# Terrorism in Pakistan: Causes & Remedies

Muhammad Irshad[*]

**Abstract**

*As is known, for centuries, various acts of terrorism have been carried out in different parts of the world by different groups for a variety of purposes. Sometimes a communist organization, sometimes a fascist group, and sometimes radical and separatist factions assume responsibility for these acts. The nature of terrorism changes with changing world conditions and increases its impact and power with the new means made possible by developing technology. Terrorism is the cruelest of crimes. The universal revulsion at the events of September 2001, the "War on Terror" has magnified many folds the global threat of terrorism.*

**Keywords:** Terrorism, War on Terror, Pakistan

## Retrospective View

This early history of terrorism throws some light on the present crisis and the "war" against terrorism. The growing of "non-state" terror is an old phenomenon lately discovered. International terrorism became a prominent tool of political agenda in the late 1960s.[1] It was applied by Palestinians for the attainment of their legitimate political rights. It was adopted as a "weapon of the poor". The largest act of international terrorism occurred on September 11, 2001 in a set of coordinated attacks on the United States. The United States has made the "War on Terrorism" the centerpiece of its global strategy since the attacks on Pentagon and World Trade Center on 11 September, 2001.[2] It has proclaimed its leadership of a world-wide alliance to exterminate this scourge of terrorism. But the bombing of Afghanistan is not a revenge for New York and Washington. It is yet another act of terror against the people of the world. Each innocent person that is killed must be added to the toll of civilians who died in New York and Washington. The United States is pursuing its War on Terror without addressing its root causes which are social, economic and political in nature and not military.

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[*] Muhammad Irshad, MS Research Scholar, Dept. of Management Sciences, Qurtuba University, Peshawar

In the immediate aftermath of American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban sought refuge in Pakistani tribal belt due to the porous nature of the international border and started organizing their resistance to US forces in Afghanistan from safe sanctuaries. Socio-economic and politico-religious complexion of the tribal region also favored these militants. At the same time, many criminal groups also started operating in these areas, which remained at large after looting, robbing, kidnapping and even killing people. These structural flaws created space for Taliban who were offering parallel security and judicial systems to the people by establishing parallel "courts" in almost all parts of FATA and some areas of settled districts in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. Tribal people in FATA remained deprived of their political rights. The sense of political deprivation and lack of participation has also created the feeling among the tribal people that they do not have a stake in the state and has resulted in a weak state-society relationship. The militant threat to Pakistan has a well-defined ideological inspiration and logistic support from international terrorist groups to achieve their target which include:

- To destabilize state's security apparatus so that people should look towards the militants for protection.
- To force the government not to interfere in militant-controlled areas so that they can continue their activities unhindered.
- To force the government to bring a new system according to the militants' agenda.

Religiously motivated terrorism is considered the most alarming terrorist threat today.[3] Groups that justify their violence on Islamic grounds – Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Hezbollah – come to mind first. But Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and other religions have also given rise to their own forms of militant extremism.

Some of the militant groups have sectarian agendas especially against Shias and Sufi orders. They are also well connected with global terrorist groups, like Al Qaeda, which have even more dangerous agendas of destabilizing or toppling the government to capture territory. Until 2004, the main focus of Pakistani militants was on protecting foreign militants, recruiting for the war in Afghanistan, training them, and securing their position against security operations.

*Under Estimating the Problem*
When an insurgency starts taking shape, states fail to assess the potential of the threat correctly and try to ignore it or misjudge the problem. That

happened in the case of Pakistan also. When the movement was emerging in the tribal areas, the state continued pretending it was not a major issue. The militants remained resolute enough in pursuing their strategy of ideological propagation. They had well-defined targets in pursuance of imposition of their "Islamic code of life." And they were trying to convince people in the name of religion, offering temptations and deterring them from standing by the 'enemy'. They were not willing to tolerate their self-perceived 'ideological enemies'.

The political structure, the administrative bureaucracy, the police and the armed forces are the key instruments to control an insurgency. The militants took advantage of lack of political mainstreaming and weak and ruthless administration in the tribal areas. The police or local security forces like Khasadars, Levies and Frontier Constabulary (Malisha) could not help evolve a security mechanism. The peace deals strengthened the hands of militants and writ of the state weakened further. Military operations resulted in the expansion of militancy and produced a bigger pool of militants. Pakistan also used a strategy to support some Taliban groups, such as those led by Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadar in South Waziristan, to divide them but that was based on a shaky rationale.

