

Q: Wars through proxy are exploiting the internal security situation of Pakistan, thus rendering an unsurmountable loss by maligning its peace, prosperity and development.

Explicating Proxy Wars

Proxy war can be defined as "directing the use of force by a politically motivated, local actor to indirectly influence political affairs in the target state." (defined by Tyron Giloh)

Dr Philip Towle defines proxy war as: The Cold war saw superpowers that financed, armed and aided proxies, without getting directly involved in the fighting, on a large scale than any other in recorded history.

After intervention of nuclear weapons, super powers confrontation could potentially escalate into mutually assured destruction (MAD) scenario. So, all these powers use the soil of third state to disintegrate their enemies. The clear example of direct confrontation of Pakistan and India is depicted as a terrible nightmare for the entire globe. The scenario of Pakistan-India nuclear stand off modelled by researchers in 2019 and published by Dawn on October 3rd, 2019:

"Researchers warn that Pakistan-India nuclear stand off could kill 100 million people."

Reasons for Employing Proxy Tactics

- Direct intervention requires a win to sustain an intervening state's reputation and global legitimacy. For instance - The whole world is now afraid of defeat in direct confrontation due to defeat of US (the world's biggest super power) in Afghanistan.
- Using the third soil as proxy in war against enemy reduces the risk of direct conflict between two enemy states. For instance India is using Afghan soil for terrorism and insurgency in Pakistan.
- Proxy tactics are used as tool in foreign policy. India uses these tactics to hit the reputation of Pakistan globally in order to isolate Pakistan from the rest of the world.
- States use these tactics because this war is less expensive than conventional warfares.

“A lobby in US favors a plan for proxy war so that America can sustain its global influence.”

~ Muhammad Amir Rana - Security Analyst
“Concerns of Proxy War”

Interests of War Waging Countries in Pakistan and Impacts on Pakistan

a. Interests of India - An Archival state

In South Asia, two countries with sharing borders, getting independence in 1947 from queen's crown have been horns to horns. They have been involved in skirmishes of borders through militaries and inside their borders through malicious proxy tactics.

i. - To weak CPEC through Baloch insurgency:
CPEC is a flagship project for the development of Pakistan. Balochistan is a gold mine as it is extremely rich in resources. So, India wants to harm this backbone of CPEC. Through proxy war India also wants to weak Pak-China relations.

ii. - To weak Pak-China relations:

Pak-China relations are the counter forces against India-US hegemony in the world. India is making strong ties with US. That's why it is also supporting Israel in recent Hamas-Israel war. But Pakistan and China are blaming US for non-humanitarian arbitration between Israel and Palestine. The largest food corridor of India is also funded by Israel. But Pakistan

and China have strong anti-US and anti-Israel stance for Palestinean. So, India wants to harm Pak-China relations through Baloch insurgencies that would directly impact CPEC. Attack on Chinese teachers in Karachi University by BLA terrorists is clear example.

iii - To undermine Kashmir issue:
Indian PM Narendra Modi crossed 'red line' when he mentioned Balochistan in his independence day speech at the time of escalation of Kashmiri strong protests against the state. Pakistan has diplomat-ic stance on this issue that is even supported by UN (Council) resolution. So, Pak India is trying to delegitimize Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

Impacts of Indian Proxy Tactics on Pakistan

Economic losses:

According to report published by Foreign Services of Pakistan: More than \$10 billion losses have been incurred in Pakistan as a result of proxy war initiated by India.

Ideological divide ignited by separatist movements
BLA from 2010 to 2015 feeding organized political violence events that rose to peak in 2015 with 96 events and 383 total reported fatalities for the year.

(Relief Web, violent events in Pakistan, 2015)

Spread of disinformation leading Mistrust in people
According to European Union Disinformation Task force report released in early October 2019: Around 265 coordinated fake local media outlets are serving Indian interests in nearly 65 countries.

