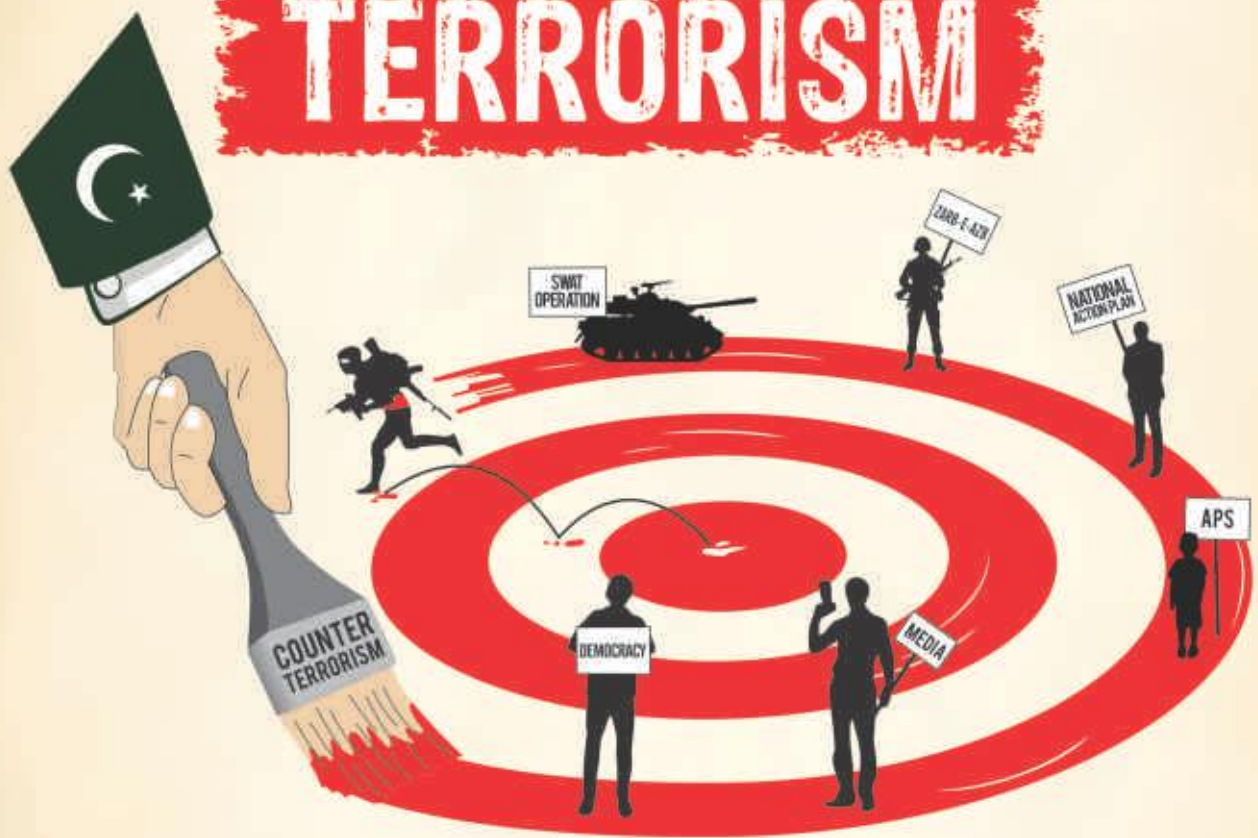


MATRIX MAG

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AUGUST 2019

A DECADE OF COUNTER **TERRORISM**



Pakistani Military Operations in
Former-FATA, Since 2001

India Can Occupy Kashmiri Land,
Not Hearts and Minds.

My recollections of 1965 war

Pakistan in a Changing World



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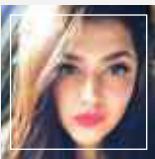
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Editor's Note

Decade of Counter -Terrorism



British Airways returned to Pakistan in early June after nearly a decade of absence. One after the other, the royalty from next door i.e. Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia visited Pakistan in the last few months. The US president Donald Trump received Prime Minister Imran Khan for an unusual tete-e-tete. Before having him over, the Trump administration also designated the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army as a global terrorist organization.

Britain's Prince William and spouse Kate Middleton - the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge - are set to descend on Islamabad this autumn, the first official visit by a member of the royal family to Pakistan since 2006.

Turkish President Recep Tayyab Erdogan called up Imran Khan in July to propose a Malaysia-Turkey- Pakistan alliance to jointly deal with regional political issues, particularly those facing the Muslim countries.

International cricket, at least the Pakistan Super League (PSL) comprising several foreign players, may soon fire up stadiums in Karachi and Lahore.

All this is happening on the back of a monumental counter-terror campaign that had kicked off in August 2008 in Bajaur (Operation Sherdil), shifted into full gear with the Operation Rahe Raast in Swat (May 2009) and climaxed with the Operation Zarb-e-Azb (North Waziristan June 2014).

Former army chief, General Raheel Sharif vigorously pursued objectives laid out in the National Action Plan (NAP), drafted in the aftermath of the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2014. By actively overseeing the NAP implementation through the apex committees (that included the provincial governors, chief ministers, provincial law enforcement and several arms of the military security establishment), General Sharif provided an unusual impetus to the counter-terror campaign.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Raheel's successor, took this campaign to new levels and provided a greater clarity on what the state of Pakistan should look like, evident in a speech to his officers at the AK Centre near Attock in April 2019, "we are strictly following a policy of non- interference into the neighbouring states, and we will not allow any Jaish or Lashkar to derail that policy."

Many senior officers in the garrison called it "a real change after 15 years." This resonated with Prime minister Imran Khan's views as well, who had been emphatic in expressing the need for mending relations with all neighbours.

This conceptual turnaround is evident also from unusual restrictions and legal actions that Jaish and Lashkar zealots and their top leaders, including Hafiz Saeed, currently face. Not only has the Paris-based FATF (Financial Action Task Force) enforced this change in the civil-military strategic pulse but the proximity to Beijing, too, has contributed to this change. And hence, paving the way for Pakistan to transform from a security to normal state.

Beyond doubt, close continuing consultations with the Chinese leadership on issues such as conflict management, counter-terrorism, accountability and economic development seem to have heavily influenced the key Pakistani civil-military stakeholders - all for the long-term good of their people.

Monumental human and material losses in the decade of counter- terrorism appear to have conclusively corrected Pakistan's strategic outlook. But whether - in view of continued turbulence on its eastern and western borders, particularly the latest explosive situation arising from the Indian revocation of Kashmir's status - the country can stay the current course - is hard to foretell in the immediate run.



Death of INF Treaty & Kashmir



Yasmeen Aftab Ali

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United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had warned that, "the world will lose an invaluable brake on nuclear war" with the death of the INF Treaty. He was right! The threat from ballistic missiles has increased. The death of INF brings to question the fate of other arms control treaties like START. Signed by Obama and Medvedev in 2010 it places a limit on Russian and U.S nuclear forces. The treaty stands to bite the dust in 2021 unless mutually renewed by both nations.

Though there is no explicit statement by Trump, the experts in Washington claim that U.S wants to include China in the treaty without which U.S may probably not support START beyond 2021.

However, compared to the INF, START has a limited scope over arms control. With the death of INF Treaty, nuclear weapons can be used by nations for purposes other than strategic deterrence.

A matter of concern in this step taken by the US is that with the dissolution of the INF, there is no new structure created to take its place to combat arms proliferation. And with no structure in place and with many nations possessing dangerous weapons, it will be a free fall towards a chaotic world order.

That chaotic disorder has emerged sooner than later in the face of Kashmir. India removed Article 370 awarding special status to the majority-Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir, which gave it the right to have separate laws. It forbid outsiders from buying property in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Article 35A a clause to be read with Article 370 is also likely to bite the dust. 'According to the provisions in the Article 35A, the citizens are defined "permanent" as someone who was a state subject on May 14, 1954, or who has been a resident of the state for 10 years and has lawfully acquired immovable property. The article also outlaws from owning property or having any gainful employment in the region. This greatly hinders private sector investments and 'development' in the region.' (Eurasian Times)

This abrogation will take away the exclusive rights of the local citizens and allow influx of Indians, who can then legally and/or by coercion acquire properties, thereby create an unbalance of citizenship, subsequently, making the original inhabitants a minority in their own home state."

An eminent jurist offered the following opinion on this autocratic step taken by BJP, "It is an abrogation, not an amendment to the Constitution (as that requires 2/3rd majority present and voting and is also the subject of cases before the Indian Supreme Court), but just a Presidential Order, that only required recommendation by Jammu & Kashmir Constituent Assembly. But J&K does not have a Constituent Assembly. Since June 2018 (some argue since 1957), the president proclaimed that J&K governor "shall exercise the powers of the elected government and will express the will of the state legislature in making recommendations to the president in relation to Article 370". However what happened to the Constituent Assembly? Why was it not there when it was most needed? Here's why. Sending of 10k force & getting tourists out of J&K may be seen as the first signs of what was to come. But the work actually started much earlier. BJP came to power in J&K for the first time ever in Jan'15 (in coalition with Mahbooba Mufti's PDP). Suddenly, there was a massive increase in violence. In the 12 years before BJP, there had only been 2 major terrorist attacks in IOK with 15 dead. In the 3.5 years of BJP's coalition government, there were 8 major incidents, killing 70 (including the likes of Urri, Anantnag & Pathankot). BJP used this curious increase in attacks since it itself came into power to try & crush Kashmiri independence movement. Intentional provocative acts were committed. Burhan Wani, Sabzar Ahmad Bhat, Afaqullah Bhat & others were killed, and when an 8-yr-old girl was raped & murdered, BJP publicly supported the accused. CM Mahbooba Mufti was forced into an awkward position and she eventually resigned in June 2018. And that was what was needed by BJP."

What followed was firstly a Governor Rule and in December 2018, the President's Rule. When Mufti realized the plan & tried to join hands with the opposition leader Umar Abdullah, the BJP Governor didn't allow the Assembly to meet to form a new Constituent govt. The Election Commission too didn't allow state elections to be held along with the Lok Sabha election, citing 'security' concerns (and yet Lok Sabha elections were safely held!). Instead, the President Rule was extended in Feb'19 and recently again in Jun'19. The lack of Constituent Assembly allowed the Presidential Order. This is also likely to be the main ground for a legal challenge to the Proclamation.

In the meanwhile Supreme Court of India when moved, has

determined to hear the case 'upon its turn' and not to give the case preference in hearing. On the other hand while chairing a meeting of the National Security Committee, PM Khan has decided upon 'downgrading of diplomatic relations & Suspension of bilateral trade with India, review of bilateral arrangements, United Nations, including the Security Council to be approached.'

The move by India bifurcating the state into a severely diminished state of Jammu and Kashmir, reducing the rights of citizens as well as creating a separate division for Ladakh has angered China as well. Beijing claims that Ladakh area also includes the disputed Aksai Chin region, which is administered by China, along the China-India border region.

Modi has upped the ante by abrogating Article 370, thereby, spiking tensions to new heights between India and Pakistan – the two nuclear armed neighbors. Admittedly, both combined together own a comparatively small pile of nuclear arsenals, but they are more powerful than those used against Japan in 1945. It is also unlikely that either will ask for U.S intervention to resolve the issue. India, since it denied asking for Trump's intervention as earlier stated by the U.S President, and Pakistan because news has made rounds of U.S was in the know of Modi's intent. The one power that can bring sense in this madness, is the third regional power: China.

In March 2019, former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov delivering a talk at the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference in Washington DC had observed, "We are moving in a minefield, and we don't know from where the explosion will come."

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The President proclaimed that J&K Governor "shall exercise the powers of the elected government and will express the will of the state legislature in making recommendations to the President in relation to Article 370".

India Can Occupy Kashmiri Land, Not Hearts and Minds.



Faizah Gilani, London

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In a stunning move, India's ruling BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) scrapped the Article 370, and took away Kashmir's special status on August 5. The move threatens to create serious trouble within the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK). India cannot change Kashmir's status alone. This one-sided decision took place without the people of Kashmir and seems to have caused widespread global concern as well.

Even the US President Donald Trump repeated his offer (August 21) to mediate the "explosive" situation in Kashmir, saying it is a "very complicated place". Speaking a day after phone calls with both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, Mr Trump said he was happy to try and help calm the situation in Kashmir. He said religion was one of the main reasons for uneasy ties between India and Pakistan. "Kashmir is a very complicated place. You have Hindus and you have the Muslims and I wouldn't say they get along so great," Mr Trump told reporters in the White House. "I will do the best I can to mediate," he said. "...you have two counties that haven't gotten along well for a long time and frankly, it's a very explosive situation," he added.

In a surprise tweet, Trump asked both India and Pakistan to amicably resolve the Kashmir conflict after his telephonic conversations with PMs of both the countries. With his tweet, the US president did not only 'internationalise' the Kashmir dispute, much to India's anger, but has countered India's position of 'bilateralism' on the Kashmir issue.

Leading US and UK publications like The Washington Post and the Guardian/Observer have also portrayed the move as an arbitrary act against the will of Kashmiri people.

The situation in Kashmir is dire. People have been cut off from the outside world, with telephone and internet lines suspended. There is a food shortage and people



are on the verge of starving. Mothers worry for their infants who need milk. Those in need of medical treatment are left housebound without access to medical assistance. This Eid Ul Adha, no sacrifices were made and there was no call to prayer from the Mosques. This is another infringement of the Human Right to practice religious beliefs. Kashmir has become a cage, or an open prison, for its people. Due to the communications blockade, many remain ignorant of the revocation of Article 370, but the Indian government insists that the people of Kashmir are "happy about the developments" that many are not even aware of.

Mass demonstrations have taken place all over the world, with a huge protest carried out on India's Independence Day (15th August) outside the Indian embassy in Central London, attracting global media attention. The protest in London is a real nightmare for the Modi government. India has always downplayed the Kashmir issue, trying its level best to avoid media attention. But the irony is that through his own actions, Modi has unwittingly highlighted the Kashmir cause worldwide.

Under the slogan of "sabka vikas" (opportunities for all), India is trying to convince the rest of the world that revoking Article 370 will bring peace and prosperity in Kashmir, create opportunities and mark a new beginning for the people. But its consequences are far from positive. Stripping Kashmir of its special status means stripping the Kashmiri people of their "Kashmiriyat," their identity. It means that eventually, the Muslim population will become a minority and if there is ever a plebiscite in the future, the Indian government would get its desired outcome from it.

It is also important to note that since the sneaky revocation of the Article 370 some BJP ministers are on record saying that Indian men are now free to marry fair-skinned Kashmiri women and that they can bring women over. Such comments not only reek of sexism and misogyny, but it also exposes the mindset behind revoking Article 370.

The deafening silence from the Indian media, activists and civil society at large over these outrageous comments is shocking. BJP ministers have a history of spouting provocative statements, and to say that this was in bad taste would be an understatement.

If the Indian government chooses to carry out its aggressive designs within Kashmir, the consequences will be catastrophic. If Prime Minister Modi believes that he can change the demographics with ease, then he is living in a fool's paradise. His recent actions will only anger the youth and re-energise the indigenous movement within Kashmir.

The Kashmiri youth not take this lightly, and they will find ways to challenge the Indian army. This explains why it has kept the curfew in place for so long.

The International media focus on Kashmir also explains the explosive nature of the situation there. In its coverage of Kashmir, the BBC, for instance, claimed to have obtained footage of some protests in Kashmir, while the Indian

government and its media announced that everything was calm and peaceful. The government refuted the BBC's claims, calling them untrue.

Foreign media outlets in the past have often shown disinterest in Kashmir. But since Article 370 was revoked, the International media such as BBC, Al Jazeera and TRT have given an extensive and balanced coverage of the Kashmir crisis, with the focus being on what matters the most – the people.

The United Nations Security Council's informal meeting on the issue on August 16 was not only a significant diplomatic achievement on Pakistan's part but also a moral victory for Kashmir. The Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, explained China's view, stating that "the status of Kashmir is undecided, and an international dispute, which should be resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions."

Modi's infatuation with turning secular India into Hindutva India will come back to haunt him as one of his biggest mistakes. Kashmir has become a talking point, and the Kashmiri diaspora is once again vocal over Kashmir's right to self-determination and refuses to settle for anything else. This now goes beyond Article 370, it is about Kashmiris deciding their own fate, with their future placed in their own hands. The peaceful way and only way for the Kashmir conflict to be resolved is through the UN resolutions, and ultimately for a plebiscite to be held, which was once promised to the people. The use of force and might can occupy the land, but it can never win hearts and minds.

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Washington's Kashmir Test



Jehangir Khattak
New York

The writer is a New York-based senior journalist and commentator. He tweets at @JehangirKhattak

“

Looking ahead there is no doubt this crisis will draw in regional powers into an international geopolitical crisis. India has taken a grave risk. While Pakistan's military may be smaller than that of India's, its capabilities are far greater

The latest spate of Pakistan-India tensions over Kashmir has triggered fresh anxieties in Washington, particularly the White House. The American policy establishment was also reportedly unhappy with the timing of the August 5 revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Indian move has clearly put to test President Donald Trump's Kashmir mediation offer, his ability to convince its closest ally to reverse the explosive and controversial decision as well America's claim to upholding human rights. This represents a dilemma for President Trump; he cannot afford – as of now – to annoy either of the South Asian giants, whose combined nuclear arsenal is more than that of China's 290 and equal to France's 300 warheads.

America's Options

The US security and political establishment at large considers Kashmir a nuclear flashpoint, dreads an armed conflict between India and Pakistan but possesses fewer instruments to influence India's present leadership.

"With key U.S. diplomatic posts vacant, some observers worry that U.S. capacity is thin, and the U.S. President's July offer to "mediate" on Kashmir may have contributed to the timing of New Delhi's moves," says a 15-page report on Kashmir by the US Congressional Research Service. The CRS report, released on August 16, is the first after a gap of 17 years.

The CRS report, though not considered as an official position of the US Congress, provides a good background on the Kashmir issue, reviews several key developments in 2019, and closes with a summary of U.S. policy options and possible questions for Congress.

At present, the United States has no Assistant Secretary of State to lead the Bureau of South and Central Asia, and only an Acting Ambassador at the United Nations. Some experts, therefore, worry as to whether the Trump Administration is prepared at all in case of an India-Pakistan armed conflict.

Strategically, the US has little room for extending unconditional support to India in the ongoing crisis. Doing so could – theoretically – compromise its exit from Afghanistan. It needs Islamabad's partnership not just over Afghanistan but also in de-escalating the explosive security environment in the region.

Islamabad is wisely displaying care in not linking its role in the Afghan peace process with Kashmir. But many in Washington fear that the Afghan peace process may not escape the dent should the crisis spiral out of control.