*Geographic conditions*
 "Geography can weaken the strongest political regime or strengthen the weakest one." In the tribal areas, militants hold geographical advantages, as they are familiar with the mountainous terrain and the climate. The large pool of insurgents and their presence among the civilian population makes counterinsurgency operations difficult. But counterinsurgency becomes more complex if it erupts in the border areas and gets external moral or political support. Pakistan has reservation over the presence of Indian consulates in Afghanistan near the Pakistani border and the hostile attitude of Kabul towards Islamabad.

*Geo-strategic perspective and Strategic Assets*
Another important and unique factor in the counterinsurgency in the tribal areas is the geo-strategic perspective of Pakistan and neighboring states. Before 9/11, Pakistani policy-makers considered the Taliban a strategic asset and even after 9/11 they were reluctant to dispose of these assets. There were many arguments and perceptions to sustain this option:

     (i)   The US engagement in Afghanistan is temporary and Pakistan needs a friendly power group in Afghanistan that can fill the vacuum once US leaves the country.

(ii) The geo-strategic importance of Pakistan can be enhanced by maintaining strong ties with powerful Afghan militant groups like Taliban.

(iii) The US, India, Afghanistan and other countries are selectively supporting some Afghan militant groups to destabilize Pakistan. The Taliban can act as counter weight to such militant groups.

*Islam and Terrorism*

In the West, there is a strong perception regarding Islam as a religion which advocates militancy. They believe, though wrongly, that Islam does not believe in peaceful co-existence. Whereas it is fact that Islam does not permit terrorism, Islam is a religion of mercy, kindness and compassion.

**Appraisal of Challenges and Implications**

Pakistan is confronted with two broad categories of terrorism namely internal and external which can be further classified. It is facing the twin menaces of religious extremism and ethnic strife. In this part, we identify critical challenges of militancy and extremism faced by Pakistan and their implications.

*Domestic Terrorism*

The real threat to our security primarily comes from "within." The banned organizations like Tahreek-e-Taliban and Lashker-e-Jhangvi, Mehdi Militia etc., have the means to create instability in Pakistan. The communal/regional cards like Sindhi, Balochi, Pathan, Saraike and Mohajir etc. seem to be dominating over the concept of nationalism which could be the essence of our strength. Sectarian violence is also one aspect of domestic terrorism. Areas like, Kuram, Para chinar, D.I. Khan, tribal belt and Southern Punjab are affected by this kind of terrorism. Suicide attacks and attacks on infrastructure, schools, banks, railway tracks and gas pipelines etc. are some other examples of home-grown terrorism. Many of these terrorist acts have external sponsorship either by states or non state actors.

*International or State Sponsored Terrorism*

These acts have strategic significance. Attacks on such high value targets in Pakistan as President, Prime Minister, Marriot Hotel, Sri Lankan Cricket Team, Army GHQ, PNS Mehran Base, Police Stations, drone attacks and FC training centers etc. come in this category. These acts are sponsored by state agents as a tool of state policy. These activities are

part of a bigger game involving other regional/extra regional actors. The prime objective of such acts is to project the victim state as a failed state and on the verge of collapse.

*Ethnic Terrorism*
Ethnicity is deeply rooted in Pakistani society which has already once caused disintegration of the country. Recently, ethnicity emerged again in the Sindh province where Urdu speaking community clashed with other ethnic communities on linguistic divide. This ethnic terrorism took hold of Karachi and Hyderabad in late 80s & 90s decade. However due economic rejuvenated activity and ethnic group mainstreaming the same was collapsed for the time being.