Institutional Acquisition Syndrome

Funding the insurgent groups lead to mistrust in local masses against institutions like judiciary, military, NAB, election commission etc. Moreover, the failure of cyber security is also leading to institutional acquisition syndrome. On August 13, 2021 Indian hackers attacked FBR for more than 72 hours.

b. Interests of KSA-Iran in Pakistan and Impacts for Pakistan

Common Interest of KSA-Iran in Pakistan
Pakistan is only Muslim country that has become a nuclear power. So, both countries want to have inclination of Pakistan's nuclear umbrella towards itself.

Interests of KSA in Pakistan

KSA has weak military forces against Iran. So, it wants to use Pakistani military forces against Iran. Pakistan shares border with Iran and KSA

had bitter relations with Iran. So KSA had used Pakistani soil to counter Iran. That's why KSA had supported Sunni Madrassahs ^{of Pakistan} against Shia ideology of Iran.

Interests of Iran in Pakistan: Iran has always been Shia dominated country. So in order to weak KSA's Sunni ideology in Muslim world, Iran had supported Shia community of Pakistan. So that it could show KSA that the nuclear power of Muslim world is supporting Shia ideology.

Impacts on Pakistan

(i) Undermining of State Religion: Decades of old turf between two major sects i.e. Shia and Sunni creating an atmosphere of hatred and polarity among nation. Several attacks have been made on Hazara community of Pakistan.

(ii) Prevalent culture of targeting minorities
Now a days, a culture of misusing Blasphemy laws is prevalent. In Pakistan, 266 cases have been reported in 2020-2021. All these cases are the result of extremism.

(iii) Misuse of different ideological sects by political and foreign powers: Use of blasphemy laws by politicians ^{against} each other show the insensitivity of those who are authorized to legislate for common people. Sponsorship of one sect by foreign countries is still

on rise. For instance ~~sect~~ sect funded by US against Deobandi to counter terrorist in Afghanistan.

iv) Extremism prevailing in local masses: Due to sectarianism extremism is prevailing in local masses even against state politicians. Salman Taseer murder case is a clear example of this extremism.

C-Interests of US in Pakistan

Disintegration of Soviet Union: US has used Pakistan because of its "geo-strategic" importance. Pakistan was first used as a proxy by US in cold war.

Example: U2 incident.

Impacts of US led Afghan War

- Deteriorated relations with Russia
- Russia placed a puppet government in Afghanistan
- Strong Russia-China relations to counter Pak-US alignment in cold war
- Formation of TTP
- The roots of terrorism in Pakistan can be traced back to 1979 when Soviet Union had occupied Afghanistan

Global War on Terror kickstarted by US

As 9/11 incident took place, UNSCR was passed. US turned its war on terror into Global War on Terror. At that time, there was no other situation

for Pakistan other than to support US led war on terror. General Pervez Musharraf recalls, in his memoir "In the Line of Fire", being told by Americans that "if we chose the terrorists, then we should be prepared to be bombed back to the stone age". This statement also proves theory of Imperialism of John Galton that no state goes into Proxy war by its own will. US wants to use Pakistani soil to break the backbone of terrorism in Afghanistan.

Impacts of US led War on Terror:

- Tale of Anti Americanism: - Anatol Lieven in his book states that Pakistanis including ruling elite don't believe that 9/11 was a brainchild of Osama Bin Ladin. (Anatol Lieven, Pakistan a Hard Country, 2011) So in this way majority of the state was going against America and also against the institutions.
- Economic losses: - DG ISPR General Babar Iftikhar reported that Pakistan lost \$126 billion in this war on terror. According to reports of US, Pakistan has lost nearly \$110 billion in this war.
- Loss of lives of local masses: - As Pakistan was the frontline state against terrorism, so Pakistan faced many losses including lives of civilians.

According to a report of Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs: 23,372 Pakistani civilians were killed in war against terror between 2003 and 2009.

• Sovereignty breach : As US was using Pakistani military bases to attack on Afghanistan so there was a lot of collateral damage in Pakistan. But US also compromised the sovereignty of Pakistani land. Salala incident 2011 is a clear example of this breach.

