

## COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGIES IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF OPERATION ZARB-E-AZB

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### ABSTRACT

The tribal areas of Pakistan attracted international attention after the 9/11 episode because these areas are considered to house remnants of Al Qaeda and its affiliates. Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas (FATA) have become the blood of Pakistan as the insurgency formulated in the area two decades ago has now surrounded the entire country. The War on Terror in Afghanistan forced the militants to flee there and take shelter across the Durand Line in the Pakistani tribal areas. With the support of local tribal militants, militancy increased. The US government presses the Pakistani government to stop the militants living in the FATA region and destroy the supporters of Al-Qaeda. This exploratory and descriptive study aims to identify the many types of militancy that exist in Pakistan and their varying levels of intensity and contributing variables. After Zarb e Azb, terrorists' operations and strongholds in Pakistan were significantly curtailed, yet their persistence in some areas demonstrates their deep roots and extensive network. In this respect, they achieved so much to defeat militancy and free Pakistan from this evil. But still, the FATA insurgency holds a potential threat and is a foremost challenge to Pakistan's national security and sovereignty.

**Keywords:** Tehrek Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Zarb e Azb, Militancy, Terrorism, FATA

### INTRODUCTION

The global phenomenon of terrorism has massively disturbed world peace and stability. One of the consequences of terrorism is that it pushes people to leave their homes and reach safer destinations, causing crises for internally displaced people and refugees. This thesis addresses the issue of terrorism in Pakistan and possible countermeasures to control this menace. Weinbaum (2017) finds that even though elites and the public might appear quite slow in appreciating the existential internal threats to anti-state groups in the country, there are several strong reasons to doubt the state's full commitment to taking meaningful action and fulfilling promises. According to William (2016), Pakistan's national security and counterterrorism policies are under the military's almost total authority. By identifying and differentiating between "good" jihadi groups, those that are expected to further its strategic aims in India and Afghanistan, and "bad" jihadi groups, those who target the security forces, he further underscores an incredibly essential issue. Furthermore, Oberon (2015) finds the human rights situation at its worst in Pakistan after the war on

terror. He states that the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has complained about more than 430 executions since the halt on the death penalty; moreover, the Commission is also upset regarding the new military courts in the country. Laub (2013) talks about the continuous rise of violence in Pakistan, especially after 2007, as terrorist groups have been targeting political leaders, tribal leaders, defense departments like the military and police, minorities, including Shia, and educational institutions as well. Though nearly unnoticed, suicide bombings have become ubiquitous in recent years. When analyzing Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy, which it developed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks to combat terrorism, Ahmed (2016) states that the country's success mostly hinges on taking decisive action to combat violent extremist ideology. Moreover, Yusuf (2015), recognizes Pakistan's policy as "pessimistic" and "extremely dismal. The author point outs Pakistan's lack of clarity in recognizing its enemy, as the state continues to overlook Islamist groups. Due to the lack of an organized approach, Pakistan is facing the dilemma

of “capacity versus will” which is very harmful to the country.

On the contrary, Amin (2016) is on a diverse view and says that countering terrorism in Pakistan is different as compared with other countries. Because Pakistan has suffered with so many terrorist attacks, unlike other countries, especially in the past four years. Unfortunately, these terrorists not only target the security forces and government, but their main purpose is to spread fear in the daily life of the masses. While analyzing the political initiatives taken by Pakistan to combat terrorism alongside the Army, Rammy (2016) notes the creation of extensive national security plans by the government under the name of the National Action Plan following the APS attack. NAP points mainly deal with the existing law and constitutional bar which comprise preventing banned organizations from operating and regrouping all kinds of terrorism and terrorist activities.

Firdous (2014) discussed the roots of militancy in Pakistan, which has become a very multifaceted phenomenon in today’s Pakistan. Since militants are using numerous strategies to weaken the country, the author attempts to trace the root cause of militancy with a focus on the phenomenon’s evolution in Pakistan.

Furthermore, Javed (2016) focuses on the internal security dynamics of Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11 and the circumstances that led to the largest military operation in Pakistani history, "Zarb-e-Azb," to combat terrorism and violent extremism. Because of societal disintegration, a surge in terrorism and extremism, and a threat to the state's authority, internal security has become a problem in Pakistan. TTP-related terrorist attacks created a significant internal security danger in Pakistan.