*Separatist Terrorism*
Pakistan has experienced separatist terrorism in the past in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and the same is still going on in Balochistan currently. The province of Balochistan has experienced intermittent gorilla war since last many decades. The terrorist threat posed by these armed insurgents is of separatist nature. It is the unsolved ethno-nationalist conflict between the separatists and the government that is fueling the militancy. The insurgents comprising of tribal militants have carried out acts of terrorism against state infrastructure and resorted to target killing to advance their agenda. The militants have active support from foreign elements. The Indian involvement in fueling separatist movement in Balochistan through its consulates in Afghanistan has been an open secret.[4]

*Nationalist Threat*
The nationalist are the sub nationals within the organizations that fight for recognition and a proper identification within the federation, and their struggle is motivated by the fears and apprehensions of pre-dominant role of other ethnic groups or nationalities within the federation. In Pakistan, Punjab is the most populated province and as such Punjabis form a large part in military and civil bureaucracy. The smaller provinces are frustrated by the prospects of facing permanently the majority of one province. They always feel threatened that their economic, social and cultural interests will not be protected in the wake of control of one majority province. They also feel that their local resources are being used by other regions and they are not paid the right price. The lack of development and poverty frustrates the population and external hands exploit the situation to inculcate a sense of deprivation and fuel violent insurgency. The ruling elite consider these nationalist movements as a

kind of revolt against the centre and the rejection of federation. The sub-nationalist's terrorism has been emerging intermittently in smaller provinces of Pakistan since 1960s and often has external backing. So far, the state has withstood the ethnic and sub nationalist terrorism reasonably. However, it is extremely important that legitimate fears of smaller sub nationalities are seriously addressed so that the very reasons of such feeling of marginalization are eliminated for good.

*Religious Extremism and Sectarian Terrorism*
Religious extremism is responsible for creating division on religious grounds and is responsible for violence against followers of other religions. The communal violence in Gojra in August 2009 is the example of religious extremism. It's most lethal form is the sectarian violence that originates from intolerant view of a particular sect for anyone not following their brand of religion. The origins of sectarian violence can be traced back to Afghan Jihad when hard line mullahs and their seminaries got official patronage from Pakistan, USA, Saudi Arabia and other allies during the Afghan war of 1980's to produce indoctrinated fighters against Soviet Union. Today, sectarian terrorism is a major form of terrorist threat facing Pakistan. The sectarian violence in Pakistan has been mainly divided along Shia and Sunni lines and currently an increase in the frequency and lethality of the sectarian violence have been noticed. During early years, both sects co-existed peacefully but the Afghan Jihad polarized the Mujahideen along sectarian lines with spillover effects in Pakistan resulting in killings of Shias and Sunnis in sectarian clashes. The banned organizations like Sipahe Sihabah and Sipahe Muhammad have been responsible for most of the sectarian violence. The sectarian terrorism poses an internal security threat to the country. So far, the people of Pakistan have refused to get divided on sectarian lines and the violence remained restricted to the fanatics and the extremists with the vast majority remaining detached, unsympathetic and rather antagonist to this approach. However, the sectarian issue has the potential of creating serious social and security threat in case extremists are able to incite sectarian sentiments as they did in Iraq.

*Jihadi Terrorism*
Jihadi terrorism with a global agenda is real threat to Pakistan national security. This phenomenon took shape with Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1970s. After the withdrawal of Soviet Union from Afghanistan, this armed struggle against foreign occupation degenerated into a sort of civil war which continued well into the 21st century. This

political instability in Afghanistan provided a breeding ground for numerous self styled Jihadi groups.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent US invasion of Afghanistan provided the Jihadis with an attractive "Cause". When Pakistan joined the US led coalition against "War on Terror", the so called Jihadis turned their guns more towards Pakistan than the coalition forces in Afghanistan. Pakistan became their strategic focal point as they regarded Pakistan as the main obstacle in their jihad against occupation forces in Afghanistan. The militants resorted to the most brutal and gruesome acts of violence. They put the very existences of the state in danger. Pakistan was considered the most dangerous country in the world. Militants' capacity to hit any target anywhere in Pakistan became a common conviction. Their capacity to resist security forces proved to be much greater than expected. The march of Jihadi terrorism towards Pakistan refueled the sectarian terrorism as well. These combinations of Jihadi terrorism are threatening Pakistan national security from both sides external and internal. Military force has not been effective against these terrorists so far but granting concessions would also not bring the desired results as experienced so far.

*Islamic Militancy*

Islamic militancy is one of the dreaded challenges Pakistan faces today. In province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Tribal belt the militant operates its challenge. The mountainous and difficult territories of this area are like to be a dreamland for militant organizations. People with this mindset have their own point of view and want to implement it first in Pakistan and then elsewhere. This is a distorted, tribalistic, ritualistic and dark version of Islam with no light of tolerance, peaceful co-existence, human rights and finer things of life.