It is probably this fear that prompted Trump to reach out to both Prime Minister Imran Khan and Modi, pleading for a restraint. Trump seems to be the one-man Washington squad trying to douse the tensions, unlike the unusually quiet State Department – an unmistakable source of worry for many sympathizers of Kashmiris, who think quiet backdoor diplomacy in this situation may have limited impact in convincing India to reverse its illegal actions because the US is not demanding so. Trump, despite being very vocal on Kashmir since July 22 meeting with PM Khan, has treaded a careful line and measured tone. He or his diplomats might be pressing India privately to reverse its farcical actions, there is no public demand as was witnessed during Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014. Washington seems to be focused more on managing the crisis, apparently less interested in the restoration of pre-August 5 status of Kashmir – playing sort of a balancing act in South Asia.

"We recognize that it's an internal matter, but it obviously has implications outside of India's borders. And so we have long called for direct conversations between India and Pakistan to resolve what have been the decades of tensions generated by that issue," a State Department official was quoted by Indian media on August 20th.

Hopes for Kashmiris

Modi may have won hearts in but his Kashmir decision has badly damaged India's image in the US.

There is a growing realization inside the Beltway that India's actions in Kashmir are driven by religion. "...Complicated situation. A lot has to do with religion. Religion is a complicated subject," President Trump said during a press talk on August 20, mirroring a headline in The Washington Post which aptly described the Indian intent in a short title: "The Kashmir crisis isn't about territory. It's about a Hindu victory over Islam."

This amounting to a scathing denunciation of the Indian narrative on Kashmir. The traditionally pro India American media has been covering the crisis in an unprecedented manner too Major newspapers like The New York Times, The Washington Post, Wall Street journal, CNN etc. have sympathetically reported on the unfolding humanitarian disaster in Kashmir since August 5, and how India's iron curtain is hiding its crimes against unarmed civilians in the valley.

"Modi's antics of Aug. 5 made the most dangerous place in the world— Kashmir — even more dangerous. In doing so, he has made the Kashmir question more "international" than it has been in at least half a century," The New York Times'



Even some Israeli newspapers are running articles condemning the Indian actions.

"With the recent dismantling of Article 370, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions are more consistent with imperial dictatorship than with democracy. This is a shameful tragedy for the world's most diverse and biggest democracy," wrote Qanta Ahmed in an opinion article titled "Indian-Occupied Kashmir: A New American Dilemma" in The Jerusalem Post on August 24.

"Looking ahead there is no doubt this crisis will draw in regional powers into an international geopolitical crisis. India has taken a grave risk. While Pakistan's military may be smaller than that of India's, its capabilities are far greater," said the author resonating in cautionary tone.



Pakistan's Options:

Pakistan has a tight rope walk ahead in dealing with the crisis. War remains its last option, any leniency towards Kashmiri militant groups to operate in occupied Kashmir from its soil will be a recipe for placement on the FATF's black list in October. International support, especially from Muslim countries, remains lukewarm, evident from the highest decorations that Modi has received in UAE and Bahrain. The struggling economy represents yet another limitation.

"Pakistan has limited options in the current situation," says Arif Ansar, who heads PoliTact, a Washington DC-based think tank that develops geopolitical risk assessments, situational awareness, and strategic forecasts. He believes the world is entering a new phase in the international politics. "South Asia's non-state actor-centric conflict is now moving towards an interstate conflict," Ansar told MatrixMag.

Another analyst, Arif Rafiq, who heads Vizier consulting, a New York-based political risk advisory company, thinks the best course for Pakistan is consistent international diplomatic offensive, strong political support for (rights of) the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and a media campaign to build international pressure on India.

Rafiq, Ansar and many South Asia experts are unanimous in noting that the threat of a limited war with India remains very real. "Pakistan has the ability to strike back. Unfortunately, it is the Kashmiris who will suffer the most," Arif Rafiq notes.

International Media Finally Exposes Indian Rights Violations in Kashmir

Matrix Report

When the Indian government revoked Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019, many 'experts' in South Asia, and around the world, believed that Indian PM Modi had 'surprised' many, especially Pakistan, by annexing the disputed territory with India. Even BJP supporters celebrated this move as an 'imaginary victory' against Pakistan, disregarding the horrors faced by Kashmiri Muslims in the occupied territory.

However, rather than 'surprising' Pakistan, the Indian PM seems to have scored an 'own goal' with this decision, leading to almost all western and international media outlets unanimously criticizing and exposing rights violations committed by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir. It is the first time, probably in decades, that Kashmir has become a topic of global media debate, with prominent Western leaders calling upon both India and Pakistan to engage in a dialogue to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Even the US President Trump has spoken on multiple occasions, on Kashmir, and expressed his desire to 'mediate' between both the countries on the issue.

Moreover, since August 5, various commentaries, editorials and news reports in the international media have exposed the explosive situation in Kashmir and criticized how the Indian forces are dealing with the local Kashmiris.

A firsthand account, by Sasha Bhat, published by the Al Jazeera News, in this regard, notes:

We saw a group of civilians shouting slogans, beating their chests and screaming at the military on the main road. There were burning tyres which were being picked up by the army and thrown into Dal Lake. Metal bins blocked the road. I was seeing my cousin after two years and, instead of catching up on life, we were driving across Srinagar in silence. The only conversation was at checkpoints when the military asked for IDs. We spent the days at home, entertained by the stray cats and our own animals. In the distance, we could hear shouting, loud bangs and blasts. Loud sounds would make us all go silent. Helicopters circled low above us regularly.

Dr Zahid Ahmed, research fellow and South Asian affairs expert on peace and security at the Alfred Deakin Institute Melbourne, while talking to Australia's SBS news, says:

The removal of articles 370 and 35A will not help the Kashmiris in any way. When you think of the Kashmiris living in J&K, I don't think this decision is going to have any positive impact on the situation there and we can visibly see some signs of that already happening. Removal of Kashmir's special status was always a promise of BJP to its voters. One aspect which is quite prevalent in India is the rise of Hindu nationalism which was clear in the previous Indian elections and in recent 2019 elections which were won by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Sadly, this has resulted in continued attacks on religious minorities including Muslims and Hindus.

One of the initial reports from BBC News, coming out of Kashmir, post-lockdown noted:

The paramilitary police try to hustle us (media and protestors) away but a man wants to be heard. "You lock us up during the day.

You lock us up at night," he shouts angrily, wagging his finger. The policeman says there's a curfew in place and that they must go inside immediately. But the diminutive old man stands his ground and challenges him again. At that point, I (the BBC reporter) am ordered to leave. But before I can, a young man, carrying his toddler son in his arms, tells me he is ready to pick up a gun to fight India. "This is my only son. He's too small now, but I will prepare him to pick up a gun too," he says. He's so angry that he doesn't even care that he's saying all this within earshot of the policeman standing near us.

Another commentary recently published by Foreign Policy in Focus highlights similar woes, especially a young woman in labour, in Kashmir:

The long and dismal record of Indian human rights abuses in Kashmir had, until now, been routinely ignored by the outside world. But now, the narrative has changed. Media outlets across North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America either report from the ground or pick up news as it appears in independent Indian outlets. They show images of desolate streets ringed with gleaming new concertina barbed wire and bristling with checkpoints, children injured and blinded by Indian troops firing pellet guns and even using catapults, and doctors and patients trying to reach hospitals turned away by soldiers at checkpoints. An independent Indian news outlet interviewed a young woman who was forced by Indian soldiers, in behavior worthy of Tolkien's orcs, to walk 6 kilometers while in labor, to reach a hospital where she could deliver her baby. There seems to be no limit to the cruelty with which Indian troops treat Kashmiri civilians.

Another story by CNN news reported on the local fears and anger post-lockdown:

Activists who have recently visited the region say its residents are now angry both at what has happened with the scrapping of Article 370, and the way it was done. "The manner in which it was done means that the Indian government is not willing to make any kind of concession. It will just have its way no matter what and they are prepared to enforce it. That is a big defeat," said Jean Dreze, an economist who visited the region with a group of activists. Fears of what may be happening in the valley, behind the latest blackout, have steadily increased with apprehension over the future.

Another report by Turkish outlet TRT noted:

In an act of defiance against New Delhi's controversial decision to strip the Muslim-majority region of its nominal autonomy, Kashmir's "Gaza" neighbourhood (Soura) on the outskirts of Kashmir's main city of Srinagar has sealed itself off from security forces. Since India scrapped Article 370, Soura's residents have erected ramshackle barricades of tin sheets, wooden logs, oil tanks and concrete pillars, and dug trenches to keep soldiers at bay amid daily protests against India.

These limited excerpts suggest that this might finally be the begging of global media highlighting Indian atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir. With such a unanimous criticism of the Indian government and its actions in the disputed territory, many have started asking whether revoking Kashmir's special status was a wise decision in the first place?

Afghanistan: Harvesting Time for Peace



Mian Sanallah

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Highlighting shared responsibility towards peace and stability in Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Qureshi said that he had invited his counterparts from Afghanistan and China to hold a Tri-party ministerial meeting on Afghanistan in September.

When Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fuelled the debate as to who will sign the peace agreement with Taliban on behalf of the Afghan government, members of the Afghan delegation, attending the 17th round of Track II Dialogue under the Beyond Boundaries project of CRSS (22-23 August), have extended full support to the signing of the Doha agreement. According to them, 90 percent of the issues on the table have already been finalized. They affirmed that a majority of Afghan citizens would not mind postponing the impending presidential elections if the election process delays or obstructs early finalization of the agreement.

However, they apprehended that mere finalization of the Doha deal might not be good enough to ensure lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. A lot would depend on Taliban, their attitude towards power-sharing, women and institution-building issues, etc. They appreciated, nonetheless, the positive developments in the context of bilateral relations with Pakistan. The trend augured well for implementation of Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Pakistan helped remove some critical misgivings in Afghanistan about Pakistan's intentions.

The 13-member Afghan delegation appreciated the tangible assistance Pakistan had extended to facilitate the Doha US-Taliban peace negotiation. They noted that Pakistan was a major player but the role of other countries like Russia, China, Iran and India could not be minimized if the aim were to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan. They welcomed the reassuring message of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi that Pakistan would continue supporting "the Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process". It was up to Afghans to decide what kind of government they wanted to establish in their country. Pakistan does not have any favourite and would be at ease to talk to the government elected by Afghan people. Pakistan would work with the government for improved bilateral relations including trade and visa facilitation.

Highlighting shared responsibility towards peace and stability in Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Qureshi said that he had invited his counterparts from Afghanistan and China to hold a Tri-party ministerial meeting on Afghanistan in September. He said that the two countries had to work jointly for a win-win situation. In view of provocative actions of the Modi government in Indian occupied Kashmir, Pakistan has stopped trade with India but did not stop the Afghan transit trade to India. This was a mark of Pakistan's commitment to Afghanistan. He emphasized the need to remove the existing mistrust between the two countries. His recipe to transform mistrust into trust was to build people-centric bilateral relations between two immediate neighbours. This is also important because Pakistan is a natural trading partner of Afghanistan and vice versa.

Robust indications from Washington and Doha tend to support the Afghan delegation's view that the evasive Afghan-US Peace Deal may finally be signed. Even Foreign Minister Qureshi sounded very optimistic about the success of the Doha peace negotiation. He felt that the negotiations had entered "the last of the last phase of finalization". With peace in Afghanistan, all the stalled opportunities would become achievable. Development of economic zones along the CPEC and participation in the ongoing projects in Gwadar city, where Pakistan wants to develop modern facilities, could serve as an additional avenue for productive cooperation for Afghanistan.

The consensus at all consultations that included interaction with universities and media was that the two countries needed to tread the path of cooperation and avoid falling prey to old accusative politics. People in both countries have suffered too much. They cannot afford that the governments in Islamabad and Kabul let the spoilers and their proxies rob them of the peace dividends. It is a difficult challenge, but small steps backed by solid resolve in the right direction often take the wanderer to his destination. Regional prosperity and peace is a lofty goal for both countries and this objective is difficult but higher than the two-point US agenda "to see if we can reduce our costs" and to "ensure that we maintain a posture that can reduce the risk" as spelt out by US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in a TV interview on the onset of the Doha round.

Reality Check



Tariq Zameer

Ambassador (R) Tariq Zameer has over three decades of experience in bilateral & multilateral diplomacy in various diplomatic missions and International Organizations including Washington DC, SAARC Secretariat Kathmandu and, Italy. He served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Sweden & Finland.



We are not cognizant of our assets, both material and human. On the one hand, we failed to control the population explosion, on the other we don't have plans to make productive use of a hardworking and intelligent youth. Skill training would make them attractive to countries in Europe and Japan.

We are passing through unprecedented times of international and local changes. Most of these changes overtake us and leave us to deal with the fait-accompli as a nation, as families and as individuals. This age has also been called the post-truth age- an age in which facts are relegated to a tertiary position in favor of appeal to emotions to earn political or other mileage. There have emerged, and fully entrenched, new power centers that defy the traditional state boundaries. Social media's ever growing influence in our daily lives has further exacerbated the limited potential of our decision makers- be they bureaucrats or politicians. Civil society, in the absence of a national narrative on key issues facing the nation presents a picture of incoherent mass of people unsure of their destiny.

Our Education system, if it may be called a system at all, does not prepare the pupils to come up to the challenges our nation faces. We do produce good scientists, engineers and doctors, but miserably fail to produce responsible citizens. The electronic media has also failed to fulfill its role of educating the people. Most talk shows are devoid of any scholarly content and issues are trivialized in a manner that viewers are left confused and misguided. We have collectively failed to inculcate a sense of social and corporate responsibility in our populace.

Optics has replaced performance. For instance, on Twitter and other social media, the Police present themselves like angels, offering cold drinks to the public, helping the elderly cross the roads or even saluting the people before talking to them. (Interestingly, the public servant has also learned from the politicians to keep a camera handy, while performing such acts of benevolence) These are praise worthy things, but the proof should be in the pudding. A visit to the Police station or a local court shows us our reality.

By our own mistakes, or by tyranny of time and space, we are confronted with a situation where we don't have credible individuals or institutions that a common Pakistani can look up to for guidance or inspiration. There are new realities all around us but you hardly find any scientific study to deal with them, let alone the capacity and capability to deal with them. A case in point is the drastically changed demography of the capital city and its surrounding areas. The growing uncertainty in masses about

the future leads to all sorts of psychological, social and law and order issues. One doubts if there's any scientific study available to our decision makers. In any case, our so called research institutions don't get high ranking amongst the research institutions of the world. The situation is further aggravated by high-sounding promises followed by little progress on the ground.

Our capacity to deal with civic emergencies is pathetic.

There is still no concrete effort to educate the sectarian religious leaders and put them to better use like convincing their followers to have smaller families.

We are not cognizant of our assets, both material and human. On the one hand, we failed to control the population explosion, on the other we don't have plans to make productive use of a hardworking and intelligent youth. Skill training would make them attractive to countries in Europe and Japan.

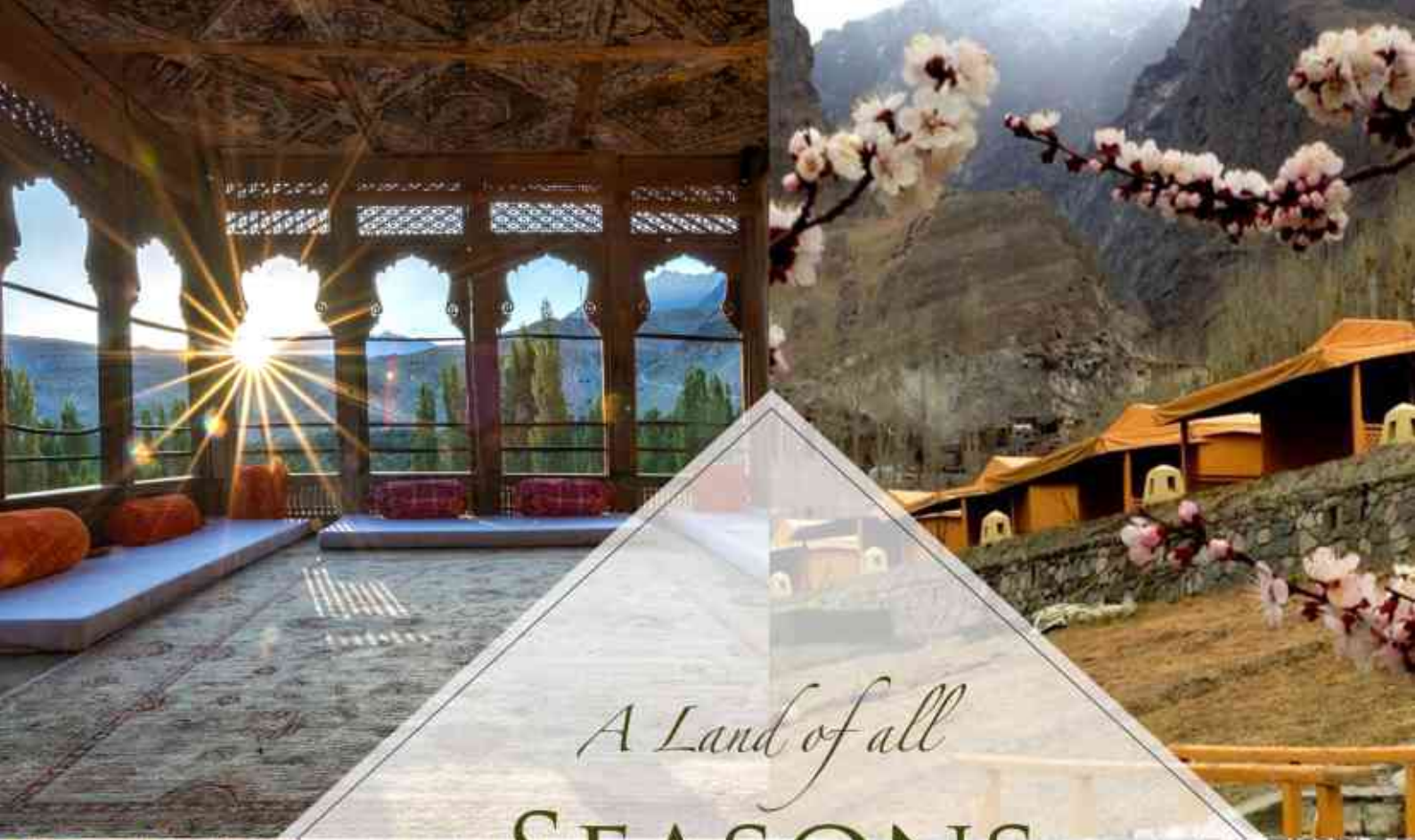
The world around us is changing fast. Here's a glimpse of it from the writer's perspective.

There are concerted efforts to gradually reduce the Nation State as an entity. Presently, it is being presented as a redundant institution.