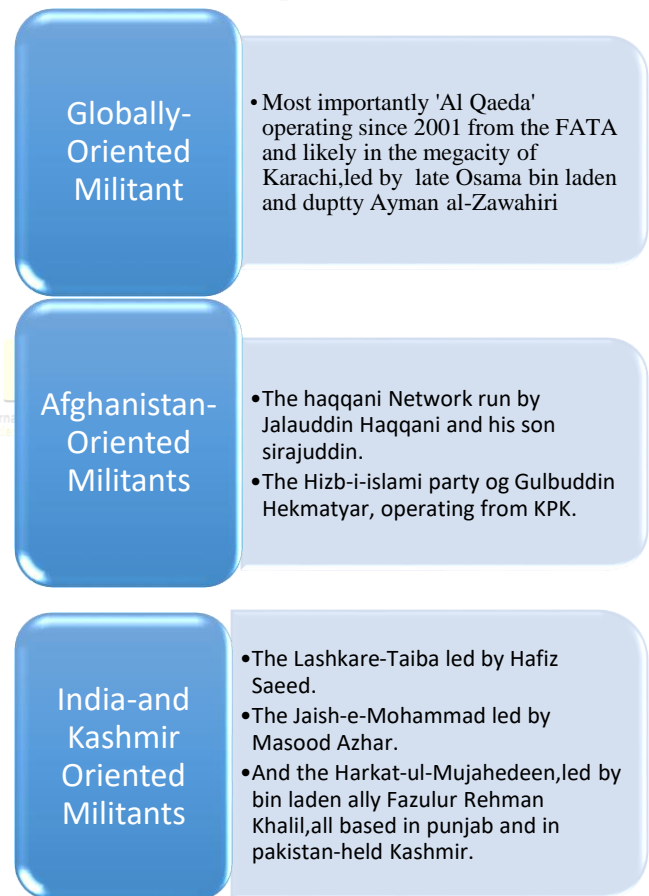
Wasim and Salim (2015) define the utmost motive behind the involvement of terrorist activities as the behavior of citizens for the reason that illiterate people cannot do reasoning and analysis and sometimes have no idea about ethics even. Exploring root causes is very significant to completely eradicating terrorist activities in Pakistan.

### TALIBANIZATION

Taliban organization located in Pakistan Growing resistance to coalition operations to quell the insurgency in Afghanistan and find Osama bin Laden, Mullah Muhammad Omar, and other al

Qaeda and Taliban commanders is occurring in the Waziristan agency near the Pakistan-Afghan border. This resistance is inspired by previous Taliban rulers of Afghanistan. The Waziristan agency, which has made headlines in the international media since 2002 as a result of frequent fighting between Pakistani security forces and militants linked to al Qaeda and Taliban leaders, is essentially under the rule of the local Taliban. They have established their hold in the north and south Waziristan areas and gained a sizable base from which to fight the allied forces in Afghanistan. (Amir,2008).

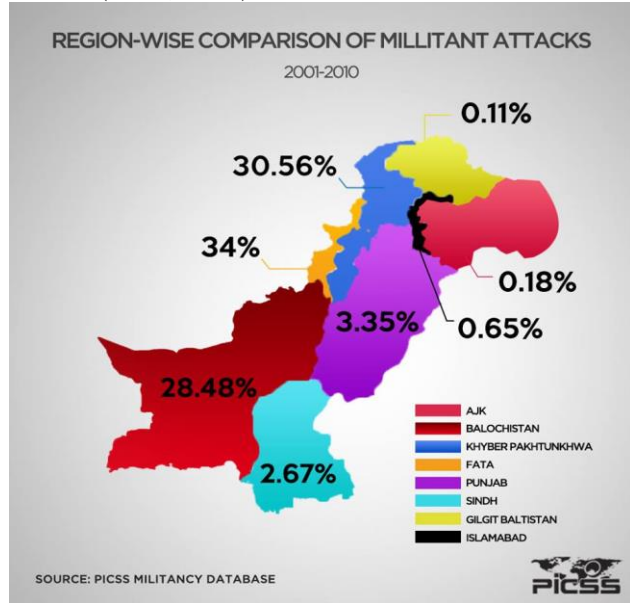
### Major Militants Groups in Pakistan



### TERRORIST ATTACKS ON PAKISTANI SOIL

Since 2004, regular terrorist attacks have created deep security concerns for Pakistan. Terrorist attacks become more deadly with the emergence of TTP. The Federation of American Scientists has released a report, according to that report there were 30 terrorist attacks in 2001, and in 2010, the recorded terrorist