• Deteriorated Pak Afghan relations :

Pakistan was providing logistic help to US NATO forces so Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan were badly influenced. Afghanistan started Guerilla war in 2003 that badly influenced Pakistan.

d. Interests of Afghanistan in Pakistan

Greater Pakhtunistan:

Pakistan shares its ^{Western} border with Afghanistan and Afghanistan wants to make greater Pakhtunistan by adjoining ^{erstwhile} FATA and Northern tribal areas of Pakistan. That is the reason, due to which Afghanistan had always been hitting these areas in terror attacks.

Sistan :

Afghanistan had always been in conflicts with Pakistan on territorial grounds. Afghanistan wants to make Sistan by combining South-Western Afghanistan with South-eastern Iran and North-Western Balochistan. That's why it is

supporting Baloch separatist movements.

Impacts on Pakistan

Pak-Afghan deteriorated relations are affecting Pakistan in following ways:

Security Angle:

Afghanistan provides safe havens to TTP thus undermining security of Pakistan.

Diplomatic Angle:

Afghanistan has not yet accepted Deorandline as international border.

Humanitarian challenge

i) Refugee issue

According to recent statistics of Pakistan, 1.7 million refugees are living illegally in Pakistan.

ii) Drug trafficking

Due to Afghan refugees, drugs smuggling is prevailing in Pakistan.

iii) Anti-Pushtoon sentiments

Due to support of Pakistan to US against Taliban anti-Pushtoon sentiments are prevailing as Taliban is Pushtoon dominant group.

iv) Weapon smuggling

Afghan refugees are promoting Kalashnikov culture in Pakistan. Moreover, they are playing key role in weapon smuggling across Pakistan.

Counter Measures Against Proxy War

1) Strengthening deprived Provinces of Pakistan

India and other foreign countries are using deprived provinces as their weapons. Baluchistan is one of the most deprived ^{Province} sector of Pakistan.

Human development index report ranked Pakistan 161 out of 192 countries. So, it is necessary to strengthen deprived provinces in order to counter insurgencies.

2) Promoting education in local masses

Local state actors become target of enemy forces due to lack of education. According to 2022 report of World Economic Forum, Global literacy rate is 87%. While Pakistan has 62.3% which should be uplifted to counter proxy tactics. (Pakistan Today, Literacy rate, Dec 2022)

3) National Action Plan

Pakistan is already trying to counter sectarian violence and insurgencies under National Action Plan.

4) Strengthening Anti Terrorism Laws

In Pakistan, ATA 1997 provided basic legal framework against terrorism which was amended 17 times through Parliamentary framework such as investigation for Fair Trial Act 2013 and Protection of Pakistan Act 2014. There is a need to strengthen Anti-Terrorism laws.

5) Improving the judicial structure

According to international crime justice report: Pakistan is ranked 130 out of 139 countries regarding strength of judicial courts. In 2008, suicide bombing attack on Meriut leading to death of 54 people including 15 foreigners. On May 5, 2010 terrorists were set free due to "lack of admissible evidence". So, there is a dire need to improve judicial structure.

6) Establishing Anti terrorism forces:

After the attack of 2008 on Meriut, US state Department termed Pakistan's ATC as almost incapable of prosecuting terrorists. Alongwith strengthening ATC, Pakistan must establish

- QRFs
- Counter Terrorism department
- Specialized wing in FIA
- Capacity building of FC, Rangers and Police

7) Securing Western Border

Pakistan has nearly fenced 94% of 2600 km of Pak-Afghan border. Pakistan has also employed border monitoring technology on western border which is a

Step in right direction.

7) Bridging civil-military relations

Pakistan's military has played a key role in protecting the land from antagonistic forces. But India is exploiting media to create hate in the minds of people. So soft media should be used to bridge the gap between civilians and military.

Concluding thoughts ~~Editorial~~

Proxy wars ignited by India, Middle East, US and Afghanistan have given irreversible damage to Pakistan. But now Pakistan is trying to counter the incoming proxy attacks from invaders and has overcome insurgencies to a great extent. But still there is a dire need to improve counter measures of Pakistan against proxy war because it is a war that is formless and soundless.

“Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby, you can be the director of the opponent's fate.”

(Sun Tzu)