Indigenous and foreign mercenaries have also started using religion as a tool. The barbarian acts of these mercenaries in Swat and adjoining areas are in diametric contrast to Islam, Pushtonism and Nationalism. They follow money line and serve their foreign masters. They also try to take advantage of situation to settle personal scores and gain advantages from deteriorating law and order.

*Pakistani Taliban*

Pakistani Taliban emerged and came to lime light in the aftermath of US invasion in Afghanistan. They joined hands with the fleeing Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban and made an alliance with them. The tribal agencies (FATA) between Afghanistan and Pakistan are considered to be the hub of Pakistani Taliban. They want, in conjunction with Afghan Taliban and

Al-Qaeda, to use this tribal belt as their base of operations against US interests in Afghanistan and elsewhere. So far, they have proved hard nut to crack. They have survived numerous military operations. They are hardcore militants and are ready to kill and be killed any time. They have dozens of suicide bombers at their service to wreck havoc any time. They have paralyzed the writ of the state of Pakistan and run parallel administration.

**Factors Responsible for Growing Militancy**
Issues like poverty, unemployment, lack of health related facilities, illiteracy and lack of justice are considered to be some of the major causes of militancy in Pakistan and elsewhere. Education and health are the most neglected sectors as Pakistan spends only 1.8 percent of its GDP on education while Cuba spends 18.7 percent of its GDP on education. In Pakistan, 40% percent population lives on or below the poverty line while the figure goes up to 45 percent in under-developed regions especially FATA.[5] According to a World Food Program study, around 89 of Pakistan's 112 districts are facing many problems including food insecurity and diseases.[6]

The diminishing public expenditures on education and health have forced a sizable population to seek the services of Islamic charities for their basic needs which make them extremely vulnerable to the various forms of vicious terrorist propaganda. Internally, Pakistan's complex socio-cultural makeup presents a conducive environment for ethnic and religious/sectarian polarization greatly eroding national cohesion, where each group enjoys trans-national affiliations and sponsorship to flex its muscle at home. During the last two decades, over 4000 people have been killed in religious/sectarian polarization conflicts.[7]

Due to the slow moving judicial system, anti-state forces feel encouraged to undermine the writ of the government. Similarly, Pakistan inherited a weak political structure. The problem was further compounded when Pakistan's founding father died before a political structure could get some maturity. In the absence of mature/visionary leadership after the Quaid's death, Pakistani nation lost their true direction. Inefficient and highly corrupt successive administrations ruined the basic foundations of the country. All these factors have led to polarization of the society and consequent deterioration of state's institutions which created the vacuum in which terrorism flourishes. In the absence of national cohesion, anti state elements in connivance with foreign hands continue to encourage and promote separatist movements. The role of unresolved political issue such as Kashmir, Palestine and

Afghanistan in fostering instability/militancy in Pakistan cannot be over looked. These unresolved political disputes provide a potent "cause" to the multitude of Muslim masses throughout the world. An amicable settlement of these disputes would deprive the militants of the rationale of their activities.

**Implications for Pakistan**

The War on Terror has had colossal and far reaching implications for Pakistan in numerous ways. Pakistan has suffered and continues to suffer socially, economically, politically and militarily. The ongoing War on Terror has cost Pakistan dearly in terms of social disruption and upheaval. Millions of people have been displaced by the ongoing operation in Swat. This number is much higher than that of Afghan refugees affected by Soviet invasion in 1979.

Similarly almost half a million people have been internally displaced from FATA as a result of the same drive. This refugees' influx has added many administrative and social problems, and has caused huge damage to our social fabric. US drone attacks are turning angry youth from the targeted areas into terrorists and provoking them to take revenge from US frontline ally Pakistan for their losses of both human and material. Likewise, it provides an opportunity to anti-Pakistan forces (Like TTP) to cash their preaching of hatred against US and its front line ally, Pakistan. As results of these drone attacks more than 2283 Pakistanis have been killed whereas only 222 Al-Qaeda operatives are 'allegedly' killed up to September 2010.[8] The direct operation of US against Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin laden in Abbottabad, without taking prior permission from Pakistan highly damaged the reputation of Pakistan in international level as well as domestic level.

| Year | No. of Drone Strikes | Taliban Killed | Civilians Killed |
|------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 2004 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 2005 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 2006 | 2 | 9 | 23 |
| 2007 | 4 | 12 | 77 |
| 2008 | 33 | 48 | 313 |
| 2009 | 53 | 61 | 724 |
| 2010 | 118 | 78 | 993 |
| 2011 | 21 | 8 | 141 |
| Total | 234 | 222 | 2, 283 |

Worst effect of this war is a clear division of Pakistani society into two extremes. On the one hand we have people who think that religious parties and institutes are just producing extremists and militants who are a direct threat to the existence of Pakistan. The other faction of masses believes that USA is waging a war against Islam. This division is breaking social fabric of Pakistani society once made up of traits like tolerance, hospitality and fair treatment.