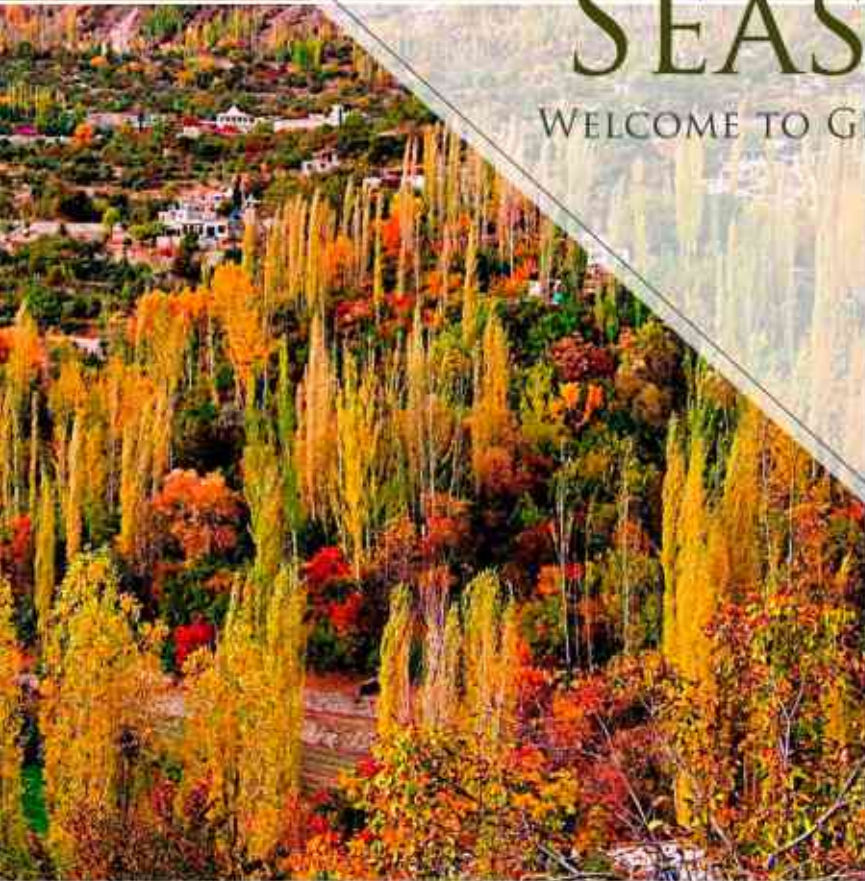
The financial and political architecture that was brought into being after the Second World War is either being redefined or eroded. A new financial architecture is being discussed in the capitals and institutions that hold the power. Our understanding of that is minimal at this stage. Unfortunately, our understanding even of the current financial architecture is also far less than satisfactory; let alone the capacity to deal with institutions like the IMF, the World Bank etc. We still largely look at interstate issues as political.

Reputed writers even in the US have already started to discuss a post-US world. This can be found in the writings of Henry Kissinger, Richard Haas and others.

The challenge for us is to prepare ourselves both intellectually and materially to ensure we are not consigned to the dustbin of history as by standers while opportunities to live honorably and play an active role internationally are abundant.



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1965



My recollections of 1965 war

General (R) Talat Masood

Commemorating Pakistan's Defence Day (6th September), General retired Talat Masood recalls his 1965 war experience in this exclusive conversation with Matrix Mag. Gen. Masood also reflects on the post-65 war situation

Many argue that the 1965 war was a surprise, however in some ways, it wasn't! This is because we were very much involved in Kashmir back then. India hit back, despite knowing that both the terrain and the local uprising was favouring Pakistan. They thought it was an opportunity to take revenge on what they were supposedly perceiving Pakistan "intruding" into Kashmir.

I was at that time enrolled in staff college. The staff college closed immediately and we were sent to the war front. At that time, Sahibzada Yaqoob was Commandant to the staff college. He also got posted for a war assignment and was given the assignment to be an advisor to the military chief. I was posted to 6 Armoured Division, which was a reserve division, in Chhamb sector, Sialkot.

It was a very challenging assignment for me and those were very difficult times. But I think it was for me and for the country, a great experience. I feel that the Pakistan younger officers and the Jawans showed great bravery, despite heavy odds because they were not so well prepared for the war as the Indians were. I think our high command failed in realizing that the Indians would respond the way they did.

I had taken an EME unit which was associated with 6th armoured division. So, my role was very important since I was supporting the armoured formation in the front and was recovering tanks both our own as well as Indian. It was a very challenging task for me and something which I never forgot.

It was one of the most extraordinary experiences. What I realized afterwards was that initially, one is a bit hesitant, however, when you are in the thick of war, you just forget about yourself. You are so highly motivated. You see everyone else so highly motivated, the number of sacrifices that our troops were giving and the way they fought, it was very inspiring. During that period, neither the Indian nor the Pakistani tanks had much of an armour, which would protect them from getting completely burnt. It was a very extraordinary experience in the sense that you enter a disabled tank that has been disabled by the Pakistan army but is an Indian disabled tank.

And when you look in, you find that the entire crew is nothing but charred remains, and you are sort of frozen inside the tank. It is such a horrible scene that you cannot forget it all

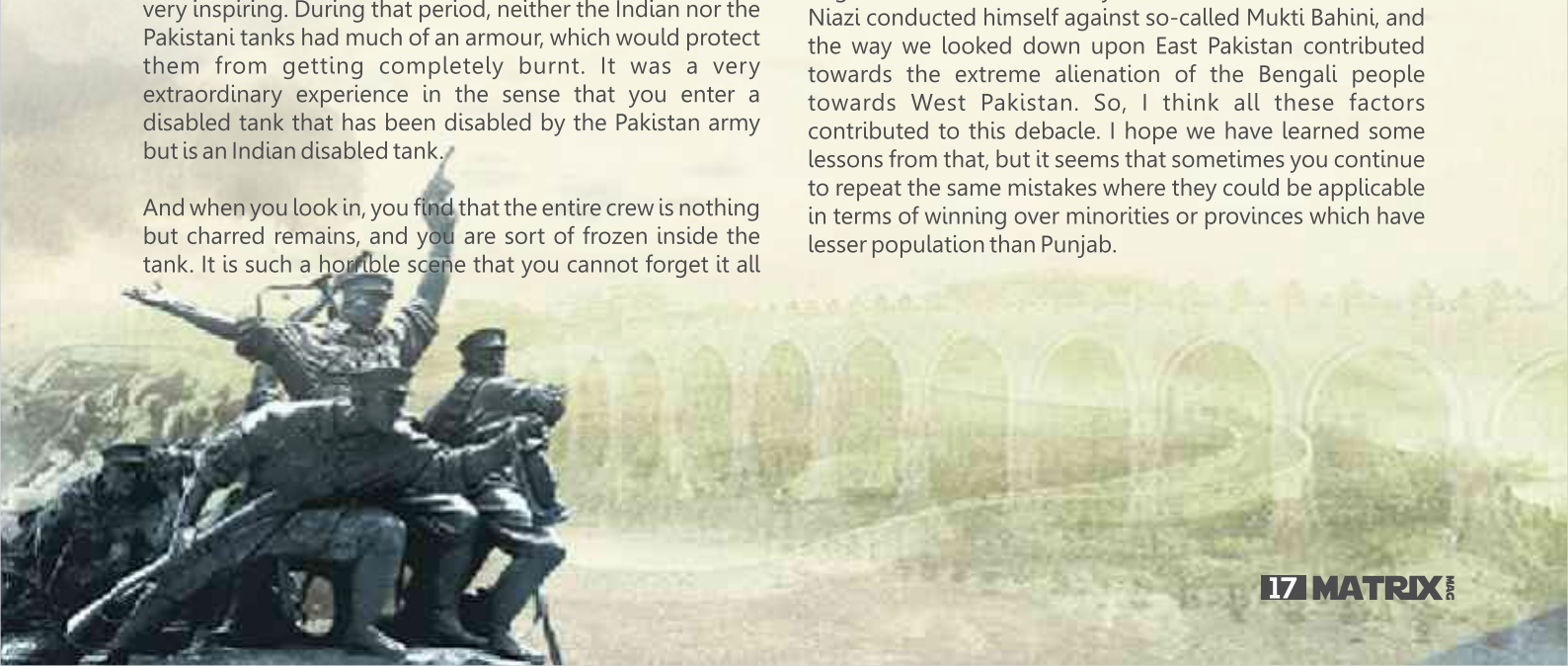


your life. And this used to be the case with several tanks because we were able to target several Indian tanks and it became what they call the "Indian graveyard" of tanks. We also lost many tanks. Also captured by the Indians, but that was more so on the other front than in here. So that was the experience.

It took a long time. We had to stay back in the fields though after 17 days of war ceasefire was announced, yet we had to be on the front for about over a year. The level of threat was there even after the interim peace accord had been signed and agreed to.

1965 War and its affect on Pakistan Socio-Political Situation
After the war was over, there were a lot of problems within Pakistan such as the way we handled the 1971 situation. We treated the Bengalis not well and it was essentially the reason why the Indians fully exploited us in East Pakistan. We didn't realize that the Bengalis were "our people" and the military treated them so unfairly that I feel bad to even mention it. And the Indians fully exploited that. And that is the reason why Bengalis got so alienated, resulting in the rise and popularity of Mukti Bahini.

The Indians thought it was an opportunity of a lifetime to separate East Pakistan from West Pakistan. The geographical distance between the two and the lack of any land route between the two - unless you went through India - became a huge obstacle. Also, the way General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi conducted himself against so-called Mukti Bahini, and the way we looked down upon East Pakistan contributed towards the extreme alienation of the Bengali people towards West Pakistan. So, I think all these factors contributed to this debacle. I hope we have learned some lessons from that, but it seems that sometimes you continue to repeat the same mistakes where they could be applicable in terms of winning over minorities or provinces which have lesser population than Punjab.



Summer of 65 Capturing war in pictures



Zeeshan Siddique

Starting his career as a print journalist twenty years ago, Zeeshan continues to explore himself as a professional after having various stints with both newspapers and leading channels.

Just 18 years after partition, both Pakistan and India were locked into a full-scale warfare in September, 1965. India went on with a military offensive targeting West Pakistan with latter repulsing the Indian move despite its limited military resources. On paper, Pakistan were the underdogs as the Indian military might of 700,000 troops easily outnumbered the meager strength of 260,000 troops of its opponent. However, a sheer display of gallantry, bravery and military maneuvering by Pakistan's Armed Forces resulted in a successful defence of their territory during a 17-day long affair. More than the question of who won and who lost the war of 65', it was a burning reflection of the belligerence and hostility to haunt the two neighbours for the decades to follow. Matrix Mag looks through the archives to capture the war moments.



The war breaks out-Earliest news reports



Troops celebrating victory at Khem Karan Sector



Tanks marching past corpses



Tanks in Chanab Sector in hot pursuit

THE AUSTRALIAN
 NUMBER 364 TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 11 1965 PRICE SIXPENCE

BIGGEST TANK BATTLE SINCE WORLD WAR II
PAKISTANI VICTORY
 Huge losses on both sides

From OUR WORLD CABLE SERVICES to NEW DELHI and RAWALPINDI Monday

Pakistani forces have repulsed a massive Indian armored assault in the costliest tank battle since the African desert campaign of World War II.

In a desperate, two-day battle among the steep fields of West Pakistan, the Pakistani forces have turned back an Indian force estimated at 50,000 men supported by hundreds of

RIVER THEIR LAST ENEMY
 ASSAULTED BY THE INDIAN ARMY in its retreat from the battle of Chabot, a tank and tank brigade is marshaled in a narrow stream. The battle was the biggest clash of armored units since the World War II campaign in North Africa and appears to have been won by Pakistan. Air advantages ground here could be the deciding factor in the present Indo-Pakistan conflict.

DRUG CUT SAVE
 Price reduction drugs will cut 12% cost of Australia's Scheme.
 The Minister has announced the reduction being negotiated in the health Government in 1965.

Australia will give away £60m this year
 BY OUR DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT BRANSHAW MANNING

Foreign media reporting on Pakistan's counter response



Army Chief Gen Ayub Khan visiting forward positions



PAF jets scrambling for strike



Pakistani soldiers holding the fort



Pakistani firemen aiming relentlessly

Pakistan in a Changing World

Matrix Report



Haroon Sharif

Haroon Sharif is global expert of economic policy & international development. He is former Chairman Board of Investment (boi)

Haroon Sharif discusses the opportunities for Pakistan, a country with 220 million people, a geopolitically strategic location, and immense resources. But the question remains, is it enough?

Looking at Pakistan in a changing world, a strategic transformational change is taking place in the region. In the next 10 years' time, Pakistan will be a gateway to a much bigger market. Western China is already connected to Pakistan. There is some good news on Afghanistan settlement, political settlement in the country and Central Asian markets being connected through belt and road initiative. Pakistan has the capacity to act as a hub for the entire region, connecting the Middle East, South and West Asia. That opens up a huge market with concrete opportunities. For almost two decades, Pakistan struggled because of the internal and external conflict. Now that part has been taken care of that and that's a huge opportunity to send out a message that this country is open for business and tourism.

Pakistan at the moment has comparative advantages of having a large population and cheap labor. In a rapidly changing world, Pakistan might lose this edge. Pakistan currently offers food security to the region, as one example. Being an agricultural country, our neighbors can invest in Pakistan, adding value to our productivity. Pakistan can be the hub of the food sector for the whole of Western China, the Middle East. During my time as Chairman Board of Investment, this dialogue had already started and research was being carried out.

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There are four stages of getting ready to be competitive in a global arena. Stage one is to be ready at the policy level. Are we ready? My answer is absolutely not because we do not have adequate investments done in research in these sectors, which can give input for policymaking. Our policy makers at the political level remain reactive. They basically do not plan for longer term. Pakistan needs to start investing in a medium term planning process based on our competitive advantage. It is critical to first identify your advantage. At this point, we haven't even identified that, 20 years down the road.



The demand of cheese in China, for instance has grown by 200%. Where would that cheese come from? Italians are looking at Pakistan to use our dairy product and basically use Pakistan as a gateway to Western China and others. In 10 years' time, I see this industry picking up in a big way. Pakistan's textile has been the backbone of our exports but now the world has changed. We need to explore value addition. After the trade war between the U.S. and China, lots of big giants of textiles had started talking to Pakistan for relocation of their operations here. Sportswear produces by Adidas China in Lahore were being sold in Europe. This enabled China to cut through the geopolitical hurdles of international trade.

Another of Pakistan's competitive advantage is the young, computer literate, managerial, labor force and not the unskilled labor force. If you look at the export markets in the world, it's not the large scale manufacturing leading the export sector. It is the IT-based fourth-generation of industry, which is leading the export sector. That is where Pakistan's next opportunity lies, where you can actually use your engineers. For example, one of the largest brands in China for air conditioning is called Gree. Gree makes and assembles air conditioners here at 20% lower cost than what they do in China, but of the same quality. By scaling that up, it can actually be taken to a much bigger market.

The last point, which is very close to Prime Minister of Pakistan's heart, is that Pakistan should open up as a tourist country.

It will take a while because it's not only infrastructure that is missing, particularly for regional tourism. It needs promotion, a communication strategy employing our best ambassadors, which would attract the people who come. If Pakistan focuses on these sectors of competitive advantage, there is no reason why the country will not start catching up with the growth rates of its peer countries in Asia. It's the time for regional development. So we need to catch up with the region.

In terms of Pakistan being ready to encourage those opportunities, infrastructurally and administratively, let me add that unfortunately because of the stabilization program, the attention has gone towards fiscal management. Pakistan needs to very clearly identify priorities for a roadmap. It needs to pick winners as the country cannot compete in each and everything. The evidence suggests that the above mentioned sectors could be the drivers for growth.

There are four stages of getting ready to be competitive in a global arena. Stage one is to be ready at the policy level. Are we ready? My answer is absolutely not because we do not have adequate investments done in research in these sectors, which can give input for policymaking. Our policy makers at the political level remain reactive. They basically do not plan for longer term. Pakistan needs to start investing in a medium term planning process based on our competitive advantage. It is critical to first identify your advantage. At this point, we haven't even identified that, 20 years down the road.

Second is the implementation, which is done by the bureaucracy of this country. Currently, that is the biggest hurdle I see and my advice as a government employee and an outside independent professional who has worked in 16 countries, is that Pakistan needs to invest in private sector partnerships in a big way, both for planning and implementation of these sectors.

For instance, why can't economic zones be developed by private sector? There are number of things for which private sector has the managerial expertise in this country, both in research and implementation, which needs to be taken out of state. When we talk about privatization or deregulation, I keep on telling my colleagues in the cabinet to look at only assets. Look at deregulating and prioritizing the policymaking, the implementation, the research. Otherwise, reshaping the bureaucracy will take decades.

Third part is the resistance from the private sector, which has developed under patronage. Pakistan's private sector elite, which has had a very easy ride for years and years, their networks are embedded in our political economy. These are the three things which, if Pakistan manages to prioritize and focus on in next three to five years, there is great potential for growth. The developed economies have slowed down. The highest growth in the world at the moment is in South Asia barring Pakistan. Pakistan needs to catch up on this momentum rather than just being stuck on fiscal management and stabilization.

The new government came with a huge promise. Is there a certain degree of movement towards meeting those expectations? I think there is a basic understanding how to go, but politically the expectations had been raised much higher for a country of 200 million people. It takes time to show results. Politicians only pick up things which can show results to be reelected. Now that balance this government



frankly has not managed to achieve. At the moment the attention is again on populous economic transactions which are good, but that give you very quick returns like social protection, the housing and the shelters but that is not the basis of sustainable economic growth. My message is that it needs to work on both. For that this government needs to take on board serious thinkers, who at the moment are lacking in the government system. We need to bring in fresh thinking and I can guarantee you that this skill is available in the private sector.

This government has to create a conducive space. I left because I was seeing that space being shrunk because all the focus was on very short term interventions, but that is not the solution. I hope that now we will start getting the signals on some macro stabilization, but I would like to highlight that confidence in the market is only created by putting people who are known, tested and neutral, with a track record of doing things for these interventions. The prime minister should appoint key people, empower them and let them hire professionals from the market to deliver on priority projects. You just cannot continue putting more water in a leaky bucket, which we have been trying for far too long.

As far as CPEC is concerned, I don't think the shortcomings that affect us internally are detrimental for the CPEC products. I think we need to understand the partnership in China-Pakistan economic corridor better. The previous government was very highly involved because most of the partnership was linked to infrastructure development, which was the job of the state. So all state resources were mobilized towards power projects, roads, bridges and tunnels. In the second phase of CPEC, if you look at the long term document, the focus is industrial cooperation. Which is the domain of private sector. We have to understand that in China the industry still is predominantly influenced by the state. Whereas in Pakistan it is 80% private. So there is a difference in cultures.

We need to put a value proposition to China that you put in X billion dollars and private investment in these sectors. For that we need to bring in private sector in the lead role, the planning commission of Pakistan or the ministry of industry cannot do it as they have no incentive because it's not the job of the state, which is to basically create a conducive environment. The key to China's model is the economic zones, for which the economic zones should be developed by large Chinese companies and Pakistani companies rather than state doing it because they will tailor it to the need of the private sector. Unless and until we do that, it is difficult to attract Chinese investors in the four sectors that we have a competitive advantage. I think China is pretty open. They are looking at opportunity. It is up to Pakistan that we put in a proposition to them to come in these sectors.