attacks increased to 1331. The highest number of terrorist attacks occurred in 2009 (Blair, 2011). Fixed bombing and suicide bombing were used by terrorist organizations to create utmost fear in minimum time by using human explosives, but before 2001, suicide attacks have an alien phenomenon for a common Pakistani since 2004 suicide attacks have become happening in society, in this respect, FATA and southern Punjab provide a huge number of suicide bombers to terrorist organizations and organizations recruit and train them (Khan, 2016). Pakistan faced major suicide attacks after a military operation at Jamia Hafsa in 2007. Since the beginning of the suicide bombing in Pakistan, the 2009 year faced a huge number of attacks (Rana, 2014).



(PICS Militancy Database)

Initially, when insurgency starts working in its early phase government fails or ignore the potential threat correctly, and Pakistan did the same. When radical elements emerged in North West Pakistan, the government didn't realize the real danger and ignored the issue and pretend that this issue has no potential to survive. While on the other hand militants slowly and steadily propagated the ideology because they have clear objectives in pursuance of imposing a particular code of life in the name of sharia. Militants allocated themselves in the northern

western region of Pakistan because those areas lack a political, judicial, military, and administrative structure that's why different terrorist groups took advantage and successfully matured their movements. The security forces of the tribal region like Khasdar, Frontier Corps, and Levies failed to control the growing threat of Radicalization. Furthermore, the peace agreements also weaken the government writ and encourage the militants. Consequently, military operations further disturbed the situation and resulted in a more violent pool of militancy (Irshad, 2014).

Under this influence and to stabilize the situation, the Pakistani army launched many joint operations to counter terrorism in Pakistan, the first major operation of the Pakistan army against militant groups was "Operation AL-Mizan" in 2002. This was the first major operation that took place in FATA. Unfortunately, this operation was not that successful as the army faced huge losses due to a lack of information regarding the enemy's methodology. This operation ended up in 2006 when the second operation Rah-e-Haq commenced in Swat Valley in the year 2007. One of the key places where the Pak army launched major operations like Operation rah-e-Nijat, Rah-e- Rast and Sirate-Mustaqeem to distress terrorists' safe heavens was Bajur.

In July 2011 Pakistani army launched another operation called Koh-e-surfaced against the militants in the Kurram Agency in FATA. After all these operations, "Zarb-e-Azab" was proved as the biggest operation in the year 2013; because it was the most well-coordinated operation ever conducted against terrorists. Currently, the ongoing operation through which Pakistan is struggling to get rid of this evil is Operation Rad ul Fassad.

The phenomenon of counter-terrorism is different in Pakistan as compared to other countries. Though it was certainly not easy to demolish the organized system of militants, the military operations did its best. On the flip side, as a consequence, these operations defined a new path and direction to the Pakistani society which also disturbed the social and political fabric of the country. There, this study aimed to dig out the dynamics of military operations in Pakistan, unfold the effective success of counter-terrorism in Pakistan, analyze the implications of

military operations, critically evaluate the operations launched by the Pakistani army to prevent insurgency and militancy in Pakistan's tribal areas, to discuss the internal issue of FATA regions and the settlement of IDPs, and to focus on the success and flaws of operation Zarb-e-Azb and effectiveness of this operation to counter the militancy.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In this research, descriptive and analytical methods would be used to comprehensively draw inferences. It would contain secondary sources newspapers, the Pak Army's official website, and print and electronic media used to collect the data. Many operations were done in the country to minimize terrorism but Operation Zarb-e-Azb was analyzed and all public information regarding this operation was collected to support the study.