According to the Pak-US Business Council Report (2009), our economy has so far suffered directly or indirectly a huge loss of $35 billion (official figure is just the double of it. i.e. $70 billion).[9] Due to widespread unrest and political uncertainty in Afghanistan, large quantities of our food items/commodities are smuggled to Afghanistan, which ultimately leads to acute food grain scarcity within our country. According to Pakistan's Finance Ministry, Pakistan suffered directly or indirectly loss of Rs 2080 billion in the war against terror from 2004-05 to 2008-09 which badly affected the country's socio-economic development.

According to the Finance Ministry, Pakistan's participation in the anti-terrorism campaign has led to massive unemployment in the affected regions which has ultimately increased rural poverty. It has reached 37.5 percent from 23.9 percent in 2007-08.[10] Frequent bombings, deteriorating law and order situation and displacement of the local population, have taken a huge toll on the socio-economic fabric of the country.

Pakistan is also paying a heavy political price in the shape of weakened federation as a result of prolonged militancy. Our decision to join US War on Terror has created a gap between Military and People which is also dangerous for the overall morale of the nation. Pakistan Army traditionally enjoyed good relations and a high image with Pakistani masses but War on Terror has shaken faith of Pakistani masses in their Armed Forces. Our Armed forces are caught in a dilemma. According to pro-Taliban section of people, Pakistan Army is fighting a war of US and according to pro-US section, Pakistan Army is the biggest hurdle in the way of eliminating terrorism and supporting militants in Afghanistan. Rise in militancy as a result of War on Terror has provided an opportunity to the US, India and west to declare Pakistan a militant and a failed state.

**Remedial Measure**
In the preceding paragraphs, various militant and extremist threats to the state of Pakistan were discussed. These threats are neither from a single source or organization nor are they a result of single factor. In order to

effectively counter these threats, the strategy to be evolved must deal with the root causes. There is no single solution or magic bullet that can fix all the problems but approach has to be multi-pronged. Prior to suggesting remedial measure for it, let us again take a look at main reasons that force people to resort to violence.

*Root Causes of Militancy and Extremism*
Young people embrace militancy due to multiple factors. These factors could be local as well as global in nature. Significant factors fueling militancy and extremism in Pakistan include spill over from Afghanistan, resentment to War on Terror, poor law and order situation, justice denied or delayed, short cut culture, lack of education, poverty (lack of food, shelter), corruption and nepotism, absence of nation building, broken family bonds, breakdown of civic facilities, external actors – both state and non state, religious seminaries and sectarianism, obscurantist ideologies, and feudal culture. Removal of these thorny issues is a prerequisite for eradicating the fertile breeding grounds that provide recruits for militancy.

*Peace in Afghanistan*
Peace in Afghanistan is a pre-requisite for curbing terrorism in Pakistan. Instability in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on Pakistan. But peace is not achievable in Afghanistan so long as US forces are deployed there. US presence in Afghanistan provides an attractive "cause" for terrorist organizations to maintain their existence. Peace in Afghanistan will pay enormous dividend for Pakistan. It can benefit economically from the reconstruction of Afghanistan. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan can help remove thorns in the relations between Pakistan and its neighbors and open up communication links with resource rich Central Asian states. However, peace in Afghanistan will not be easy to achieve in isolation given its status as proxy for global and regional powers.

*Logical End to War on Terror*
It is a common perception in Pakistan that the present day challenges facing Pakistan are due to wrong decision of Government to fight American War on Terror. On the other hand, many people feel that the time has finally come for a show down with the militants. This has led to a confused and divided nation that is still pondering on the question whether this is Pakistan's war or not. This is certainly the most crucial question that has been muddied by the personal interest of various stake holders. If this is Pakistan's war then the entire nation must fight it. Otherwise, a way out has to be found that avoids direct confrontation

with United States. The most important strategy to deal with the issue of War on Terror is to create a national consensus on the issue.