Pakistan already has seven economic zones, but all are dysfunctional with the exception of one or two. And main reason is that state machinery has not been able to provide utilities. For instance, at the moment we do have electricity available, but in economic zones only 15% of the industrial units managed to get gas and electricity. 85% do not have access. A main focus of an economic zone is that you get uninterrupted supply of utilities, security, the regulation and cheap land, the land prices in economic zones are still very high because the land is owned by the provinces and provinces want to sell that.

This is Pakistan's challenge, we need to give these economic zones to private sector. We failed to develop, I must confess, an economic zone on IT industry in Islamabad because the ministry of IT does not have the capability. We need five, six people from Silicon Valley who are running the similar park to come here and do it as there are Pakistanis available, but they will only come if we empower them with decision making. If they need to run around a deputy secretary to get the file moving, nobody will come.

We have to confront three main challenges. Firstly, it is our policy making politicians, who basically do not understand what a public policy for economic growth means. So we need to bring in people who understand it as advisors to inform the government in how modern policy making is happening in the world. Secondly, our machinery is the bureaucracy, and that's where we need to outsource things to private sector as much as possible. In this case, the government is very scared because of the accountability, judiciary and competence it implies. These three factors are needed to build real public private partnerships.

I just recently had a discussion since we know that we are in a fiscal tight situation, why don't we put solarization of all the government buildings and universities which will save a huge amount of money? But that requires a contract. The ability to give a contract to an outside partner in a transparent and efficient manner needs to be developed. It's not there. So that the second part that how to use the private sector, there's the policymaking weakness, the bureaucracy's weakness to outsource things.

The third is Pakistan's cozy elite which has grown on patronage and continues to grow on patronage. This can only be handled at the highest political level not at the low levels, but that is not a hidden factor as their influences and interactions can be seen clearly. Unfortunately, the nexus of that elite with our political institutions has reached a dangerous level where country is suffering on economic growth.

To break this nexus only requires overcoming a psychological barrier. This, or any other government needs to have the backing of the people who are frustrated. If you put a value proposition, people buy it. A popular leader like our Prime Minister Imran Khan can very easily do it because he has the connection with the people. Secondly, the onus is to show to the people what the alternative route of growth is. The bureaucracy creates a fear of pursuing this alternative because they are hands in glove with the same elite. My worry is that the consensus building capability of state has gone down. We are living in a very intense political environment for challenging a crony capitalist elite, for which we need to build a consensus in the nation that we need a way forward and people who inspire confidence.

This prime minister, understands the issue of entrenched procurement regimes very well, which have been consuming the majority of the country's funds. His heart is at the right place. My worry is that he is banking on the same people who have vested interests in the system. The system cannot change from within. It needs to be brought in from outside, through technically superior systems. If you continue asking somebody who is already in a comfortable environment to change, I'm afraid it will not happen.



A DECADE OF COUNTER
TERRORISM



The Evolution of Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Policy Post Musharraf Era



Imtiaz Gul

“

The proxy terror in Balochistan and former FATA territories is still claiming precious lives, yet the drastic reduction in violence in recent years testifies to the greater focus of, and coordination among, both civilian and military security establishments.

Pakistan's decade of counter-terrorism since the assault on Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which began in May 2009, has had its fair share of ups and downs. The performance on ground – supported by empirical data (explained in another MATRIXMAG story in this issue), testifies to more successes than failures. Failures that largely stemmed from the rusted, partially dysfunctional, politicised state institutions and their conventional outlook.

But the larger picture points to several successes, acknowledged not only from a Pakistani military or civilian expert, but by a British counter-terror official familiar with Pakistan, as well;

You have achieved a lot in the last five years if measured against the disconnect in the approaches between the military and civilian institutions. You must also keep in mind the institutional lethargy and indifference that had existed particularly in the civilian security establishment and some ministries for decades.

This assessment could have come only from a person with sound understanding of South Asia and the socio-political limitations that countries like Pakistan face when dealing with issues such as socially acceptable ideologies that fraternize with extremism and at times, terrorism. Public sympathy and official apathy for, and appeasement of non-state actors invested in Afghanistan or Kashmir was widespread. The soldier on ground, too, was confused as to whether he was fighting an enemy or a religiously devout soldier of God.

Heavy odds confronted General Ashfaq Kayani when he became the GHQ boss in November 2007. His elevation to the coveted post probably was a blessing in disguise in the context of a directionless, demoralized and confused rank and file of the army.

His experience as corps commander Corps 11 (Jan 2001- 2003) Operations (three years DG Military Operations) and Intelligence (three years as ISI chief 2004-2007) before taking over the mantle from General Pervez Musharraf, was a unique combination. This experience gave him the understanding of the situation that Pakistan was engulfed in, and the tactical wherewithal to address some of the core issues that Musharraf had ignored because of the multiple hats he wore, including his struggle for survival.

Long before entering the GHQ, General Kayani had figured out that the army under General Musharraf, had lost its focus and motivation, primarily because of confusion about the war on terror. "Is it our war?", "Why are we fighting our own people?", many even within the armed forces wondered.

The first objective the new COAS set for himself was to establish the focus in the garrison and train his soldier accordingly. He used to tell his visitors that an army trained to fight on the eastern front had to be reoriented to on the non-conventional front.

The second objective was to develop a simple argument for all to delegitimize the "mulla" narrative; our mission is directed only at people who are not amenable to any argument and who want their opinion accepted with the barrel of the gun, Kayani used to argue in his interaction with soldiers at the forward positions as well as garrisons across the country. Kayani essentially led a conscious campaign to take religion out of the security discourse. This helped reestablish the focus which our armed forces had lost.

The third objective was to re-motivate the soldier through a series of steps.

To start with, Kayani declared December 2007 as the month of counter-insurgency. He

had a new training programme designed and implemented by the early 2008. General Kayani raised the compensation for martyred soldiers to nearly Rs.20 million besides the care package for the families of martyrs.

All this brought about a fundamental change in the institutional outlook; we are fighting a political enemy which is using religion as inspiration for its foot-soldiers. It has nothing to do with religion as such, soldiers were told.

This also meant –enabling the soldier to distinguish between jihad and terrorism. Undertaking such a bold mission was not easy at all in a context wherein Islam stood out among the primary pillars that were used to motivate the garrison and military educational institutions.

I recall a one-on-one meeting with the late General Shamim Wyne, a former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff at his office in Rawalpindi, around January 10, 2011. He was then defending the use of religion as a motivation force for the rank and file of the army. He was quite emphatic about it but became speechless for a few seconds when I asked him, “is the Pakistan army meant to defend Pakistan or Islam?”

The ultimate objective was to place higher demands on the fighters on the way to fighting what his successor General Bajwa refers to as “monsters.”

Although complete military campaign plans had existed before Kayani assumed the charge (big and small operations such as Sher Dil in Bajaur had already been under way since mid 2007), yet these 'monsters' i.e. non-state actors required a more comprehensive response, particularly when the ISI and GHQ concluded by late 2008 that the Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had become a full-blown instrument of an unfolding proxy war against Pakistan. The ferocity of the attacks on GHQ, three regional ISI headquarters (2009-2010), on police officials and military convoys in ex FATA regions. and the terror disguised as sectarian violence across Pakistan left little doubt about the nature of this war.

It was not ideology but rather a well thought out design to occupy territory for operations, sever the Karakorum Highway and create operational hurdles for the army, using the Afghan jihad as the pretext.

All the operations since August 2008 – when the Bajaur operation Sherdil, was launched – to Swat (Rah-e-Rast, May 2009), South Waziristan (Rah-e-Nijat, October 2009), Zarb e Azb (North Waziristan, June 2014) as well as the current Raddul Fassad (since 2017) – in fact gradually discredited the Mulla narrative.

A major catalyst for the final assault on the TTP was an extremely controversial speech that Sufi Muhammad (who died in July 2019 at age 94) gave at the Grassy Ground in Mingora, Swat on April 19, 2009; on the back of a flawed deal, that the Taliban had begun abusing, the military had managed to persuade Sufi to condemn violence and suicide bombings at this rally. But, to the shock of all and sundry, all Sufi did was to condemn the Constitution of Pakistan, the parliament and the Supreme Court as “un-Islamic.”

It was indeed a turning point, prompting the GHQ to wage a three-pronged operation against Mulla Fazulullah's TTP headquarters at Peochar at the foot of Swat mountains on May 7, 2009. This reinforced General Kayani's conviction that TTP

was after a geographical piece of land to use for proxy terror, and hence the series of operations.

Once convinced of TTP's real intent, the GHQ under General Kayani ruled out any negotiations but under General Raheel Sharif, it restarted once Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif decided to give the talks another try in January 2014. This attempt failed too; in February, the TTP proposed a 15 point plan, most of which looked like the state's capitulation to this rag tag army. At the same time this demand-laden plan also further exposed the terror outfit's real intent.

In hindsight, most of us are now convinced that General Kayani was right in his assessment of the terror threat emanating from the TTP and its associates operating in Mohmand Agency, Bajaur, North and South Waziristan and Swat, says Major General Ijaz Awan.

Although under General Raheel Sharif, the army finally launched the long-awaited major anti-terror campaign in North Waziristan in June 2014, yet the real shock it got was the brazen raid on Peshawar's Army Public School (APS) in mid December the same year. Nearly 150 deaths, most of them children, jolted the entire GHQ. After subjecting most military institutions to siege and suicide bombings since 2007, the terrorists had now begun directly targeting the families of armed forces. A rude awakening indeed, that galvanized the entire military and civilian officials.

The immediate collective response to the APS attack was the 20-point National Action Plan (NAP), which despite massive shortcomings, refocused military and civilian intelligence and security outfits - the Intelligence Bureau, the ISI, police, provincial counter-terrorism departments (CTDs) on their primary roles i.e. pro-active surveillance and hunt for the terrorists as well as their abettors across the country.

Despite the shortcomings in the implementation of the NAP, in hindsight, with all that has gone on since 2014, coupled with scores of actions against Kashmir-focused non-state actors under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Action Plan, Pakistan has made a big headway in countering terrorism.

One indicator – however questionable in the eyes of critics – was the Paigham Pakistan; a 22-point message born out of consultations by more than 1800 religious scholars of all schools of thought. Launched on 16 Jan 2018, this document represented the first formal national narrative against extremism and terrorism. It emphatically rejected extremist ideologies, condemned terrorism including suicide attacks in the name of religion and underlined peaceful co-existence and tolerance. The scholars declared that declaration of combat jihad is the prerogative of the state, and that any such initiative of an individual or group shall be deemed interference in the state authority.

The proxy terror in Balochistan and former FATA territories is still claiming precious lives, yet the drastic reduction in violence in recent years testifies to the greater focus of, and coordination among, both civilian and military security establishments.

No surprise therefore, that in 2019 that the discourse within GHQ and the PM House has moved from security to economic development – an antidote to many of the country's internal and external challenges.



From Swat to Waziristan: Countering Terrorism

Gen. Asif Yasin Malik

Gen. Asif Yasin Malik (Corps Commander 11 th Corps, Feb 2010 to December 2011)

Often people ask me how was the situation in the northwestern frontier region when I took over as the Commander of the 11th Corps in Feb 2010.

We were well into the operations all over. Some major operations were going on in six (ex-FATA) agencies. Minus North Waziristan, all the agencies were under major operations starting from Bajaur (Operation Sherdil, August 2008), Swat (Rah-e-Rast, May 2009), South Waziristan (Rah-e-Nijat, October 2009) as well as some of the Frontier Regions (FRs) adjacent to ex-FATA agencies. In Swat, we were still busy in minor operations and clearance leading to opening up of areas which were earlier closed or under Taliban threat. Mostly, Taliban had left Swat but there were some locals who were still the sympathizers. So, we were in a sort of major flux of operations and were clearing the areas agency wise.

Complex Nature of Militancy

We were pitched against various groups – which had merged into the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Swat was under Sufi Muhammad's Tehreek-e-Nifaze Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), but in reality, it was Mulla Faqeer Mohammad - from Bajaur - led militants' faction. Khyber was under Haji Mangal Bagh of Lashkar-e-Islam (LI). Mohmand and Orakzai had their own leaders.

Swat was TTP per say, because Sufi Muhammad had a different ideology than the Taliban of Waziristan or those in Kurram and Orakzai, so they had a different thought. Other issue was that FATA was contiguous to Afghanistan. So, there was a supply chain, there was a support base, not necessarily of the sympathizers but of the NDS (Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security) and other agencies operating in Afghanistan. On the contrary, Dir and Bajaur acted as buffers between Swat and Afghanistan.

Swat had a different dimension and Swat (led by Sufi's son-in-law Mulla Fazlullah) was also leaning on Karakorum Highway (KKH) and the mountainous Hazara region. Therefore, their strategic aim was to sever KKH and cut off the Northern areas from Pakistan; that sort of a game was being played in Swat.

Why did terrorists focus on the Karakorum Highway?

This was the larger agenda of the Taliban. Swat and Northern areas offered them a natural geographically difficult sanctuary. Access is very difficult; the troops were very less at that point of time and we were focused on the Indian border rather than the northwestern areas. Their idea was to get into Northern areas and then connect with the Indians through Kashmir. This is why, it made sense for them to cut off KKH first. As evident, couple of years ago, there was some trouble in Northern areas, most probably externally motivated. The aim was basically to have an alternate support base, in case Afghanistan is not available. So, they sort of looked towards India.

What strategy was plugged-in back then?

We had a parallel strategy going on, whereas, we were developing the capability and the capacity of the law enforcement agencies in settled areas and we remained there in a supporting role. Whereas in the FATA and some other operational areas, we were in the leading role. On the other hand, we were working hand in glove with KP government and the law enforcement agencies in settled areas while the civilian authorities were hand in glove with us in FATA region. The strategy was to draw some sort of wedge between settled areas and FATA, eventually containing the terrorists. However, the tragedy was confronting some legal implications; someone could just commit a crime in the settled areas and just walk across into FATA, standing there and wave to police - as FATA was not in police's jurisdiction. Though, we then sent out a clear message that the then KP-FATA boundary was irrelevant for the military and that they would be chased down no matter where they are across the country.

Did Apex Committees assist in curbing terrorism?

Formulating Apex committees was a very good step taken by the then military as well as political leadership to have some synergy. Imagine the governor being the representative of the federation, the chief minister being the chief executive of the province, the military, the Inspector General (IG) Police and the IG Frontier Constabulary (FC); all sitting under one roof and having a debate or a consensual approach towards challenges. If we had not worked on apex committee, probably we would have had to go and knock at different doors in the government departments, rather than having an integrated coordination mechanism.

Fading romanticism and TTP's emergence as a proxy

It was in 2009, that the romantic part of TTP – associated with Afghan Jihad – started to disappear and hardcore terrorist's definition of TTP started emerging. By then, we had a clarity that TTP has become a franchised organization. It was a McDonalds of terrorism in FATA the analogy sounds inappropriate and anybody could join TTP. There was no ideology as far as TTP was concerned. In different areas, they opted different ideologies. Unlike the Afghan Taliban who had a very simple ideology that get the foreign troops out of Afghanistan.

Afghan Jihad, a legitimacy tool for TTP?

TTP was using the context of Afghan Jihad for their own benefits in two ways; one that Pakistan was helping the foreign forces in Afghanistan which was against the people of Afghanistan- their infamous slogan. It is pertinent to note that Mullah Omer had given a fatwa that no Afghan Taliban would fight against Pakistani security forces and would not destabilize Pakistan. Whereas, they didn't like to be associated with TTP but the TTP wanted to somewhat associate itself with larger part of terrorism matrix. It eventually became a power game or a money

game, all means and ways were justified.

TTP's financial life-line?

TTP did not require millions of dollars to run its affairs. The Taliban were never equipped with stinger missiles or they were not carrying tanks or something. They were armed with basic weaponry which is easily available. Money coming from abroad was basically to buy their loyalties; that money was never spent on foot soldiers. The foot soldiers would they require maybe 15000 or 20000 rupees a month and they were not in thousands, but only in hundreds; financing was in a way overplayed.

What was the basic flaw in negotiations' approach?

We had already suffered in Swat. In 2008-09, when the PPP government got elected, they said go ahead clear Swat and later they had cold feet and said stop fighting and start talking to them. We had to pay with blood and life again after the talks failed in Swat with Sufi Mohammad and party. So, the areas where we had shed blood, cleared them, they got time to prepare and fight us again on the same battleground once again. Thus, we were vary of talks in 2012-13, when the government wanted to talk to them because we had been through it. We had even been through Shikai agreement and all that. The army had lot of experience of talks. None of those agreements were honored and they benefitted in the larger canvas. The basic flaw with the talks was that when a terrorist and state sit across a table, they are equated. There is no difference. Lastly, Taliban had already been fractured. There was no unity of command in Taliban. There were factions, supporters and detractors. Therefore, let's say if the talks had succeeded my personal view is that leadership which was talking could not have enforced the outcome of the talks in rest of FATA.



What We Faced Then?



Major General (R) Ijaz Awan

A soldier, former Ambassador and a defence analyst

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General Kiyani was of the view that the Taliban were not fighting for sharia. They want control on a geographical piece of land where they can live with confidence or reorganize and start their operations elsewhere.

When I took over in the second week of December, 2008, the prevailing conditions were very difficult and different for three reasons; the entire region was witnessing a reversal of earlier successes. The reversal had taken place after the ANP government decided to release Sufi Muhammad and many of his followers. They went back and started targeting the people and taking revenge from those who had helped the Pakistan army in their initial operations.

Now, because of that the army's unit number one was over-stretched. Their lines of logistics and supplies were being targeted by the terrorists who had moved into the built-up area once again. They had created a perception that probably the army was not very serious about their operation.

Common people also seemed to feel that (fighting the Taliban) was probably beyond the Pakistan army and that it either lacked the will to resolve or don't have the capability to control them because they are same people who are arrested and then they are back again. The ANP government was little indifferent to this entire operation because they had passed a bill in the KP provincial assembly legitimizing their slogan of Islamic sharia law in Malakand division.

Taliban filled with sense of triumph?

All these factors resulted in hopelessness among common people, who had lost hope and were creating doubts about the army. The Taliban also thought they could overrun everything they wanted in a situation wherein, the army was overstretched with deployments, starting from Malakand Fort to the mouth of Peochar. They were also deployed in villages along both sides of River Swat. Every village that was cleared housed an army post to initially control the conduct of elections. When these Taliban were released from jail, they went back and began attacking army posts wherever they saw an opportunity.

It was only the administrative difficulties, the overstretch of units and non-availability of reserve force for the entire area which gave rise to false perceptions.

The Trigger for Operation

My biggest difficulty was the identification of friend and foe. Also, notables of the area, including Afzal Khan Lala, kept asking me, if the provincial assembly agrees to



the demand for sharia law, why is the army opposing it. Coupled with the difficulties of operation, and the fact that Taliban terrorists were dominating those areas and also targeting people at will, I requested the Army chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani to visit Swat. He visited and himself took a sense of the situation.