#### **CASE STUDY**

##### **Operation Zarb-e-Azb**

Zarb-e-Azb was the joint military comprehensive operation launched by Pakistan Armed Forces against terrorist groups in North Waziristan Agency. The operation was launched to eliminate the post-effects of the 9/11 incident and reached all logical conclusions. But the ultimate reason behind this operation was the major incident of the Karachi Airport attack on 8 June 2014 by TTP and IMU. Pakistan responded strictly and deploy the forces in the north Waziristan agency under this operation armed forces targeted the threat of terrorism without any discrimination of good and bad Taliban. The operation was not only against TTP rather it is against all the foreign terrorists operating from FATA, more than 30,000 thousand Pakistani soldiers were involved in the first phase of the combat, aiming to destroy all the terrorist hidings in the northern area of the Waziristan agency. One of the purposes behind this combat was to promote peace and security by eliminating all the militant places in North Waziristan (Munir, 2014). The operation has been warmly supported by all the sectors in Pakistan. While encouraging and appreciating the nation, former Defense Minister of Pakistan, Khawaja Asif has revealed that the nation stood by her military decisions even after failed dialogues with TTP. He further revealed that the operation is not ending here but it will continue to go until it reaches its logical

conclusion. Any group that will challenge Pakistan's constitution, attacks civilians and soldiers or government settings and most importantly if dare to use Pakistani land or to make any strategy for any terrorist Attacks will be targeted" (The Nation, 2014).

On the other hand, during that period of nationwide security upheaval and the threat of terrorism, Pakistan was in desperate need of political stability and civil-military understanding. However, continuing law and order in the state and civil-military collaboration for anti-terrorist operations can endure the state's writ and stop Pakistan's state of insecurity. However, after all of that, the government eventually made the recovery and reintegration of the internally displaced people from Operation Zarb-e-Azb a top priority. However, this has led to increased state instability. As a result of the operation, Pakistan's economic ties with China have been strengthened as part of the ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, which is also benefiting Afghanistan and Pakistan and their shared security interests in the region (Jones, 2014).

Out of all the significant military operations carried out in Pakistan, operations "Rah-e-Rast" and "Zarb-e-Azb" have proven to be the most effective at eliminating terrorists.

After the brutal attack of September 11, and after the emancipation of America's so-called war on terror, terrorism and counterterrorism policies claimed more than 50,000 casualties on public cost, including 15,700 security personnel; moreover, the monetary cost of 118.32 billion dollars to Pakistan's economy (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2016). Pakistan was classified as the second among the most affected countries by terrorism by asymmetric violence and conflict in the year 2011 (Global Terrorism Index, 2012). Nevertheless, because of successful military operations like "Zarb-e -Azb", Pakistan's status amongst the affected countries declined to number 6, in the global terrorism index (synnote, 2009).

"Utilising North Waziristan Agency as a base, these terrorist has pursued the war against Pakistan and upsetting our national affairs, impeding our financial development, and causing huge death toll and property," the ISPR stated (Dawn, June 16, 2014). The TTP itself proposed a peace agreement with the legislative and asked the Authority of Pakistan to proclaim a ceasefire. The Pakistani government first

viewed the peace process as the best option for dealing with the threat of terrorism. TTP, however, continued to engage in terrorism throughout the peace process and target innocent civilians.

The Pakistani Army's counterstrategies, on which they based eight small- to medium-sized counterterrorism operations against militants and four large-scale operations, their physical strength has been greatly diminished by it (Basit, 2015). More than 1087 military operations against TTP have been completed by the Pakistani Army, including 323 major and 776 minor operations. Although Pakistan's position as a frontline state in the war on terror caused tremendous destruction there and caused great losses, these significant military actions somehow assisted Pakistan in overcoming this Militancy. These operations were held in all agencies of FATA and some areas of KPK but many open border areas with Afghanistan created major hurdles in the way to a militant-free FATA. Because Afghan government has some political insecurities over fencing the borders with Afghanistan that's why Militancy in Pakistan was not declined at a satisfactory level at the end of Operation Koh-e- said, Because Militants of TTP hide in North Waziristan from South Waziristan. On June 15, 2014, it is when the large-scale military campaign in North Waziristan began. When Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's 15 terrorists assaulted Jinnah International Airport in Karachi on June 8, 2014, taking about 2,500 security personnel captive for seven hours, the Pakistani army launched Operation Zarb-e- Azb in retaliation (PILDAT Report, 2015). At the time, this was one of the most significant attacks ever committed on Pakistani soil, and it was at this point that the Pakistani government and army decided to launch their largest and riskiest military operation ever as a result of the failure of their counterterrorism strategy since Zarb-i-Azab. To combat the TTP militants in South Waziristan, the previous operation Rah -e Nijat, a significant and final military operation, was followed by Zarb-e- Azb. As a result, different Islamic terrorists found it challenging and reluctant to penetrate (FATA), North Waziristan. Additionally, the goal of Zarb-e-Azab was to eliminate Al Qaeda and its affiliated movements, including the TTP, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Chechen Islamic Jihad Union, Emirate-e-Kaukav, and East Turkish Islamic Movement, which harmed

Pakistan's national security in the sociopolitical and economic spheres.