The right course seems to be an engagement both with the United States as well as the militants. Pakistan has to carefully play its cards using the leverage it has in helping America in its War on Terror in Afghanistan. Instead of siding squarely with one party, Pakistan needs to carefully disengage itself. It should explain its bottom lines to both sides of the conflict in Afghanistan. It will have to convince both sides that a buffer Pakistan is to the advantage of both belligerent parties. The United States should also be made aware that compliance to its agenda would quickly erode public support of the democratically elected government. Pakistan can help the United States but not at the cost of compromising its national interests and interest of both countries have to be taken into account. The success of any military operation in tribal area cannot occur without taking tribal population on board and this may need engagement with extremists to alleviate genuine grievances.

*Active Foreign Policy*
The militancy prevalent in Pakistan has both local as well as global dimension. Many of the local militant groups derive financial, logistic and training support from across the borders. This is evident from the types of weapons and resistance offered by these groups to the security forces. It is a widely known fact that no militancy stands a chance against the resources of a state without active help from other state(s). The obvious beneficiaries of supporting militancy in Pakistan are our arch enemies like India and Israel. We must obtain irrefutable evidence of external involvement and then use available diplomatic opportunities to force these states to abandon their support of militants. Opponent must be made to realize that mercenaries are loyal to the highest bidder and tomorrow these mercenaries might come back to haunt today's masters. A regional or trans-regional alliance states may be proposed to create a balance of power in the region. Only an active and forceful foreign policy can effectively build and win the case for Pakistan on International forum.

*Improving Intelligence*
An effective strategy to counter militant and extremist groups hinges on the capability to gain timely and accurate intelligence. The small terrorist cells embedded in local population are difficult to locate and disrupt without an effective intelligence network. This will include strengthening local intelligence agencies in terms of organization, equipment, training and coordination. The intelligence agencies must be made fully free of

outside interference while making these accountable to the elected leadership. Only competent and clearly mandated intelligence community can shoulder its responsibility towards getting nation rid of the menace of militancy.

*Dealing with Militancy in Tribal Belt*
A coherent strategy, listing force as a last resort, should be evolved to deal with militants. The foreign elements cannot stay in the local population unless people are discontent with the government and are sufficiently motivated to support the foreign elements against the state. Therefore, local population must be taken on board to counter the threat posed by such insurgents. Local tribesmen should be encouraged to stand up to the foreign elements and fight alongside the security forces. The military operations must be precise and avoid collateral damage. The rehabilitation of militants captured during these operations must be given due consideration. It may be emphasized that the ground offensive by security forces against Islamic militants resulted in heavy civilian casualty and internal displacement but it has been unable to kill or capture the top leadership of Taliban .[11]

*Enhancing Competence of Security Forces*
The current militant threats are new to security forces as they are trained to deal with more conventional threats. They need to be equipped with new tools, equipment and training to discharge their duties effectively. The same has been highlighted by high loss of lives suffered by security forces in their counter insurgency operations. The attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore and the failure of security personnel to offer any significant resistance to attackers speaks of their total lack of competence in dealing with terrorist threats. The culture of superfluous satisfactory readiness has to be replaced with a more realistic evaluation and critical deficiencies have to be addressed on priority. Material and training support from advanced nations may also be sought to develop the capacity for identifying and fighting terrorist threats especially in urban areas.

*Effective use of Media*
An essential element of developing public opinion is use of the media. Media can be used to educate and bring people on board about challenges facing the country and the plan to counter them. Unfortunately, our present media coverage is geared towards being the first to bring out any new story without due regard to its authenticity or impact on general public. Media must resort to responsible coverage in

line with national interests rather than serving their immediate business interests. The soft corner for militancy amongst general public can only be eliminated by a well-organized media effort that brings out the atrocities committed by the militants.