In a consequent meeting at GHQ I proposed three things; one the need of additional troops to start operations to clear the main supply route (MSR) to different units. Second, we have to stop reliance on helicopters for logistical support and this slogan of sharia needs to be taken head on.

General Kiyani was of the view that the Taliban were not fighting for sharia. They want control on a geographical piece of land where they can live with confidence or reorganize and start their operations elsewhere.

The Nizam-e-Adl, as they called it, enforced in eight districts of Malakand division. We had to get over with it to give a motivation against terrorists and their false narrative of Sharia to troops. For this reason, he had a meeting with Asfandyar Wali and later he met President Asif Ali Zardari. Both had diverse views on Nizam-e-Adl enforcement. Wali said a draft law for enforcement of Sharia could be passed by KP provincial assembly whereas Zardari raised an objection based on his Pakistan People's Party's political ideology, saying it would not be possible for the party to go for the vote with this. Then the bill was tabled in February 2009 at the the National Assembly which passed it and the "Islamic system" enforced in those district of Malakand to please TNSM.

This led to cease operations there and provincial authorities began talks with Sufi Mohammad for the system's enforcement. My entry in the negotiations came later when it hit a snag on laying down arms by Muhammad's followers, a demand he was unable to fulfil as he did not have any sway over militants headed by his son-in-law Fazlullah. I, along with the then provincial information minister Iftikhar Ahmed, police chief Fayyaz Tooro and other officials met Muhammad at Aman Dara mosque and sought his promise to announce laying down arms as a key demand in return of the Sharia enforcement. But, he changed his mind a night before during a public gathering at grassy ground of Mingora, the main town of Swat Valley, as Fazlullah stopped him of making any such announcement on phone call.

He whispered him with his sting thought that this would harm his movement as they got this "success with the barrel

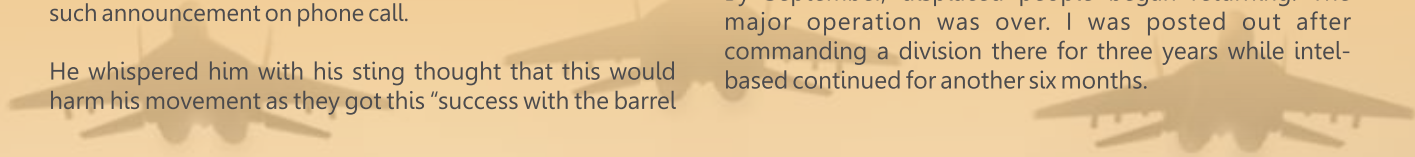
of the gun" and would not be able to dictate terms on which they wanted to enforce Sharia. So the cleric rather used the gathering to condemn Sharia negotiated with us and Pakistan's constitution. That was the moment when the army understood the real script. General Kiyani's assessment was right given their linkage with Tehrik-e-Taliban, an umbrella organization of militants groups operating in Pakistan's tribal regions near the Afghan border. Yet, we went into negotiation that lasted for some time. They wanted, as the final demand, the army to leave Malakand, to retake control and impose an orthodox system, seen in Afghanistan during the Taliban era. So, finally in the end of March, the army decided to go into an offensive for a decisive battle. Additional forces had to be sent in because my division alone could not have operated in that region bordering Dir and Bajaur.

That successful operation later was copied by Americans in Afghanistan and our commanders in North Waziristan. They evacuated areas of civil population before launching operations because otherwise it is difficult to single out foes in a huge crowd and chances of collateral damages are more that harms public sentiments. The Swat operation was done purely on the army's own resources with the least collateral damages. Terrorists were deprived of using local population as human shield. This success was very reassuring to all that people of these area are with the state and not with these terrorists. No sympathy with terrorists. If they are quiet, it is under coercion and not at will. And most important thing that TNSM and its slogan of Sharia was completely exposed. They rather wanted a piece of geographical land to carry on their violent drive.

And those who talk about the military's Inter-Services Intelligence's linkage with these terrorists should see the background, when these violent individuals were also helped by world's powers in not only getting training but were rather pampered by them when fighting against the Soviets.

There is no iota of doubt that 9/11 attacks on the United States led Pakistan's policy towards militants shifted to 180 degree and that annoyed terrorists who then bombed Pakistani cities, schools, mosques and imambargah and killed thousands of its people.

By September, displaced people began returning. The major operation was over. I was posted out after commanding a division there for three years while intel-based continued for another six months.



Pakistani Military Operations in Former-FATA, Since 2001



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Pakistan's tribal districts, formerly known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), have remained a hotbed of militancy and terrorism since 2001. The influx of transnational militant groups from Afghanistan, Middle East and Central Asia, coupled with the rise of local militant networks, led to an insurgency that many believed was near-impossible for Pakistan to win. Especially between 2007 and 2011, when civilian casualties were escalating and attacks taking place in all major cities of the country, man, outside Pakistan thought that the country's fate might be similar to that of Afghanistan or Iraq.

However, through military operations, sometimes supported by tribal Lashkars, Pakistan succeeded in culling the menace of terrorism. The actions taken are far from perfect, and resulted in collateral damage and mass displacement. But the military operations did play a role in making the tribal areas relatively secure, which ultimately paved the way for integration of former-FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province through a parliamentary bill in May 2018.

Therefore, in order to understand the seriousness of efforts undertaken by Pakistan towards countering terrorism, discussion of major military operations in the former-FATA region since 2001 is important.

Operation Al Mizan (The Balance)

Al Mizan was the first large scale military operation conducted by the Pakistani army in the tribal areas. Started in 2002 and ending in 2006, the operation, under the then President General Pervez Musharraf, saw the deployment of around 80,000 soldiers in the region. Military convoys, during the operation, were often targeted by the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. The operation included several sub-operations, such as Operation Kalosha II in South Waziristan Agency. The United States, at that time, had not only praised the operation but also provided military aid, nearly \$2 billion per year, to Pakistan. During the operation, the military apprehended around 700 foreign and local militants. The operation resulted in capturing and killing of several senior al-Qaeda leaders, namely Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Abu Faraj al-Libbi, Abu Zubeida and Abu Talha al-Pakistani. Overall, it failed to clear North and South Waziristan agencies of militants and major terror networks.

Operation Zalzala (Earthquake)

This operation was launched in South Waziristan Agency in January 2008 against Baitullah Mehsud and his supporters. The operation came after Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), under Baitullah Mehsud, captured the Sararogha Fort in South Waziristan, killing a number of security forces personnel. Interestingly, the aim of the operation was not to target those militants who were involved in Indian-Kashmir or Afghanistan, but only the TTP and Baitullah Mehsud. The operation carried religious and ideological significance as the TTP launched online propaganda against the Pakistan army, calling it an enemy of Islam. The TTP claimed that the army was formed of non-Muslims and was following the US agenda. Additionally, in May 2008, the military had cleared South Waziristan of TTP, claimed victory, and averted militant attacks for the short term. However, soon after the military vacated the area, militants started to regroup and reactivate their terror camps, carrying out attacks in FATA and the rest of the country.

Operation Sirat-e-Mustaqeem (Righteous Path)

This operation began in June 2008 to tackle the Lashkar e Islam (LeI) from the Bara region in Khyber Agency. The operation also included a number of sub-operations codenamed Daraghlam (Here I come), Biya Daraghlam (Here I come again) and Khawakh Ba desham (I'll teach you a lesson). Even with claims by the military of pushing the LeI to the Tirah Valley, the region remained insecure along with

negatively impacting the local businesses. Due to Khyber Agency's proximity with Orakzai and Kurram, in addition to sharing a border with Afghanistan, it became easier for the militants to flee KP temporarily. One of the negatives of this operation was the Lel – previously fighting against the TTP in the Agency – joining hands with the TTP against the Pakistani forces. Although the military was initially successful in clearing out the Agency of militants, it had to launch further operations in the Agency.

Operation Sher Dil (Lion's Heart)

In 2008, the military moved its operations to the Mohmand and Bajaur Agency, launching Operation Sher Dil in September. The operation formally started when local militants attacked a military convoy in the Loesam area of Bajaur Agency. The main goal of the operation was to target Zia-ur-Rehman and his cohorts, and to recapture the Agencies from Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, initially targeting the border crossing in the town of Loesam. Later, the scope expanded to the whole Agency. In late 2009, both the US and Pakistani military announced the relative success of the operation claiming that both the Al Qaeda and Taliban had been defeated in the operation. However, both groups re-emerged in the summer of 2010 carrying out attacks both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This operation was also complemented by a new US drone strategy for the Af-Pak region with a sudden spike in strikes in September 2008. It was in 2010 that the military announced the completion of the operation claiming that the Agency had been cleared of the militants and the writ of the state had been restored.

Operation Rah-e-Rast (Path of Righteousness) – Swat Valley

The provincial government of KP led by the Awami National Party (ANP) had signed a peace accord on February 16, 2009 with Sufi Muhammad of the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) to allow Sharia law to be implemented in Malakand region. It was a very crucial period for the country as 80 percent of Swat Valley was under the control of the Taliban and TNSM was one of their main allies.

To halt any further expansion of their drive in the valley, the government had no choice but to accept their demand of implementing the version of Sharia law the militants had already introduced in the areas they were controlling. On 21 January 2009, Taliban had enforced a complete ban on female education in Swat district affecting 40,000 girl students.

Coincidentally, three phases of aggressive military operations in Buner, Lower Dir, Swat, and Shangha districts were also launched during the same period. On 26 April 2009, Operation Black Thunderstorm was launched followed by Operation Toar Tander-I (Black Thunderstorm-II) and the final Swat Operation (Operation Rah-e-Rast) began on May 5, 2009, only two days after the TNSM and TTP conveyed their disagreement with the government-appointed qazis (Judges).





The operation, launched roughly between July 2 and 4, 2011 was intended to target the TTP militants in the Kurram Agency. Kurram Agency's importance was related to the fact that not only was it based between North Waziristan and Khyber, but also provided the shortest route between Pakistan and Afghanistan's capital Kabul. Before 2007, the Kurram Agency – with 40 /60 ratio of Shia and Sunni population – witnessed low key sectarian conflicts. It was post-2007 that the TTP, in search of new safe havens, not only entered the Agency but also brought along other groups such as the Al Qaeda affiliated Haqqani Network. The military decided to launch the operation when the TTP had captured the Thal-Parachinar road, which connected the Kurram Agency with Peshawar.

By June 15, the army declared its success in regaining control of Swat valley after losing 30 soldiers and killing 1,040 militants. Although the Taliban militants were driven out of the valley, the incidents of terrorism continued occurring in the region requiring the military's presence in Swat until October 2018.

Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path of Salvation)

On October 17, 2009, the Pakistan army, under pressure because of growing domestic insecurity, launched a major operation in South Waziristan against the TTP, deploying over 30,000 troops. Both Baitullah Mehsud and Hakimullah Mehsud were orchestrating all major militant attacks taking place both in the tribal areas and the rest of Pakistan. Also, the year 2009 was the deadliest in terms of terror attacks and casualties with the number up from over 6,700 in 2008 to over 11,700 in 2009. The number stood at 3,598 in 2007.

These numbers suggested that both in 2008 and 2009, not only were militant networks able to consolidate, but they were also able to carry out attacks all over Pakistan. The aim of the operation also included securing lines of communication along with dismantling the TTP's infrastructure. Due to the intensity of the operation, most of the militants moved to Orakzai Agency, the former base of Hakimullah Mehsud, and therefore, the military announced the operation was a success by the end of the year, marking an end to the first phase of the operation. Also, learning from its failures and mistakes during 2004 and 2008 operations, the military went into South Waziristan with a methodical approach, with forces higher in number compared to militants, along with seizing higher grounds to control the valleys. On December 12, 2009, Pakistan's then Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani announced that the operation in South Waziristan was successfully over and that the scope of the operation might shift to the Orakzai Agency.

Operation Brekhna (Lightning)

In late 2009 the Pakistani military engaged in a campaign to clear criminals and militants from the Mohmand Agency. The operation came as a result of militant groups taking over the administration of the Agency, enforcing Sharia and placing a ban on shaving beards and music. In September that year, the military had claimed to have cleared 80 per cent of the Agency of militants in September. However low-intensity conflict still continued. Due to the situation in the Agency, the operation was the longest running operation by the Pakistani military as it later became part of operation Zarb-e-Azb.

Operation Koh-e-Sufaid (White Mountain)

The operation, launched roughly between July 2 and 4, 2011 was intended to target the TTP militants in the Kurram Agency. Kurram Agency's importance was related to the fact that not only was it based between North Waziristan and Khyber, but also provided the shortest route between Pakistan and Afghanistan's capital Kabul. Before 2007, the Kurram Agency – with 40 /60 ratio of Shia and Sunni population – witnessed low key sectarian conflicts. It was post-2007 that the TTP, in search of new safe havens, not only entered the Agency but also brought along other groups such as the Al Qaeda affiliated Haqqani Network. The military decided to launch the operation when the TTP had captured the Thal-Parachinar road, which connected the Kurram Agency with Peshawar.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), before the operation, incidents of sectarian killing, terrorism and kidnapping for ransom had increased in the Agency. The military's operation team consisted of 4,000 soldiers, heavy artillery and air support. It was also one of the major operations where the tribal Lashkars (militias) also lent their support to the military fighting against the militants. Due to the intensity of the nature of the operations, as many as 100,000 people fled their homes from Kurram, seeking refuge in temporary shelters in Peshawar and surrounding areas. On August 11, 2011, the then chief of the Army General Ashfaq Kayani visited the Kurram Agency to mark the end of the operation, which the army claimed was successful in rooting out terrorism from the Agency.

Operation Khyber 1, 2, 3 and 4

Even though the military had claimed relative success after the conclusion of operation Sirat-e-Mustaqeem (see above) in Khyber Agency, the region still continued to host local militant groups such as Lel, Jamat ul Ahrar (JuA) and the TTP. This led to a series of operations - started to support Operation Zarb e Azb - codenamed Khyber (named after the tribal Agency) 1, 2, 3 and 4, aimed at eliminating the aforementioned militant groups. Khyber 1 started in October 2014 and went on for over a month with the military claiming that nine militants were killed in the first phase. In November, the Pakistani army, on its website, revealed that over 350 militants had surrendered during the operation, including 20 high profile leaders.

As per reports, the operation was concluded in February 2015, with the announcement of Khyber 2 in the same region. During this operation, which concluded in on June 15, 2015, the military claimed to have cleared the area of TTP and Lel, but in the process also lost 50 soldiers. It was further claimed that Lel's Mangal Bagh, along with his men, moved to Naziyan district of Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

The military, after the conclusion of the operation, was not able to claim control of three important passes connecting with Afghanistan, in the Tirah Valley, and claimed that it could not be done even after the operation through air strikes. This led many to believe that a next operation in the Agency was also in the offing.

Due to the unachieved objectives from previous two operations, the Pakistan army launched operation Khyber 3 on August 16, 2016, with the help of Pakistan Air force's fighter jets, bombarding militant locations. As per military sources, key mountainous passes were secured in Rajgal valley with as many as 40 militants killed in the operation.

The operation officially concluded when operation Khyber 4 was started in the Agency on July 15, 2017, as part of operation Radd-ul-Fasad, to again rid the Khyber Agency of terror groups such as the Islamic State (IS), especially in Rajgal valley. It was reported on July 23, 2017, that the army had cleared the valley of terror groups, losing two soldiers during the operation. On August 21, 2017, the military announced the conclusion of Khyber 4, claiming Khyber Agency to be militant free. It was revealed that over 52 militants were killed during the course of the six-week operation.

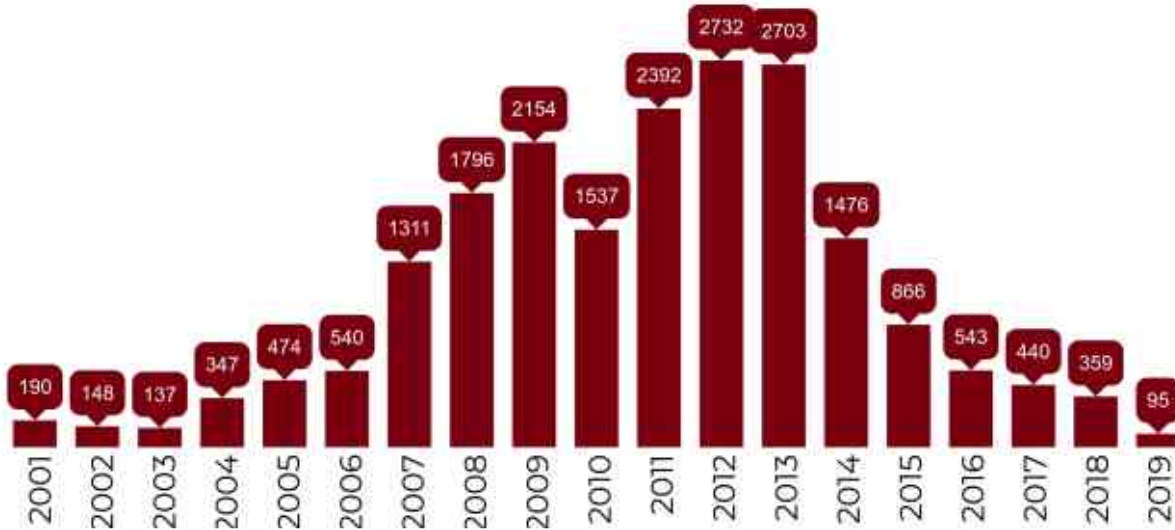
Operation Zarb-e-Azb (Strike of Azb)

Through various operations in the Swat valley of KP province, and former-FATA, the military was able to clear most of the region from militant organizations. The military had also claimed to have cleared most of former-FATA, especially because a number of militants had moved to North Waziristan, which was closer to Afghanistan. Therefore, North Waziristan was still hosting not only the TTP, but also militants from other groups such as the Al Qaeda, the East Turkemanistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).