In 2011, the international community urged the then-Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani to undertake military operations in the North Waziristan Agency against terrorists who were seeking refuge there (Zahid, 2015). After June 15, 2014, the Pakistani government realized that Operation Zarb e Azb had finished execution discussions with the TTP, but that the militants had broken their promise to uphold the terms of the peace accord with the Pakistani military. During the operation that resulted in the killing of a prominent three-star army general in a bomb explosion by the terrorist attack in the Upper Dir district close to the Afghan border, they persisted in carrying out their evil deeds (The News International, 2013).

These assaults on the army stoked animosity towards militants among Pakistanis, particularly in the military services. Due to the brutal TTP action of beheading 23 Pakistan Frontier Corps troops in late 2014, operation Zarb-e-Azb became more intense than it had been earlier. In November 2014, extremists attacked the Wagah border, resulting in a terrible catastrophe. As a result, it helped to highlight the 255 casualties from an attack by Jamaat-ul-Harrar, a TTP faction, which also left 200 others injured and 55 dead (The News, 2015).

Another terrible and deadly attack by militants led by Mullah Fazullah occurred on December 16, 2014, at the Army Public School, which has come to be known as "Pakistan's 9/11" because it claimed 142 lives, 132 of whom were schoolchildren. This attack not only shocked Pakistan but also traumatized the entire world with its inhumane treatment of Peshawar schoolchildren (Zahid, 2015). After some time, it was discovered that despite the success of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in its first year, some of its goals had not been entirely attained due to noncooperation on the part of the Pakistani and Afghan governments (Khan, 2015).

#### **NATIONAL INTERNAL SECURITY POLICY**

Pakistan has implemented several significant counterterrorism tactics and programs, such as the National Internal Security Policy (NISP), which was adopted by the Pakistani cabinet in 2014 and is intended to safeguard territorial integrity.

Additionally, on February 26, 2014, the Pakistani government introduced the NISP before the national assembly to create political harmony in the fight against terrorism and the maintenance of peace and security. It was divided into three categories: secret, operational, and strategic. The administration initially made steps to explore dialogue with militants when all three were interwoven with one another. At a secondary level, the government made numerous local and national initiatives to ensure public security.

Additionally, the NISP's secret component remained private. These were the NISP's key takeaways. The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) must create the Directorate of Internal Security (DIS), which will integrate all grids of tactical operative and strategic intelligence, civil and military, under one roof. To coordinate between police and anti-terrorism departments, a contemporary, well-equipped federal RRF Rapid Responsive Force was required. Mosques and madrassas should be incorporated into provincial and national educational institutions by the government. A comprehensive national weapons control regime should exist. It is essential to stop the abuse of electronic gadgets and cybercrimes that endangers the nation's security and tranquility. The government was unable to fully implement its policies as a result of political party rivalry and lack of cohesion. To ensure security and calm, the military launched an operation against militants in North Waziristan (Rumi, 2015).

### **NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

Following the 2014 terrorist attack on the APS school, Pakistan's civil and military leadership collaborated on several measures collectively known as an anti-terrorism agenda. For Pakistan's internal security, the plan was intended to lessen the severity of and eradicate their presence.

The security forces of Pakistan have been able to act against ills across the nation thanks to a plan with a defined outline for taking action against terrorists. The military apparatus was strengthened by this plan, enabling it to accelerate Operation Zarb-e-Azb and launch strategic operations in important cities like Karachi. Another goal is to make it possible for the civil and military leadership to work together to combat terrorism and increase the effectiveness of

counterterrorism. Even though the TTP's presence cannot be undermined, the national action plan has brought major terrorist organizations like them to their knees. The Nation Action Plan led to a boosted and successful operation against terrorists hiding in Pakistan's tribal region; further, the National Action Plan brought the results of an operation against the urban militia in Karachi and ignited action against sectarian groups in the Southern region of Punjab; and finally, the National Action Plan ensured the results of civil-military cooperation over counterterrorism measures and, to a greater extent, reduced the number of terrorist attacks.