*Economic Recovery and Poverty Alleviation*
Economic and social inequality is one of the key factors influencing recruitment into militant organizations. Economic disparity is the main reason for discontentment among people and an opportunity to the terrorists to enlist unemployed through lavish funding. Many studies suggest strong correlation between militancy and inequality.[12] The only way to alleviate poverty is through economic recovery. Economic recovery plan be given top priority, especially in the underdeveloped regions of the country. Any such plan has to focus on revival of industry to generate economic activity and jobs. The foreign donors may be approached for funding of grass root level and pragmatic economic development programs. FATA is amongst the poorest and neglected areas of Pakistan with per capita income half of the national average. More than 60 percent of its inhabitants live below national poverty line. Education is uncommon with only 17% male and 3 percent female literacy rate.[13]

*Revamping Education System*
Education plays a key role in developing responsible and tolerant citizens. Starting from elementary to graduate education, emphasis must be laid on imparting civic sense. The syllabi must be revised to increase emphasis on subjects like social studies, arts, sports, athletics etc, that teach courteousness, teamwork and tolerance. Disparities in the education system need be addressed. Pakistan has a large chunk of population that needs to be transformed into an educated group of citizens with wide variety of vocational skills. This can be done by pumping more money into education sector for greater number of quality schools within the easy reach of population. The greater number of affordable and quality public schools will reduce the input to dubious institutes where extremists can teach them their obscurantist ideologies.[14]

*Streamlining Madrassa Culture*
Madrassa forms an important part of our social set up. Initially, Madrassas were established to provide free religious education to under privileged. While nothing is wrong with the traditional objective of imparting religious education, the use of this system by extremists to advance their obscurantist agenda has muddied the water. It is essential

that government thoroughly scrutinizes the set up of these Madrassas and brings them under the supervisory control of the Religious Scholars Council. The syllabi of Madrassas also need comprehensive revision so that students are not only taught correct religious concepts but also get modern scientific and vocational knowledge that offers their graduates a chance to be absorbed into the society.

*Conflict Management System Revival*
On the grass root level, the petty issues and disputes of the people must be solved quickly and amicably. Traditionally, such disputes had been solved through gathering of elders. Breakdown of such local forums has increased intolerance and violence in society. Government may therefore, revisit the revival of Punchayat, Jirgas and local councils so that minor disputes may be settled locally and cordially.

*Administration of Speedy and Affordable Justice*
Justice delayed is justice denied. The necessity of speedy and affordable justice in any society is beyond any doubt. According to a news report, as many as 14,607 under trial prisoner were sent back to prison, without being produced in front of a judge, in the city of Karachi in July 2009. Only 5223 cases were heard by 132 trial courts of the 5 districts of Karachi.[15] This type of judicial performance has resulted in complete loss of faith of general public in courts. As a result, the Taliban like speedy justice system attracts public support and erodes writ of the state. Therefore, whole judicial system needs to be reviewed to ensure that people have access to judicial institutions that dispense speedy justice.

*Revival of Civic Facilities*
Civic facilities like clean drinking water, sewerage, gas, electricity, education, health, roads, etc are the responsibilities of the state and reflect the health of a society. However, presently most of these are either nonexistent or severely limited in quality and availability. The electric power crisis has adversely affected every aspect of individual and national life. Similarly, the recent sugar crisis just before the start of holy month of Ramazan speaks of poor governance and indifferent attitude of rulers towards masses. The cumulative impact of the lack of basic civic facility is a discontented and irritated society that is quickly losing faith in government institutions. In order to reverse this trend, immediate and visible efforts are required on the part of government to provide housing, water, sewerage, and most importantly livelihood to the citizens.

*Improving Law and Order*
Government has the fundamental responsibility to protect the life and property of its citizens. However, the prevailing law and order situation is far from desired with rampant crimes. People do not trust police and have to hire private guards. Those who cannot afford are left at the mercy of criminals. Kidnapping for ransom, robbery, burglary are common. Added to this are the suicidal and bombing attacks by terrorists. The main reason behind flight of capital and lack of foreign investment in the country is the poor law and order situation. To exterminate the threat from militancy, it is imperative to make political stability and law and order a top priority.

*Abrogation of VIP Culture*
Although Islam teaches equality, since independence the class and feudal system has actually strengthened in Pakistan over the years. The rural and under developed areas are more susceptible to the establishment of local fiefdoms and khanates where few influential hold total control over the populace. For example, 95 percent of Balochistan is "B area" where the local tribal sardar or chief exercises control and central government do not have total authority.[16] These local landlords, politicians or tribal chiefs have kept their own people oppressed through the use of mercenaries and private militias. In order to break the influence of these individuals, bold reforms are needed that ensure the people at grass root level become master of their own destiny and enjoy the fruits of development.