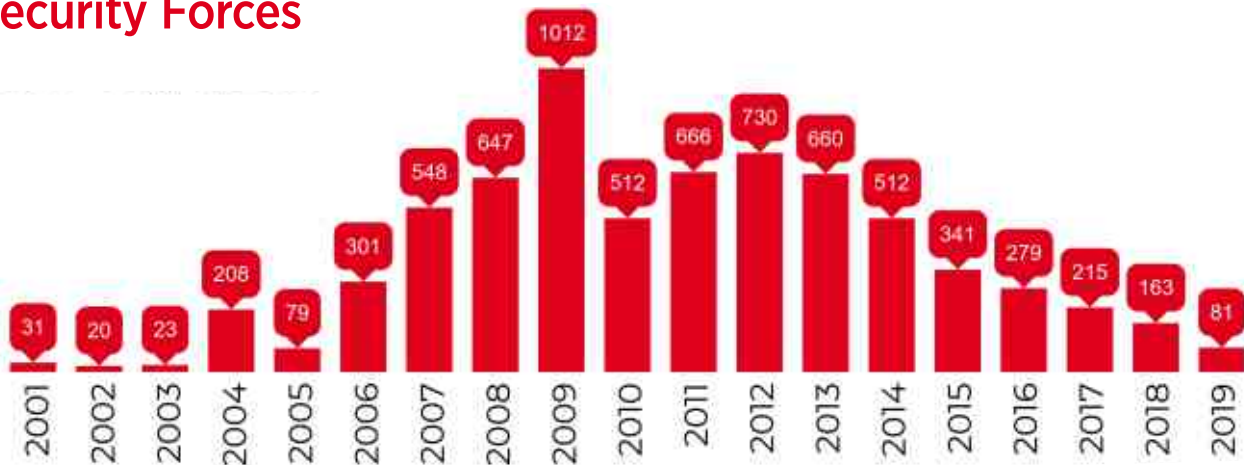
Fatalities from terrorism and counter-terrorism in Pakistan 2001-July 4, 2019

Civilians



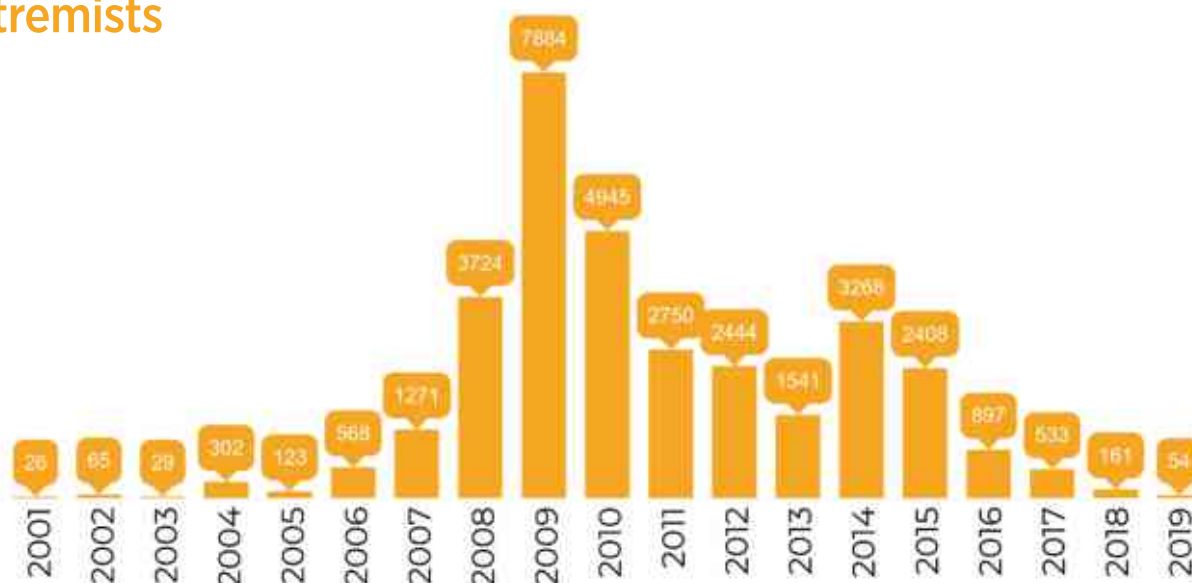
Even though Operation Zarb-e-Azb was supposed to begin in 2012, lack of public support held the military back from launching it in North Waziristan. The operation finally started a week after June 8, 2014, when the TTP attacked Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, killing 36 and injuring 18. In terms of media coverage, logistics and public support, Zarb-e-Azb was by far the most high profile operation that the military had conducted. On paper, this was also an operation that did not distinguish between the 'good' Taliban and the 'bad' Taliban, targeting all groups present in North Waziristan.

Security Forces



Later that year, the militant groups conducted the most devastating attack in the country's history, killing 135 children at the Army Public School in Peshawar, KP. A week after the attack, the government, in consultation with political parties and the military, announced a 20 point National Action Plan (NAP), with the aim of rooting out terrorism from the country. With the whole country – including the civil-military establishment – on one page supporting counter-terror operations, Zarb-e-Azb's initial results and outcomes were positive. The year 2015 saw a sharp decline with violence-related deaths dropping from 7,611 in 2014 to 4,635 in 2015.

Terrorists/Insurgents/ Extremists



According to a military press release, which also signified the conclusion of the operation on February 22, 2017, the operation was a success as it helped clear out over 4,000 square kilometres of North Waziristan from militants. Additionally, the operation was based on over 19,000 small and large Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs), which helped in seizing 243 tonnes of explosives, shut down 7,500 bomb-making locations, killed 3,500 militants and wiped out close to a thousand sanctuaries and militant locations in the region.

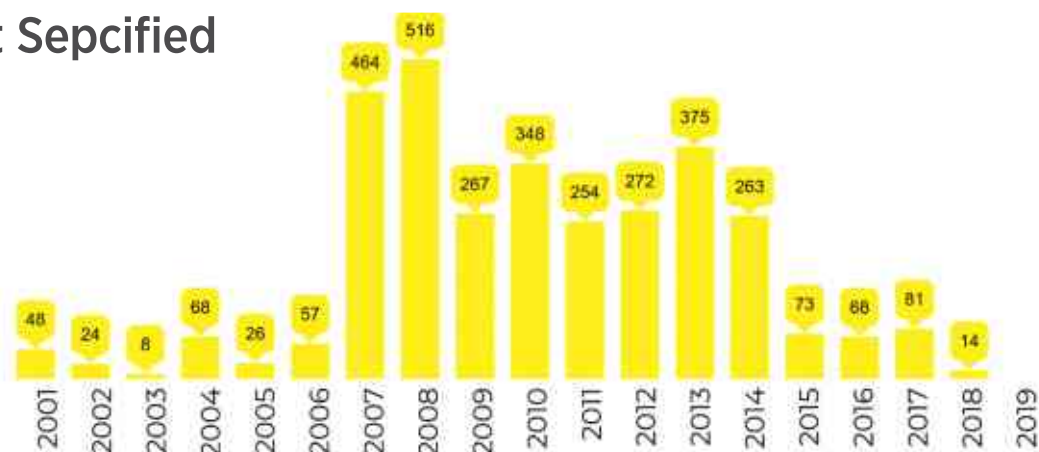
Table: Fatalities from violence and counter violence in FATA during Operation Zarb-e-Azb Jun 15 - Dec 15, 2014

Affiliation of victims	Fatalities
Militants/Insurgents/Criminals	
Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and affiliates*	204
Lashkar-i-Islami (LI)	123
LI/TTP	88
Uzbek militants	44
Haqqani Network (HQN)/TTP-Gul Bahadur group	20
Others**	39
Total	518
Security Personnel	
Khassadar	12
Levies - including Polio team guards	9
Total	21
Civilians	60
Grand Total	599

*Includes Tariq Afridi group, Gul Bahadur group, Jangraiz group, Geedar group, and the Mohmand/Orakzai groups, in addition to other suspected attacks.

**Includes Al Qaida, the nexus of HQN/TTP and the nexus of LI/TL.

Not Specified



Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad (Rejection of Discontent)

Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad is an ongoing operation that was announced on February 22, 2017, the day on which Operation Zarb-e-Azb was concluded. The operation was not only limited to the tribal areas, but its scope was expanded to the whole country, with a focus on de-weaponizing and explosive control. The operation was intended to eliminate all remaining terrorism threats present in the country. The operation was started on the back of a fresh wave of terror attacks in February, where militants targeted all four provinces – Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Punjab province – and the Pashtun tribal areas.

Current Situation

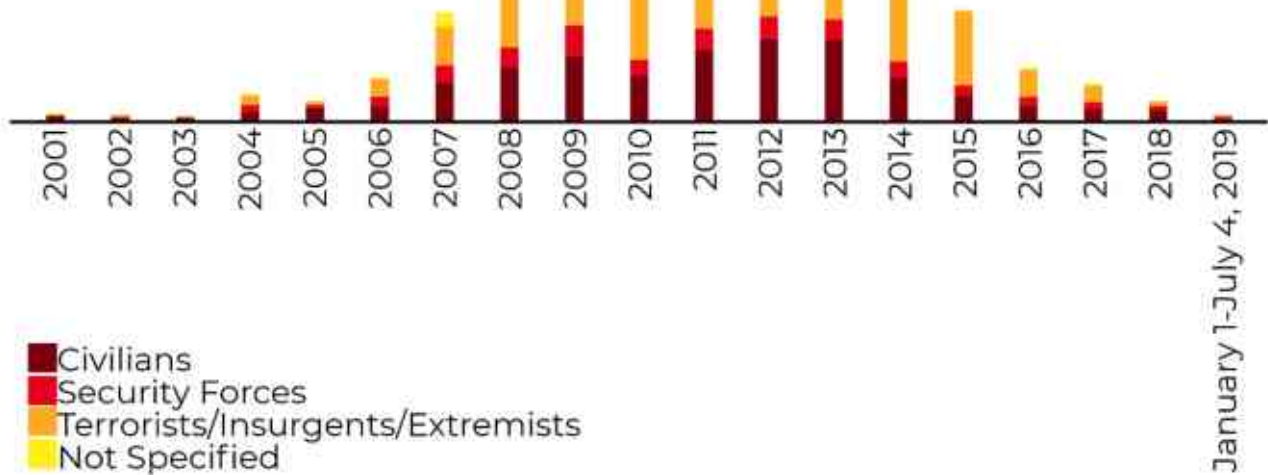
Based on the data below from South Asia Terrorism Portal, it is clear that Zarb e Azb's initiation in 2014 played a major role in drastically curbing militancy.

Fatalities from violence and counter violence in Pakistan 2001 - July 4, 2019

Year	Civilians	Security Forces	Terrorists Insurgents Extremists	Not Specified	Total
2001	190	31	26	48	295
2002	148	20	65	24	257
2003	137	23	29	8	197
2004	347	208	302	68	925
2005	474	79	123	26	702
2006	540	301	568	57	1466
2007	1311	548	1271	464	3594
2008	1796	647	3724	516	6683
2009	2154	1012	7884	267	11317
2010	1537	512	4945	348	7342
2011	2392	666	2750	254	6062
2012	2732	730	2444	272	6178
2013	2703	660	1541	375	5279
2014	1476	512	3268	263	5519
2015	866	341	2408	73	3688
2016	543	279	897	68	1787
2017	440	215	533	81	1269
2018	359	163	161	14	697
January 1-July 4, 2019	95	81	54	0	230
Total*	20377	7036	33013	3227	63653

Fatalities from terrorism and counter-terrorism in Pakistan **Combined**

2001 - July 4, 2019
for complete data, please see the preceding graphs or charts

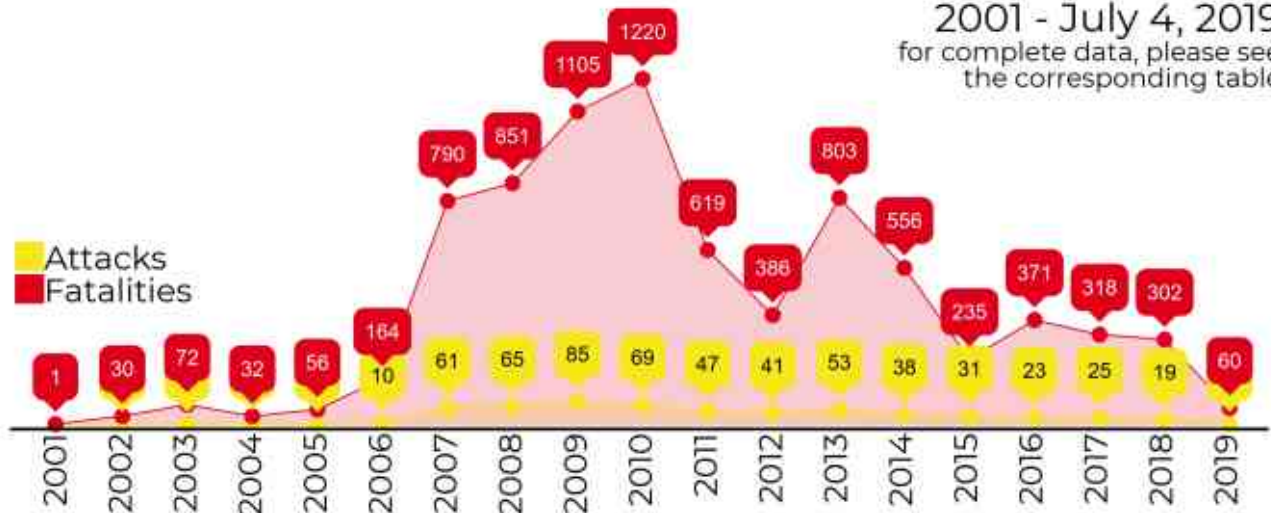


Moreover, all parameters of violence are now showing significant decline. The noticeable parts in the following graphs are the lows and spikes in the occurrences of these attacks. After the Swat operation in 2009, a steep drop in suicide attacks can be traced from 2010 onward that goes up to the year 2012. In 2013, it took another leap and from 2014 (Operation Zarb-e-Azb) onward it goes down further and after a little bump in 2016 it continues declining. The fatalities of civilians in suicide attacks were over 70% and of security personnel 17%.

Fatalities from suicide attacks in Pakistan 2001 - July 4, 2019

Year	Attacks	Fatalities
2001	1	1
2002	2	30
2003	2	72
2004	6	32
2005	4	56
2006	10	164
2007	61	790
2008	65	851
2009	85	1105
2010	69	1220
2011	47	619
2012	41	386
2013	53	803
2014	38	556
2015	31	235
2016	23	371
2017	25	318
2018	19	302
2019	5	60
Total	587	7231

Fatalities from **suicide attacks** in Pakistan
2001 - July 4, 2019
for complete data, please see the corresponding table

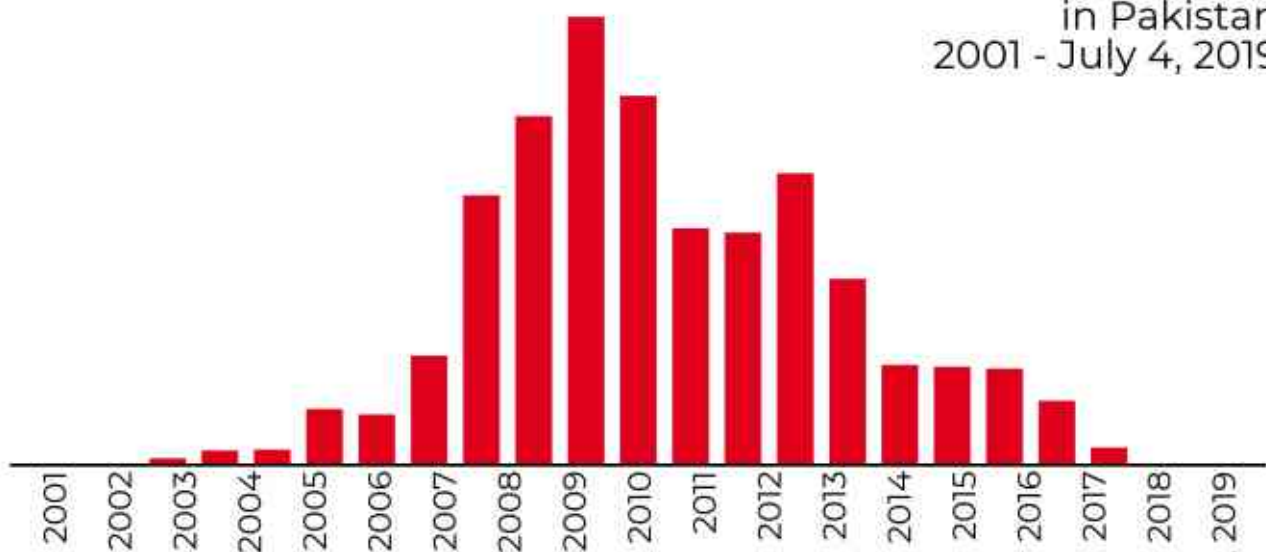


The incidents of bomb, IED, and landmine explosions also followed a trend similar to suicide attacks.

Fatalities from explosions in Pakistan
2001 - July 4, 2019

Year	Total
2001	37
2002	80
2003	85
2004	307
2005	277
2006	599
2007	1476
2008	1910
2009	2453
2010	2021
2011	1296
2012	1272
2013	1597
2014	1019
2015	548
2016	538
2017	528
2018	352
4-Jul-19	96
Total*	16600

Fatalities from **explosions** in Pakistan 2001 - July 4, 2019



The decline in terrorism makes it very clear that effective security operations against the heavily armed outlaws were an effective way of bringing down militancy. The bulk of the minor skirmishes in the region are a result of cross-border attacks. Moreover, one of the major indicators of the military's success in former-FATA is the fact Washington has stopped accusing Pakistan of harbouring or supporting the Haqqani Network in the tribal areas.

Additionally, a halt of US drone strikes, with no strikes since July 2017, also suggest that no "high or middle level" militant leaders remain in the tribal areas and have moved to Afghanistan. However, even with this level of success, the situation in the tribal belt still remains far from ideal, especially with geo-political developments in Afghanistan. Pakistan will have to ensure that its strategic gains are not lost as the situation unfolds.





Preempting and Preventing Extremism & Terrorism: Inclusive Approaches Needed

Dr. Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed has an extensive experience of studying, evaluating and implementing peacebuilding projects in Pakistan. He is a research fellow at Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University, Australia. Dr. Zahid Shahab had a detailed conversation on the subject of countering terrorism in Pakistan. Matrix Mag interviews renowned peace expert Dr. Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Matrix Mag (MM): People use the terminologies extremism and terrorism interchangeably. For a common Pakistani, how would you differentiate between the two?

Zahid Shahab Ahmed (ZSA):

For a common Pakistani, these terminologies may mean different things because they are highly politicized in the way they are used in Pakistan as well as outside. Even in academia there are different definitions, but the way I understand it is the key difference that there can be many extremist groups that promote hate speech and extremists ideas but may not necessarily be engaging in terrorist activities.

MM: Pakistan is still being labeled as a country that is promoting terrorism although we have had significant successes in the past decade or so to control terrorism. In your opinion, has Pakistan dealt with the issue effectively in the past decade?

ZSA: My response to this will be based on what has been happening on the ground. Unfortunately, the focus of Pakistan has largely been on counter terrorism than on actually countering extremism and in my opinion for valid reasons too. There was a time in the not too distant past, when terrorist attacks in Pakistan were an everyday reality. But, now it is very rare to see a terrorist attack happening in Pakistan and credit should be given to certain policies and measures; for example moving around in major cities, you'll see high security and surveillance. So the approach of counter terrorism, needs some transformation and that will come through greater civil military coordination and collaboration. But, now we have to move beyond and we need to have a more in depth approach of countering extremism because even if there are groups who are not directly engaged in acts of violent extremism, they are still promoting those ideologies that can lead people towards involvement in violent terrorist activities.