Well, the National Action Plan has resolutely proven to be a good and effective strategy against terrorists operating in Pakistan and fomenting violence. Internal Security benefits from its improvement and improved results.

### **DYNAMICS OF OPERATION**

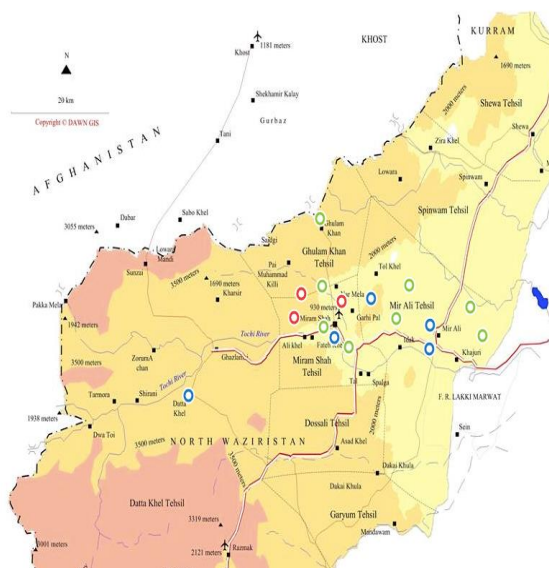
The biggest setback in recent years for terrorists was Operation Zarb-e-Azb. It was made up of 180,000 Pakistani security personnel and had a national action plan and a comprehensive national internal security policy. It attempted to combat extremism through several military operations and extensive political, social, and economic programs (Ahmad, 2015). Furthermore, according to Major General Asim Saleem Bajwa (ret.), 218 terrorist commanders were among the 2763 militants who were killed during the 9,000 intelligence-based operations (IBO). Another military source reported that approximately 837 terrorists' hideouts had been destroyed and a sizable quantity of explosives, equal to about 250 tonnes, had been seized (Hussain 2016). During it, the army also found 18,087 weapons, including AK-47s, heavy machine guns, sniper rifles, and rocket launchers (Akram, 2016). Additionally, the calm visits of Chinese President Xi Jinping and numerous other notables, together with the victory of the Zimbabwe T-20 cricket match, demonstrated the success of Pakistan's military operations. According to the Chinese President, Zarb-e-Azb has proven to be a "game changer" for South Asia as well as Pakistan. (2015) The Express Tribune.

One of the key indicators of Operation Zarb-e-Azb's success was the drop in the number of fatalities and casualties caused by terrorist activity in Federally Administered Tribal Areas. After the long-lasting

effects of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, a sizable portion of Miran Shah regained 80%, and it is now regarded as a war of survival and a time to put an end to terrorism. After this military operation, the Army handed control to the frontier forces of the tribal area and reduced the number of checkpoints in South Waziristan from 50 to only 5 in two years (Hussian, 2017). This military operation is based on four phases: strangling, clearing, rebuilding, and handing over control to civil administration.

The motivation for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations to ensure global peace was driven by a variety of interests among international entities. One was to exterminate Al Qaeda and other foreign extremist organizations that posed a danger to American interests. The second was to stop militant organizations from obtaining nuclear weapons. Only three percent of Pakistan's anti-terrorist operations since 1945 have been successful, twenty-two percent have ended in draws, and eighteen percent are still in progress. It would show that Pakistan needs to work more if it wants to successfully tackle the long-term risks posed by militants (Jones & Fair, 2010).

Operation Zarb-i-Azb



Source: PAF 2014

### OUTCOMES

Although Operation Zarb-e-Azb cost many lives and loss of money and infrastructure to return peace and prosperity in the northern region, further one of the major outcomes of the operation is highlighted.

- Area of North Waziristan, Shawal, and Khyber Agency cleared by Pakistan Army from Militants.
- One of the major successes of this operation is over 900 terrorists killed in Operation Khyber 1 and Khyber 2
- North Waziristan was the epic center of terrorist activities and it considers save heavens for Militants, North Waziristan has very challenging terrain but despite that Armed forces cleared all their hideouts, caves, and tunnels.

