



The Role of Pakistan in the War Against Terrorism (B)

Global War on Terror and Pakistan's Position

The previous lecture was about the cold war and how it links with the war against terrorism. It covered how Pakistan was embroiled into the war against terrorism. Pakistan's position in the "War on Terror" is quite significant. Pakistan played a key role in facilitating the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan from shortly after 9/11 up to the present.

War Against Terrorism

The US needed Pakistan's support due to Pakistan's geographical location and its links to major regional players like India, Iran, Afghanistan and China. So, the United States of Pakistan needed Pakistan to support against terrorism. Pakistan provided different types of support demanded by the US such as:

- Pakistan approved to provide over flight rights to the United States of America over Pakistani airspace
- Naval and land bases were provided to large its attack against the Taliban, Al-Qaida and Afghanistan
- Pakistan agreed to the US that it will be willingly eliminating all those elements who would be supporting terrorism against the US and its allies.
- Pakistan opposed all those who were against the United States of America in the war of terrorism.

As a result, it corporates Taliban and its regime that is why Pakistan cuts off diplomatic ties with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Hence, every logistic and diplomatic support to Taliban became ended. The slogan by George W. Bush 'either you're with us or you're against us' made this happened. So, Pakistan had to show its support with the United States of America and clearly gave the message that we are not against you. That slogan divided the whole world into two compartments without leaving any grey area in between. The whole world was now looking towards Pakistan and without its help it was unlikely the US would have been able to pursue its interests in the region.

Pakistan's role in the War against Terrorism is pivotal. The US preferred Pakistan's cooperation over India's due to two reasons:

- i) One was Pakistan's geographic proximity to Afghanistan
- ii) The second was that the Indian army was equipped with Russian weapons and training.

Pakistan not only has a long border with Afghanistan, but it has a long coastline which was very significant for US forces and they stationed in the Indian Ocean because it wanted its forces to reach Afghanistan rapidly and easily. Due to diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Taliban, the US had been keen to get its support in the war against al Qaeda and its networks operating in Afghanistan. This relationship of Pakistan and the Taliban regime was very significant in pursuing US military and political interest in the region. The Taliban regime was basically run by the Pashtun, an ethnic group of Afghanistan, who have the same culture and traditions as the Pashtun's of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan in Pakistan.

Pakistan: The Most Useful Ally

Being the most useful ally due to the support provided to the US in terms of war against terrorism. To make the bond stronger, the US demanded that Pakistan cut itself off completely from al Qaeda activity and break their diplomatic ties with the Taliban. It must freeze all of their assets and to stop the fuel supplies to those against the US.

The US demanded Pakistan to provide the intelligence information about both organizations and allow it to use its airspace for offensive military operations in Afghanistan and bases for US forces in Pakistan, logistics, and the like.

Steps Taken by the Government of Pakistan after 9/11

Pakistan is a country whose strategic position in the region is the most delicate due to which the post 9/11 developments profoundly affected its bilateral relations, defense and strategic concerns, national integrity, internal stability and economic situation. Pakistan in this regard supported all UN resolutions concerning prevention of terrorism. It cooperated with the international coalition to curb terrorism. Immigration control measures were initially taken to keep a check on the movement of potential extremists. Many actions were taken against fanatical and extremist organizations and groups. Jihadi leaders were imprisoned, and Jihadi organizations were banned by the government of Pakistan

Following steps were taken for the reformation and regulation of madrassahs:

1. NOC (No Objection Certificate) for the opening of madrassahs. No illegal madrassah shall be operated in the premises of the state.
2. The registration of madrassahs was made mandatory.

3. A review of their syllabi was another condition to be fulfilled by the Jihadi organizations.
4. There'll be a check on the number of foreign students attending them.

Few steps were also taken for the regulation of Mosques:

1. NOC became a requirement for opening a mosque.
2. Political activities in mosques were made unlawful.
3. The use of loudspeakers became restricted to only Azaan (the call to prayer).

Provision of Air Bases

Pakistan allowed the US and its coalition forces to use its air bases/airfields in Pasni, Jacobabad, Shamsi and Dalbadin. It also permitted the US to land planes anywhere in Pakistan in the case of an emergency and access to Kohat and Zhob air bases was also provided.

Support of an Air Corridor:

Pakistan provided an air corridor for the use of the US and its coalition forces in launching air strikes on Afghanistan because it would have been difficult for the US to keep launching ground operations into Afghanistan. In providing such a resource Pakistan's government had to reschedule/redirect many commercial flights; 2/3rd of Pakistan airspace was provided to US forces for OEF operations and about seven thousand air force personnel were allocated to the role.

Support of Naval Facilities

Support in landing ships at Pasni and even curtailed its Navel training operations in order to accommodate the US and Coalition Navies. Around 25000 Pakistan Navy personnel, 50 aircraft and 2,000 Coalition military personnel were imbedded in these locations, using up to 100,000 gallons of fuel a day. The US Amphibious task force (TF 58) was involved for a hundred days of surface operations and landed 275 craft for offloading. US 400 C-17 and C-130 helicopters were used in various sorties, about 8000 Marines, 330 vehicles and 1350 tons of cargo were regularly used throughout the operation. An officer from Florida stated "these efforts may be the largest amphibious operation conducted by the US Marine Corp since the Korean War."

Support for Logistic Supply by Road

Pakistan allowed the US and NATO to use Pakistani supply routes for about 75 per cent of its gas, food and military equipment requirements. This supply route made a significant contribution to the success of operations in Afghanistan, but many were destroyed or damaged by tribal militants.

Sharing Intelligence Information

Pakistan provided the US with vital information on various terrorist and extremist outfits helping avert terrorist attacks and facilitating arrests that broke the back bone of major terrorist organizations. In August 2006 Pakistan shared its intelligence information with the UK and played a pivotal role in attack prevention, allowing them to take pre-emptive action against terrorists planning to use chemical explosives on a civil airplane.