Pakistan's reaction to counter extremism, as far it's performance is a mixed bag of successes and failures/challenges. In the past decade for example, the

adopted approaches have largely been heavy handed and reactionary. As such, the National Action Plan (NAP) was only formulated after the terrorist attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar. Within the National Action Plan, there is a greater focus on counter terrorism than extremism. Very little attention has been paid to soft approaches such as preventing violent extremism through education or Peace Education. I think the national action plan goes as far as to the issue of Madrassa registration only and not really educational reforms i.e. changes in the text books and teacher training, etc.

So the reality is that extremism does not only exist but continues to spread across the country. In my opinion, now the challenge is even greater with the online hate speech. There is no single day when I don't receive online hate speech through WhatsApp and Facebook, etc. While the government has tried to deal with this challenge of online hate speech by blocking certain social media accounts, I think it has failed to realize that such approaches are not long term or sustainable. There is a need for teaching our people about critical digital literacy to build their resilience against online hate speech and extremist material.

MM: A dedicated government institution National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was supposed to formulate policies and monitor the progress on the different points of the NAP. How do you rate its performance?

ZSA: I may have some reservations vis-à-vis their role, but I will be more subjective in terms of my analysis; e.g. when NACTA was set up, the approach was very reactionary in the aftermath of the attack on the APS in Peshawar. And then for a few years it wasn't fully operational. I think it became operational only recently. It has started to expand and now has various departments e.g., research and creating a counter-narrative, etc. I think the challenge is in the area of counter narrative, since it requires a much deeper understanding of the issue and what sort of extremist material is out there. So once, I think NACTA is able to produce that amount of research, it can ultimately develop

counter narratives also.

I think a bigger challenge is of political will. Several of these extremist elements are coming into the mainstream politics and they are able to pressurize the government as in the recent elections, one of these religious parties, came out as maybe the fourth or fifth biggest political parties in Pakistan. Looking at their vote bank and success, it appears that these elements have gained a large amount of public support due to which even secular parties like Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) couldn't implement certain things e.g., having an Ahmedi in the economic advisory council and there were certain other issues on which the government had to back track.

There has also been a rise of extremism in the educated class. We have seen this at LUMS; there was an issue of IBA student engaged in a terrorist attack; a medical student who was about to go to Syria to join the ISIS, etc. This shows a new dynamic in violent extremism and NACTA therefore has signed an MOU with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to introduce a university level course on preventing violent extremism. Now we have to wait and see how they develop this course and how they implement it. It is not going to be easy because in many universities, we have certain student groups that are supported by university administrations. Jamiat being one among them. Thus, a lot has to change in terms of structures for NACTA to be fully operational. NACTA also needs transformation in its approach through greater civil military cooperation. It still appears to be dominated by security sector people.

MM: A lot of criticism was placed on Madrasa system of education to be the root cause of extremism/terrorism. Do you agree with this?

ZSA: I don't think madrassas should be the only ones to be blamed. Of course there is a deeper history of how madrassas were established especially the ones that promoted a jihadi or militant mindset. In the 1980s, when Pakistan was engaged in the Afghan Soviet Jihad more than 1000 madrassas were set up across the country for that very purpose. And the curriculum for that was produced at the University of Nebraska. I've done extensive research on this issue over the years and it reveals aspects that contradict the popular point of view that madrassas are promoting extremist ideologies, that they are also not willing to be mainstreamed or reformed. I think one has to be sympathetic to madrassas too. What happened after 9/11, through all the CVE efforts, is a greater stigmatization of madrassas and their students.

MM: Peacebuilding should have an inclusive approach. Has Pakistan taken on board all the stakeholders in dealing with this issue? What will happen when the security forces are withdrawn from some of the sensitive areas?

ZSA: That's also my concern. This is a similar concern in relation to what happens to Afghanistan once the NATO troops leave. The analysts are saying, most likely it will go back to another wave of civil wars. Similar is the case of Pakistan- what happens when the government withdraws troops from all these areas where the military has been engaged in counter terrorism? The local people have developed strong grievances against the state and those grievances can be exploited by elements inside and outside of the country. In terms of peacebuilding approaches, I think

what has been lacking is the civil military cooperation. Also, there is lack of government versus the non-government sector cooperation because one reality of the past 14 – 15 years is that the NGOs have been doing a lot of work in the peacebuilding sector and perhaps there are a lot of best practices that the government can adopt. What government can do at the national level, the NGOs can never do because they are largely dependent on foreign funding that comes for a short span of time and often has its own political angles to it. Sadly, in Pakistan, there is now a deep mistrust from the government on the NGOs, which is visible in the form of crack down on the non-government organizations. I therefore, don't see any cooperation between the two in the peacebuilding sector though it is the need of the time.

MM: What, in your opinion should be the priorities of the government for preventing and preempting extremism and terrorism in future?

ZSA: What Pakistan needs to do is to have zero tolerance for terrorist funding and existence of any forms of extremist groups. In Pakistan there are many non-state actors that are able to engage in acts of violence. I think another priority for the government should be to stop outsiders from interference in Pakistan's domestic affairs. This also means telling some of our close friends to stop funding extremist groups in Pakistan. Pakistan has had great success in terms of stopping these external sources of funding, but still, there are non-formal ways of transferring money through some channels and the extremist groups are still able to generate local funding because Pakistani people give a lot of charity on certain occasions.

I also think the national action plan needs to be more comprehensive and has to move beyond the 20 bullet points. There is a need for a comprehensive approach and preventing violent extremism through education. This of course will demand curriculum reforms. And there is a need for teacher training for public and private schools as well as madrassas. One of the major challenges to countering violent extremism in Pakistan is the parallel education system. There is a need for greater seriousness on this issue. Public awareness through media will be fruitful towards a more sustainable approach to countering violent extremism.



Operation; Clean up Karachi!

Mawara Tahir

When it comes to the environment; clean, pure and green strikes the mind. People are responsible for its purification or contingency. It is us who contaminate it, make it impure or pure. Similarly, our environment makes us who we are? We breathe all the air around, and littering makes it even worse. Where will you head after littering? This waste originates from us, at the end of the day we will end up breathing the same garbage we litter. It doesn't just affect humans but also the living beings living with us, litter on the ground degrades natural areas and kills plants and animals. Even marine life is being affected due to this menace. Billions of tons of litter are dumped into the ocean each year, and it is more than the 250 million trashes that is being generated each year. This leads to the repeated killing of fish on a daily basis and the gradual depletion of marine life. One of the destructive germs is Scavengers. They can have wrecking impact on the harvests as dairy cattle are vulnerable from ingesting the chemical objects or even metal of the trash. Believe it or not, the litters we produce are causing more species to become endangered as well as causing innovation in the myriad of diseases and inhaling unhygienic, garbage-full air.

Regarding this various initiatives are being taken by the government of Pakistan to provide pure and hygienic environment as well as to bring out clean Pakistan. Recently the environment pollution tend to reach its saturation in Karachi with sky high garbage heaps, open sewage drains causing deaths, unattended garbage dumps; on which Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi, pledged to clean up the heart of Pakistan; the city of lights; Karachi, in just two weeks.

In his tweet, the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Syed Ali Haider Zaidi, said "Inshallah" with the help of the people of this great city, we will clean up Karachi from trash in the next 2 weeks". Replying to the minister's tweet, the K-Electric announced that "K-Electric fully supports Karachi cleanup initiative by Mr Ali Zaidi and will help in every way possible."

There was a dire need for this campaign to take place as Karachi is oozing out with the stink of unclear waste dumps to the obnoxious fumes from burning plastic to the infectious possibilities of medical waste and the cesspools of wet garbage. Especially after the monsoons, it flared up the noxious stench and alarmed the people who are now rooting to get rid of the hazard. There had been emergency enforced in the city to clean the city thoroughly.

Zaidi seems to be optimistic about this enterprise but the provincial, the local governments including Mayor Karachi did not seem very hopeful about the cleaning campaign. "Governments aren't interested in Karachi, especially the Sindh government, such campaigns did not

yield fruitful results" said Waseem Akhtar. On the contrary, people are supporting the operation and to make it possible, common citizens and celebrities alike, are volunteering to standby this great cause. Pak Sar Zameen Party's (PSP) Raza Haroon responded to Zaidi's tweeted that "it was a good initiative and all stakeholders should be on one page".

"Whatever Ali Zaidi had said should be implemented and all the drains of the city should be cleaned" said Anwar Maqsood.

Singer Fakhir Mehmood said that "it was a terrific initiative for Karachi. Let's neaten it up and make a difference. Count me in buddy".

"It is an excellent initiative by Zaidi for the city of lights. We Zalmis' will play in a beautiful Karachi," said cricketer Wahab Riaz

Moreover, K-Electric in an announcement said that they anticipate joining the #Let'sCleanKhi activity propelled by Zaidi and guarantee a cleaner and greener city. Right around 6,000 tons of trash is tossed into the ocean consistently, the PTI pioneer stated, including that Ghani ought to be approached to resign immediately from local government ministership after his failure, as his negligence has caused enough damage.

"Wearing colourful jackets like Shehbaz Sharif does, is of no use. Saeed Ghani has failed." mentioned Zaidi

"We will take whatever action that we can take," he had said, hinting towards the likelihood of legal action against the electricity provider. As to the 19 individuals who were electrocuted to death during the heavy rains in the course of recent days, the federal minister said the K-Electric (KE), Karachi's sole power provider, would be held liable.

A day prior, Ghani implied that the provincial government may make legitimate move against the KE for the recent fatal deaths from electrocution. He had considered the federal and local governments in charge of the tumult that emerged in the city.

So we are hopeful to see a clean green Pakistan as revolutionary measures are being taken to restore the beauty and balance of the country. We pray that this drive and these initiatives for dirt-free Pakistan and to eliminate plastic bags for healthier environment will succeed and endure for a longer period of time.

Because at the end of the day it is us who are contaminating our home, this is us turning out all the garbage. It is us who needs to change first in order bring change in the country.

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Journey to Self Discovery is Possible

Umair Jaliawala

Saad Gul interviews Umair Jaliawala, who is a decade strong consultant and trainer on leadership, a motivational speaker, social entrepreneur, and a personal coach who is driven by ideals, not idols. As a trainer, Umair Jaliawala assimilates business, religion, philosophy, and psychology in a way that makes participants of his sessions reflect, grow, celebrate, cry, and connect.

Matrix Mag (MM): Thank you so much for joining us for this conversation. I'll dive right into my first question. When we see problems and problems only, it is generally a perception problem. And you often say that there's opportunity in every problem. What do you mean by that?

Umair Jaliawala (UJ): I'm glad you picked that one up. That is something that has driven me all this while, that the things we complain about are exactly what needs somebody's work. It is somebody's job, it is somebody's enterprise. It is somebody's social project. So all the problems around have opportunities built in to them because your mind is seeing a problem there, which means there's a better state that you want this problem to go to and be able to perhaps enjoy that. And seeing life this way has helped me understand that if my school had a terrible policy, it was an opportunity for me to be an activist. If the kids of Lyari didn't have great engagement available, they were isolated. I could do great activities. It was an opportunity turned into many projects. I had many young people joining me for it.

In the corporate world, when you go to the professional sector, people are working without owning what they are doing, not growing and facing challenges because they have not trained in these subjects. That is where our training comes in. These are all my opportunities which were actually problems. So I advise that look at every problem as an opportunity. But also to keep in mind that not every problem is your opportunity. Each problem is an opportunity, but which problem is your biggest problem? And that's where the drive comes from.

MM: I love that. You recently said in one of your talks that magic happens outside of your comfort zone and breaking out of the comfort zone requires a certain level of self reflection. How important do you think it is to break out of that comfort zone? If we want to level up?

UJ: So you must have had friends in your schooling and people in your family, are you really honest with them? Do you tell them what you feel about them and what they're doing?

Only if I'm successful, then feedback is given...even then, it's too feeble and weak because I have good applause and good thumbs up coming my way from the simplest social interactions, which are biased, prejudiced according to what I want to hear. I wonder how do you plan on creating magic in this world without having an introspective lens on your own life, putting yourself under the microscope. You know, I received thousands of comments on the things that I put out. Are they me? Not exactly, but it's a perception about me, about what I'm doing and how it's being received. And then there's a side that I know. And to put the two together is a great way of getting honest feedback. Try getting evidence for it. Look at the numbers you've generated. If I'm a trainer, I look at my own videos, I see myself there and when I see it, I can catch exactly the things that others were highlighting or that I was feeling was a miss. Why is this magic outside the comfort zone? I've been telling many stories and some of them are my comfort and they work. But I truly feel amazing when I pick up something new, something that is giving me the goosebumps when I'm talking about them and when I'm enlightened by it.

I applied two simple things. If I keep going to the same restaurant, I can't expect magic there. If I keep hanging out with the same people, it's going to be routine, and we're not designed for that. We're human beings who have a psychological need to chase the new. Bring this to your professional life and your personal life. And now ask yourself, what all do you do? Do you know what you can deliver to this world? What are the things which you've already done? What are the things that you don't know? Who are the people that you need to meet? What are the skills that you've got to learn? You can just imagine what

you're doing right now and add to that. You are, you know, and it's not just magic for the world telling that it's magic. It's that you feel magical, you're a Wizard, you're creating and you know nothing is too big to be cracked.

MM: Self-help gurus and life coaches and social media these days can tend to make us believe that happiness is an absence of problems. However, that's not true. I mean there are all kinds of seasons in life and it's actually how we deal with our fears or insecurities that actually determines how happy we are. What do you think about that?

UJ: My advice is to not read a lot of self-help and don't listen only to the gurus of this genre. I know I'm also classified in this genre and I'm saying this because I think Pakistanis especially have all read the same 50 books. And so we all think the same and we talk about the same names and many of them self-help. What about history? What about sports? What about the rise and fall of empires? What about science? What about technology? I work to inspire people and I think that can come from anywhere. It doesn't need me to just tell people, "hey, you can, you can, you can". It's also, "hey, look what all is around." That helps people sort of take responsibility and believe that they can.

Happiness is cognitive. It comes out of thinking. It's seeing what all is there and then coming towards rather than just being pushed into whatever you imagine. My advice is that you should expand the horizons of your imagination. Number one. Number two, motivational speakers paint a very rosy picture of life and they would make you believe that every instance you can be happy. I believe that human beings can wire themselves into anything and motivational

speakers sort of take it to an extreme level and say that it is possible. So yes, I say that that's possible.

Is it practical? Is it desirable in my dictionary? No, because I too believe that yes, life has seasons and the grieving has its own amazing powers. It cleans you, your frustrations, your pains lead to a lot of drives in your life. And Trust me, you learn the most on an empty stomach, the broken heart and probably a cashless wallet. And so to receive life with that, then there is growing up, I'm not what I was five years ago and to graduate into a new role. I think that piece is what motivational speakers don't quite cover well, to help people through those phases. So I agree with the big paradigm and I think it's needed because the world has become very negative, paranoid. Every important building is like a fort. These days, everybody is wondering "Hey, am I good enough", and, "am I going to get enough likes or comments".

MM: So our days here on earth are numbered and we all get 1440 minutes every day. Successful people clearly understand that, creating more time and freedom is all about setting priorities. How do you frame optimum time management and whether there are any tools, tactics, or mechanisms that one can design to get the best out of 24 hours?

UJ: Oh, they are plenty. My mind has been buzzing with ideas and I started very young and learnt on the job. I'm saved because I have a calendar and that calendar is... You know, I was training and I lost my cousin and I was training and it was 10 in the morning and I got the news. That calendar has saved me honestly, where it has been tough. It



has been...I'm sitting here, I have to report on wherever the training is tomorrow. It could be anywhere in this country, it could be outside.

Nothing will bring a lost second back. But we all waste time, so do we just put our hands up in that second, no. The key in my view is to really feel fulfilled that you did what you had to, you were yourself and you lived it in the best possible way. I believe in that. Pick up your must. Pick up your shirts and pick up your coats. I'll give an easy tool here that just put down whatever you want to do and use this simple tool.

What is the one thing that you must do? What does it do for you? What would you do if you had all the time in this world? For a student that must is their schooling and their own personality. For a professional, that must is the contract they have signed. These musts are non-negotiable. Your faith gives you some must. Your country gives you some must. I know for a fact that our life has enough time to do the must. The problem is that it's the coulds that motivate people instead of musts. I'll rest my case here. That's all that I know about time management.

MM: Expectations, is there an opportunity for us to own up to our laziness and our fears and insecurities? How does this apply to individuals?

UJ: It's a two edged sword, expectations. Having done it for 12 years now, when I walk into a hall, I'm expected to do a lot of things and I may not be in the mood. I might be preoccupied, or I might just have had a bad day. But there is expectation. So yes, it helps me because I have to live up to that expectation. Just like you expect performance from a great batsman so that batsman can turn around and say that yes your expectations kept me going and helped me. But for the, superstars, the expectations can be killers too. And I learned this very early because I did a program called Dastan-e-Ishq and there was just everything that I believed in, in that experience and I wanted to present, I put it into a musical sequence and it was a success.

I did good 150 dastans, but all the people who attended them would say to me that it was good. I think in artists' minds that when you have a bestseller and you need to write another one, it can be a killer. How I've learned to cope with it is also how it can help you. That is to have multiple strategies for dealing with different situations in life.

So I've come to this comfort now because sometimes you end up doing great work, and sometimes you end up doing things that don't match expectations. I got married late at 31 and I realized that my expectations didn't match up to what it was. And through that I've learned that barriers break when people talk. If you are expecting something from me and not telling me, I can keep going on for the next 10 minutes completely off. But let's have that chat. It needs a bit of vulnerability that is difficult to create. But in my life, I've tried creating that with my audiences. Even the

people I'd meet for the first time, I tell them in the first five minutes that you can help me score a lot of friends today.

Talk to people who have expectations and let them know that sometimes you just can't meet them. That's the way it is. And when you don't, I think those are the days that really, really tell you more about the relationship you're in. They tell you more about what you need to be doing. So just like the earlier question you had about introspection, think about it when you're walking into it, but also think about it when you come back from it and you're upset. And that thinking is usually emotional thinking, right? So separate that and go rationally, eventually you will calm down. Yeah, it's a dance.

MM: So there's never a perfect time to start anything. I personally believe like everything is right now. What would you say to the people who have been planning for so long? Just waiting for that perfect moment to start something that they've always wanted to do.

UJ: I would tell them to love themselves a little more and to be gentle to themselves. Being a perfectionist contributes to not liking yourself and what you produce. And wanting to be magical and to be right and to be great at all times, denies you of being human. Work with what you've got, today the whole world calls it MVP, minimum viable product. Whatever your idea is, turn it into a small thing that you can launch, that you can ship, that you can put out and now think, "What's the worst that would happen?"

It would not sell. It would not receive any traction. You'd probably get a nasty email to that or a nasty comment to that. So is the effort wasted? No, it's not because until this time it was only in your mind. By putting it out, you've also gotten some votes, some idea and some testing. Do a whole lot of it and do it every day. Do one thing everyday that scares you. Launch businesses, you know, if you have an extra car put it on Careem. If you have an extra shop, try doing something there and put a budget to it. This is my 50,000 failure budget. And I think that will give you a great reason to just go ahead and do it. Most ideas that that have really changed us were not ideas thought by an individual, but were ideas that resulted out of cross fertilization and people learning from each other.