There were many challenges faced by Pakistani Forces and the Government during the Military Operation but the biggest challenge is about internally displaced persons who are in hue amount from Fata. Internally displaced people are those who have been forced or required to leave their homes as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. This is according to the UN Guiding Principle (1998). According to domestic and international law, the United States claimed that IDPs were entitled to equality and freedom in their own country as well (Hameed, 2015).

About 3.3 million Pakistanis were compelled to flee their homes in 2009 as the government's war against the Militants grew more intense, becoming one of the largest internal displacement events in the area. They sought temporary sanctuary in KPK. The number of IDPs increased, with 0.7 million more coming to neighboring districts of Kpk as a result of ongoing operations in the tribal regions, particularly during the big Zarb-e-Azb campaign in North Waziristan Agency. According to the most recent censuses, the violence has caused around 5 million people to be internally displaced from their homes and places of origin. But with time gradually peace prevails in the region due to operations and displacement challenges covert into the challenge of the sustainable return of IDPs. In this regard, the government makes various strategies to counter the ratio of displacement.to improve the protection human rights of IDPs and returnees it is necessary to develop a partnership with a long-term plan further, in this regard efforts are being made to overcome these barriers, although responses have not been consistence and far-reaching

as needed due to limited financial resources and limited access in FATA, because this protection strategy allows more.

The main concern areas of IDPs are the legal assistance and identity documents and security issues in the areas of return and the issue of freedom of movement, important concern was the lack of basic facilities of health, education, and shelter. so the main objective was to overcome on these concerns through suitable measures and policies.

As a result of the military operation Zarb-e-Azb's first phase's success, the Chief of Army Staff decided on August 14, 2014, that it should be brought to a logical conclusion in a few more weeks. The Federal Government and the FATA administration have a monumental challenge in resettling more than a million IDPs, according to Khan (2014). Additionally, the armed forces won't be able to take control of the region for very long if militant activity doesn't resume there. As a result, the government has a difficult situation that requires the development of policies, extensive preparation, financial support, and most importantly, sincerity and resolve.

The care of the numerous internally displaced people (IDPs) was the main priority in this regard. After the operation establishes the State's authority, it is important to plan for the safe return and rehabilitation of IDPs and to create a civil administration that can efficiently run the region (Pildat, 2014). The armed forces approved the IDPs' repatriation on December 8, 2014. The return of IDPs, according to the Chief of Army Staff, was his top priority. The official order to prepare for the return of IDPs to their homes in areas free of the threat of terrorism was given to Pakistan's civilian leadership (Yousef, 2014). IDP resettlement is a challenging governmental move, however, the strategy is ready by COAS. Following the Swat operation in 2009, the return of tribal members and the rehabilitation of their communities have recently been completed. The full-fledged military effort to retake the territory from the terrorists drove thousands of residents to flee North Waziristan. Reintegrating them, according to Rtd. Lieutenant General Talat Masood, is the secret to success. The drill will only include these military advantages.

Because they experienced significant damage to their infrastructure as well as the loss of numerous lives, the people of FATA experience instability and harm

rather than celebrating the Pakistani Army's triumph in Operation Zarb-e-Azb. People were compelled to leave their hometowns in search of a better future and a peaceful way of life by slaughter in these war-torn countries. Resolving them by reducing their issues amicably was a significant challenge for the state (Al Jazeera, 2017).

Pakistan was in a position of both gain and loss, but the biggest challenge was the return and rehabilitation of IDPs, who had been able to settle down in their native country because almost the entire region had been cleared of terrorists, but the government of Pakistan was involved in a tremendous amount of work for this return phase because displacement was on a large scale and IDPs were becoming a persistent challenge to the government in terms of their rehabilitation, reconstruction, and renewal of life

It is challenging to evaluate the success and long-term effects of Operation Zarb-e-Azb in Pakistan. Retired General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani oversaw the formulation of the anti-terrorism doctrine from 2002 to 2007. It is referred to as a formative stage. Kiyani's biggest problem was how to achieve agreement on the matter to execute a military operation. Due to the edgy and strong militant attacks throughout the years 2002 to 2009, it is avoidable. Even, if Pakistanis had sought to use stick political strategies and soft tactics (Rana, 2016). The second part of Zarb-e-Azb's military strategy outlines its benefits, including the fact that Pakistan is now a generally safer environment than it was before the operation's beginning. Terrorist assaults have lost some of their initial ferocity. According to ISPR, 3,600 square kilometers in North Waziristan, including Shahwal, have been cleared of 900 terrorists associated with Lashkar-e-Islam. Nearly 253 tonnes of explosive material, 7,500 bomb factories, and 992 hideouts have all been destroyed by the Pakistani army (The Express Tribune, 2016).