*Eradicating Corruption and Nepotism*
Unfortunately, the corrupt have controlled most of the business of the state. Despite having numerous anti-corruption establishments, it is rampant in every field of our society. The corruption and nepotism can only be eradicated through merit based appointments and placements. However, the situation on the ground is contrary as most of the appointments are filled on the basis of bribe, nepotism or political conveniences. In a symposium organized by the Federal Ombudsman and UNDP, it was reported that police was the most corrupt organization but its Highway Wing was least corrupt.[17] The reason being the highway police was appointed on merit with proper wages.

*Strengthening the Federation*
The genuine grievances of provinces need to be settled immediately. An expeditious effort must be made by government to resolve issues faced by provinces. The unrest in Balochistan needs immediate attention and

constitutional amendments may be considered to grant greater autonomy to the provinces. Actions like judicious distribution of resources through National Finance Commission (NFC) award, higher royalty and increased development fund are likely to reduce the sense of economic deprivation among smaller units of federation.

**Conclusion**

Once again Pakistan is at a crossroads. Militant and extremists threaten the territorial integrity of the State. The asymmetric guerilla warfare introduced by Afghan Jihad continues to haunt us. The government of the day is sandwiched between conflicting pressure from the United States and the militant extremists. The economy is in shambles and over inflation coupled with lack of investment and the flight of capital is destroying the fabric of our society. Rampant corruption, nepotism and breakdown of civic facilities have held the nation hostage. Poor law and order caused by mercenaries, criminals and extremists have taken a heavy toll on the everyday life of innocent people. Doubts are being raised about the capability of the security forces to meet these challenges and even the viability of the state. Away forward has to be found despite the enormity and complexity of the national scene. Pakistani people have the capability to brave all odds given right and sincere guidance. The future course has to be chartered carefully with national consensus. Time has come to involve the people of Pakistan into the decision making that affect their very life. The people must reject extremisms in all its forms and work towards establishing a peaceful, tolerant, pluralistic, law abiding, modern, progressive and corruption free society. Terrorism is a great hurdle in our socio-economic prosperity, political stability and geo-strategic sustainability. Development activities are on halt in these areas. The rule of ignorance, stagnation, fanaticism, and destruction is spreading like a wild fire especially in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. The militancy is caused by numerous factors; hence no single solution exists for our problems. Multiple simultaneous courses need to be adopted and global picture must to be taken into account while considering way forward. The local as well as external factors need be taken care of to isolate and eliminate terrorism. On international level, we have to engage US and our neighbors to eliminate support for militancy in Pakistan. On national level, we have to sort out economy, education, and civic infrastructure to facilitate a progressive and prosperous society. The improvement of law and order and elimination of corruption and nepotism must remain high on our priority list. At the same time, a strict check has to be maintained on the use of religious seminaries to breed and spread sectarianism and extremism. The relative

expediency and weight of any particular approach has to be decided based on ground situation and impact based on accurate feedback.

## Notes & References

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Every terrorist incident in Pakistan strengthens my belief that root cause of terrorism in the country is external. The father of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, truly said that no power on earth can undo Pakistan, however, he did not say that no power can hurt Pakistan. It is equally true that mere existence of Pakistan is not acceptable to many countries in the world. These 'rogue states' worked together in the disintegration of Pakistan (East Pakistan) and the same forces are active since '9/11' to destroy Pakistan from within. Internally, hostile forces have worked hard to deprive the nation from the spiritual power of dignity. These forces have applied multiple subversive methods to achieve this goal. Terrorism in Pakistan according to Ministry of Interior, poses a significant threat to the people of Pakistan. The current wave of terrorism is believed to have started in 2000 and peaked during 2009. Since then it has drastically declined as result of military operations conducted by the Pakistan Army. According to South Asian Terrorism Portal Index (SATP), terrorism in Pakistan has declined by 89% in 2017 since 2009. Terrorism isn't the issue associated with Pakistan since it's birth. If ...  Let me rephrase it as of current scenario. "What were the causes of terrorism in Pakistan". Start the journey right from the beginning to better understand the context of plot. Terrorism isn't the issue associated with Pakistan since it's birth.