Despite a successful conclusion in 2016, Operation Zarb-e-Azb had some problems because the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan didn't cooperate. They will end rebel infiltration into Afghanistan if they unite fully. Because they were linked with 400 families, the militants were forced to reside in a lawless area of Afghanistan due to the lack of mutual peace (Zahid, 2016).



Operation Zarb-e-Azb and other operations resulted as a serve kind damage and the destruction and killing the thousands of innocent civilians and displacement of people on a massive scale, moreover the destruction of educational and governmental institutions as a consequence of these operations along with socio-economic and psychological deterioration in the region. But this operation had some destructive means as well because Military Operations brought drastic implications over the Political and Economic System of FATA as it affected the internal structure completely. Militants embedded the administrative system of tribal areas by Killing local tribes and targeting their agencies which made the whole mechanism vulnerable. Moreover, the sense of deprivation from political rights threatened the tribal people and the rise of Mullah Fazlullah is one of these examples. The Terrorist outfits inculcated anti-state sentiments and hatred against Pakistan Army. Moreover, because of impoverishment, lawlessness, and socio-economic deprivation, the people of the region faced severe kind of unemployment, which became the major incentive of militancy in tribal areas and the whole country (Thakur, 2012) as far as the economy is concerned has suffered a lot due to these operations with the great expenditures on military operations, deterioration of livelihood, speedy downfall in foreign investments collapse of growth rates, inflation, and low profits in other words military operations caused the collapse of overall economic system of country (The News,2015).

### **Conflict Resolution: A Way Forward**

The conflict resolution in the tribal area was the biggest need of time for peace, prosperity, and stability of the whole nation. No doubt, the issue was complex and multidimensional and no simple and easy arrangement can address. The government took short- time, and long-term measures to root out the military completely from tribal areas and parts of the state (khan, 2012).

It is sticky that due to continuous militancy, Pakistan lost more than 50,000 lives and more than \$100 billion in financial losses but still a large portion of the general public including mainstream political and religious leaders hardly accept the ownership of war against terrorism. These elements still claim that it is an American war imposed on Pakistan.

### **CONCLUSION**

Pakistan's counter-terrorism framework aims to maintain peaceful coexistence and calmness in the country. However, the success of Zarb-e-Azb has been challenging, as it has contributed to countering terrorist activities. Pakistan has attempted to address the issue through negotiation but failed to achieve much success. The government launched various military operations in 2001, but their initial success was limited due to their lack of experience in counterinsurgency and limited approach.

Moreover, to maintain the success of Zarb-e-Azb, a hybrid operation against alleged terrorist groups under the banner of TTP and Al Qaeda, Zarb-e-Azb was launched. This operation successfully dismantled the terrorist network in North Waziristan, but its sustainability depends on future courses of action. Pakistan needs the support of Afghanistan to eliminate the chance of terrorist outfits, as there are still sleeper cells and escaped militants in Afghanistan.

The war on terror has devastated Pakistan's socio-economic, political, and cultural dimensions, causing displacement and displacement of people in tribal areas. The main achievement of Pakistan's approach to eliminating terrorism is sacrificing its people, soldiers, and capital, but it has been criticized by rivals.

The Fata tribal area (FATA) has faced constitutional, administrative, and political problems, but it has also been a flashpoint for international attention due to the American and NATO presence in Afghanistan. The turbulence and volatility of FATA have been felt by the entire population, and the government needs to take a long-term view of the policy in this context.

The FATA needs to stand up with positive vibes, as the Army is taking initiatives to rebuild the agencies, particularly North Waziristan and South Waziristan. Addressing the social, political, and economic grievances of the local populace is crucial to control the constant refueling of insurgency. The economic factor becomes the primary reason behind the framework to overcome for a long period.

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