That only happens when I put my idea out. Whatever I know or I have mastered, I am telling with all honesty. Now the audience can help me with it, can leave a comment on it, but if I don't do it, if I don't kick, I never score. So, that's what I have learned.

MM: You found your calling at such a young age. I think you were 17 at that time and but today there are millions of millennials' out there who feel lost. They're craving belonging and connection. What would you say to someone who hasn't found their passion yet? Regardless of how old they are or what stage of life they're in?

UJ: You don't need to find it outside. You need to find it

inside. It's your passion so it can't be outside. It can't come from somebody else's advice. It has to come from your deepest realization. Positive is passionate.

If you look at it spiritually, then Allah had to get a lot done for our lives to unfold for this world to move forward. And he probably equipped all of us with some talents and with some pains as well, or if not by default then our own childhood got us to experience that and our code was written there, honor it. And you know, the beautiful part is that the back end could be this drive, this pain, but front end could be anything. In front end you could be a teacher and educator, a social worker, a corporate professional. Leave aside all the big templates and the tools and the profiles. Sit alone and ask yourself, what is it that gets you moving and focus on that.

MM: That's so powerful. I love this quote by Marcus Aurelius, it says that we love ourselves more than others, but we care about their opinion more than our own. Now we live in a society with a "what would people say?" syndrome. How can they break that trap and start taking action?

UJ: Learn from the class four story in the English book, father and a son taking a donkey and one of them sits and so people look around and they say, alright, child is sitting and the old father is walking, look at what young people are nowadays these days. And then they swap so the father is sitting and the child is sort of walking ahead and people look around and they say, oh, what kind of parents are they? We would never do that. So they both, they both sit on the donkey. So now people look and say, ah, couldn't even think about the poor animal. So they'd be both get off the donkey and now people say what stupid people.

I would like you to understand that everything you hear from anyone is their opinion. It's not a fact. It might be coming from a fact, but you can get down to the fact because it's about you.

You have lived this life, whatever happened in it you had dealt with it, you dealt with people, they dealt with you, but does anyone have the right to decide your next move? Or to spoil your mood? I have my phone on do not disturb. Now you know why? Because I don't want a random guy taking my attention away. That's what I tried doing with the opinions I hear. However, it can lead to some narcissism that you start believing in everything that you say is right. Therefore, go with a flexible mind and don't turn it into a debate. Your job is not to protect yourself, but to understand where the other is coming from. Don't agree. Don't disagree. Just take it with you. Between the yes and no.

If you don't get into the emotional traps, if you just process and bring it back, you yourself will go back and go back better because everybody knows at the end of the day that I don't have all the answers. There are parts of what others are saying that might be right. Drop the defense and say, fine, people have processed, they're coming from

somewhere, find out where they're coming from and then you're in a better place to evaluate what you've got to change but please don't take other's opinions as your reality.

MM: That's so powerful. Before I ask my last question, where can people connect with you online?

UJ: Oh, my page, my Facebook page "Umair Jaliawala" you can find me on Instagram. I have a good youtube channel. So yes, you can reach out at all the social channels that you use and my team does get back, so I'm very accessible, that way. But it will be good if you joined me on the channels that you're not on because I'm trying for content to be separated based on the mood of the channel now. And I have my own website. It's "Jaliawala.com".

MM: Okay. What is the legacy that you want to be remembered by? I've never been scared of death. Every time I fly in alot of turbulence. It's good. There's Azaan happening. I love the timings of things.

UJ: I think that's the answer. It's wonderful. I was just reflecting. When you're born, they do the Azan. And that's the start, they say namaz e janaza, doesn't have the Azan because the Azan was done when you were born. So your life is actually the time between them. That's a wrap up. And what does the Azan say? It says, God is great. Human beings aspire to be great. Call each other. Great. Great, great, great. And what about your concept of God? If He is everything that is around this multi-verse, all of us, our imaginations, the idea of it, then sure it's great. And to be a witness to that, to accept that, to bow down to that, to have done it all your life, that you were not what your mind told you.

You were part of a larger scheme, a scheme far bigger than your own imagination and the little worries that you were born with and to believe in great people, great advice being sent down. Every culture has amazing people. I don't know how many of them qualified to be prophets. It's not that one man. It's the idea. It's the message to be supreme in your conduct throughout this life. To be a war strategist, to be an educator, to be a teacher, to be a husband, and yet be exemplary in all of that. That people can't stop writing about every move of yours. To be a witness to that, to pick the path of coming together, standing together, forming a culture together. I could do it in my own house. This call is for me to step out, to do it collectively. When you die to not just be how big you became or how big your family became, but people should show up at your funeral from unknown places and who can't even tell where all they've come from. When did they meet or what did they hear and yet they have something to say that how their life became better in the process. So come to the way of goodness, of prosperity. That's the call.



Everest Under a Woman's Feet

Samina Baig

Born in 1990 in Shimshal village, Gilgit-Baltistan Samina Baig is a Pakistani high-altitude mountaineer who in 2013 climbed Mount Everest. She is the first and only Pakistani woman to climb Everest and the Seven Summits. She is also the youngest Muslim woman to climb Mount Everest, having done so at the age of 21. Samina was the first to climb the peak Chashkin Sar (above 6,000 meters) in Pakistan in 2010, which was later renamed Samina Peak after her. In an exclusive interview with Matrix Mag, Samina shares her struggle, achievements and aspirations.

How it all the began

Since childhood, I was very fond of mountain climbing. I remember when I was in Grade 4, my brother used to tell me stories about mountain climbing. So it all began from there. But, my dream came true in 2010 when I actually started mountain climbing along with my brother. When I set off for my first expedition, I did not have enough knowledge regarding mountaineering but I went on my first adventure at that time to climb an inclined peak that was 6000 feet high.

Summitting Chashkin Sar

I still vividly remember, when I reached the summit of Chashkin Sar, I could not believe I had done it. It was an incredible moment for me and I can never forget it. Because I did not have enough knowledge regarding mountaineering initially, succeeding in climbing that peak was quite an achievement for me personally. Being a village girl, dreaming of mountaineering was quite an impossible task for me but everyone encouraged me. After I climbed the mountain, my team members too admired my effort and named the peak in my name i.e. Samina Peak. It felt absolutely beautiful to have a mountain named after me in my own beloved country- meaning my name will live forever. This further fueled my passion for mountaineering and ignited the fire within me for continuing what I had started.

Mountaineering a male sport?

Mountaineering is a totally male dominated sport in Pakistan. My success therefore has not only strengthened my belief in myself but has also paved way for other girls to pursue their dreams in this field. Let me share though that it is not an easy sport at all and needs a lot of hard work,

commitment and support from family and relevant institutions.

I give full credit of my success to my family, especially my brothers who are behind my success and achievements. My four brothers have supported me at every step. My brother summiting alongside me kept motivating me throughout. We were each others strength and support. When I felt tired or demotivated, my brother would encourage me and vice versa. My brother and I doing the summit together also sent a very strong message to all that if your family supports, anything can be achieved in life.

Breaking Clichés

For me, the real struggle began with my mission to climb Mount Everest in 2013. The mission was to climb Everest on its 60th anniversary. The training went on for three years and when I finally climbed the Mount Everest, it completely changed my life. But, it also changed the perception of Pakistani women abroad. It also challenged the cliché about Pakistani women being "vulnerable" and "confined".

What exactly does one require to be in this field?

I want to share that when you intend to climb a mountain you have to overpower your fears. Banish those fears from heart and mind, because mountain climbing is extremely challenging. I believe that mountain climbing is not about winning or losing but is a matter of life and death. You have to be well prepared for any eventuality before going on such expeditions.

I keep my feelings in control and remain prepared for any possibility- experience an avalanche, rock fall, crevasse fall or harsh weather ahead. Though we take safety measures besides mentally preparing ourselves to overcome any

mishaps, yet we often face health hazards like headaches, nausea and shortening of breath due to low oxygen levels but, it is part of the adventure and we are prepared for it.

I still recall that when I was on my quest at Chashkin Sar, as I got close to the summit my right leg got numb and I thought that I can't do this but people with me boosted my morale. I then thought that I had worked real hard to get to this point. My brother at this point gave me every possible aid to stand up on my feet again and reach the top.

Fear of climbing

I am often asked about how do I feel when I look down while climbing. After these many years, I have sort of overcome my fear of climbing and am not afraid of heights anymore but, I remember when for the first time I climbed Everest and when we were crossing Khumbu Icefall, there were iron ladders over the crevasses so when you're crossing those it certainly gives you jitters because those crevasses are very deep. So while doing that initially I felt afraid and was trembling but after crossing it, I felt quite normal.

On gender empowerment:

I really want women to be empowered in Pakistan. Also, I want women to be treated equally in all fields including sports. I wish that sports to be promoted rigorously in Pakistan, not just cricket but all the sports because we have a great amount of potential among our youth in Pakistan. All they need is to be motivated, encouraged and given proper opportunities to thrive. Often people lag behind and do not come forward because of the lack of support and opportunities.

Memorable moments

My journey till now has been vigorous but fantastic. Everest

till now is the most memorable one and one of my tremendous achievements. And about seven summits, people are not much aware about those so far, so being the first youngest Muslim Pakistani woman, I have done all seven mountains and have swayed Pakistan's flag on each of them. The voyage of seven summits was a remarkable experience as we had set a target to complete it in 8 months. So Antarctica, South America, North America and Africa; we summited these peaks in eight months and it was mind blowing.

My Inspiration

I am very much inspired by Edurne Pasaban, Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner- the first woman to climb all 14 eight-thousand and above peaks without supplementary oxygen and Mike Horn etc.

Government's Support

Recently, the government has taken a lot of initiatives to promote tourism in Pakistan which is great because it was really needed. Tourism was fairly bad because of the security issues and the **visa policies** which were quite restrictive. Tourists had to face a lot of challenges and hence they refrained from visiting Pakistan during the past decade or so but now the current government is working hard to revive and promote tourism in Pakistan.

Future Plans

Next thing in pipeline is K-2; which is the toughest peak. Though it is the second highest peak but it's very arduous in every aspect plus it is very steep, weather is harsh and secondly there is no manpower on K-2 so I think it's the most challenging peak. It is called the "mountain of mountaineers". It's been two years that I am planning for K-2 since it is my ultimate dream.





In Conversation with Zoe Viccaji

Zoe Viccaji is a music sensation. She has been showering industry with her mesmerizing voice and fiery music. She has made a remarkable impact on music industry; her style mixes new-age influences which leaves her fans enchanted. Her upbeat music with catchy lyrics makes people of all ages want to sing along. She is a bottomless barrel of musical ear candy, with high energy and good vibes. She worked in stage musicals Mamma Mia! And Chicago, she released her debut single Thinking about You in 2009. She joined Coke Studio in 2010 and collaborated with Strings and Bilal Khan and released the singles Mera Bichra Yaar and Anjane. Zoe released her debut album Dareeche in September 2014 under Universal music India. She won the Best Mixed Album award at the Indian Recording Arts (IRA) in India and Lux Style Award for Best Album in Pakistan. Also another enduring track "Phir Mili Tanhai". Zoe speaks to Matrix Mag in this exclusive interview.

Matrix Mag (MM): What is your idea of good music?

Zoe Viccaji (ZV): Something that transports you emotionally or physically, in a good way :)

(MM): What does music mean to you?

(ZV): Music is something that just makes life better- can you imagine what it would be like if there was no such thing as Music!? When I'm down good music makes me happy, when I need motivation to work out good music makes me push myself harder- and so much more.

(MM): Are you planning on continuing your music?

(ZV): Yes most definitely. I love making music, the bigger question I have is what kind of music I want to keep doing. I have been feeling a bit jaded lately and think it's time to shift gears!

(MM): If you got an offer from across the border would you go for it?

(ZV): Most definitely. I don't see why political issues should get in the way of human beings wanting to connect on a peaceful level.

(MM): How was your experience with Coke Studio?

(ZV): Always great- this year I am a main featured artist and while I'm super happy I was part of the line up, I really miss being part of the house band and being part of all the songs as a backing vocalist!

(MM): What drew you to the music industry?

(ZV): The Love for Music- I just love singing and making music. I think our music industry has a long way to go.

(MM): What do you enjoy most about being a singer?

(ZV): I Enjoy being on stage. I've always fed off the energy of an audience.

(MM): Do you have any mentor in music industry?

(ZV): I've always loved Sajjad Ali.

(MM): If you didn't become a musician what would you rather be?

(ZV): I'd rather be a vet.

(MM): Which song of your albums is close to your heart?

(ZV): Phir Mili tanhai-it's where it all started.

(MM): Who do you see as your tough competitor?

(ZV): I don't like seeing anyone as a competitor- we are all just on different levels.

(MM): Which instruments do you play?

(ZV): The guitar and novice on the piano.

(MM): What cheers you up?

(ZV): Friends and family being together. If they're not around, cleaning the house.

(MM): Have you ever dealt with performance anxiety?

(ZV): Yes it's a regular part of the job! It's less now than in the beginning but it always pops in to say hello at the oddest of times.

(MM): What is in your project pipeline next?

(ZV): Lots of collaborations and new songs. And finally completing the disco EP which I've had writers block on too!

(MM): One message you would like to give to your fans?

(ZV): To do what you love doing, And do it well. Don't settle for the mundane.



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Too Human?



Aliya Naseer Farooq
Content Editor

Charles Bukowski wrote in his poem "The Bluebird":

**There's a bluebird in my heart that wants to get out but I'm too tough for him I say, stay in there I'm not going to let anybody see you...
...I only let him out at night sometimes when everybody's asleep I say, I know that you're there so don't be sad then I put him back but he's singing a little in there, I haven't quite let him die and we sleep together like that with our secret pact and it's nice enough to make a man weep but I don't weep do you?**

How many times has someone said to you, "Oh c'mon you're too sensitive!" or "Hey, let it go...don't be so sensitive!" usually accompanied by a shrug, smirk or that patronising look that I call the "I am better than you" look. It is a common one. We all get it from almost all the people around us and may have given it to some people ourselves, for all we know.

Let me explain the dynamics of this particular scenario. I am a self-acclaimed expert on the above; having heard it all my life. That is half a century on this planet. I know my sensitivities. I can safely say that half of my time on earth has been spent listening, one third of it talking (most of it as a teacher...) and the rest being "sensitive!". I have listened to rants on how hurt "they" are, how "wronged", how "emotionally abused" and how "taken for granted".

That is my speciality, if any and as I do not have a degree in psychology, I cannot get paid for it. So, yes, it is all voluntary and yes I do pick up the call even when I know full well that the other end is going to vent... today, another day and then another.

"Why don't you just let it ring?" I have been asked. You know it will go on for an hour or more, it does and it happens again and again. I have never ever told my "venters" and "ranters" that they are being too sensitive. I restrain myself. I refrain from dishing out that one dismissive, "Hey, grow up... don't be too sensitive!"

Sometimes I have to literally pinch myself on the arm. I have bruises to show for it. Bite my tongue or whatever it takes but I never say, "You are too sensitive!"

You might think I'm a saint or something; let me clarify - the thought did cross my mind.

"You are superb, you can take a lot of **** and not react". Some saintly suspicion crept up my "over sensitive" mind but then it stopped in its first flush. I found myself using four, five, seven lettered words that I did not realise were part of my vocabulary. These after effects of listening to a particularly marathon rant session, happen far away from the world, thankfully in the seclusion of my bathroom.

These have a strange cleansing effect on the heart and mind. Having lived in Lahore all my formative years and doing what I do best - listening. Being a listener growing up in Lahore is an enlightening experience, to put it mildly. Our household was an island of decency in a sea of profanity. All in the most harmless, unintentional, regular manner.

Lahoris, you see, do not pay much heed to the frivolities of formality. Their realms of refinement only extend to the games of gourmet gastronomical genius. Here, they excel: how to cook the innermost organs of all halal four-legged and two-legged creatures. This "donkey" matter is a recent addition, I have no memory of it in my day. They have exquisite taste in all that concerns the digestive tract. Other matters relating to the tongue are not given any thought, whatsoever. Their "happy" is accentuated with a selection of obscenities reserved for congratulatory exclamations. Their "angry", well, that is when you need to immediately move to another room, house, country or continent. It includes the mention of body parts that no anatomy book ever explored.

Coming back to the question about sensitivity, you are sensitive means you have feelings, you show emotion. Insults, snide remarks, taunts and jibes affect you, as do manipulations and manoeuvres and underhand tactics. The best part of it all and the most difficult one is when you see it all, understand it all and can even predict the next move. To be able to exert self-control in those moments - those teeny tiny winks and wincing, the half-smile, the raised eyebrow. When they see-unsee you, forget to return your salaam, take forever to look up from their desk and let you stand till you either move away or forget what you came there for in the first place. Then there are those who when faced with a rational, logical, competent person who does not follow the dotted line drawn by them or has enough creativity and experience to think out of the box and who, God forbid, does not give them the lip service on which

they thrive or give them the praise which is oxygen to their hollow existence. If someone refuses to be a sycophant; all hell breaks loose.

They make up fantastical mighty towers of fake qualifications and expertise, not to forget the accent that goes with it, to make up for genuine work and self-realization. They stand on top of these towers looking down upon all the sweat and blood people that they need to satisfy their fanciful narcissistic existence and it works. Yes, believe me, it does. The whole act has a shelf life, of course. Like any other perishable item. The tower stands for a certain time and they know it. It is their game, after all, and they are good at it. They cultivate a circle of weak and insecure people around them as a safety barrier against the self-assured ones, those who have had enough experience in life to see through their facade. They need to bring them down before their tower of ice begins to melt. That is when they will hit you where it hurts, and it hurts. It does. You know why? Because the person being kicked in the stomach, the person you are backbiting or maligning, spreading false rumours about, is a real person. She has a real degree, real compassion, real self-respect, real self-control and real decent upbringing by honest and hardworking parents. This real person will not take attitude, will not praise where it is not due and she will not resort to the mean, weak and underhand tactics that she sees you stoop to each hour of every day.

Once you have succeeded in demolishing the reasonably decent, now you know in your twisted psychotic timeline, that it is time. You cannot do more damage around here. Move onto another pasture and wreak your havoc over there. If the ravaged one so much as winces in pain or lets a tear escape – "Ooohh she's too sensitive!", "I don't know what her problem is!" accompanied by that rolling of the eyes heavenwards. I know this only too well now, having had my share of such narcissistic Nellys and how they are absolutely professional when it comes to dodging the blame and shifting it to the unsuspecting victims.

When confronted by toxic behaviour patterns, I choose flight over fight, just as I choose to move to another room when the torrent of vernacular hits. I will not stoop to your level. I will not pretend to climb up your fantasy tower of greatness. I will not call your bluff. It is a battle I choose to ignore. I will leave you to your existence of pathetic darkness of your own making. I will not tell you to leave space for a window in your lightless tower. I will leave. I will leave to a more positive existence. I will strive harder to make myself better. If a tear escapes in this whole process then so be it. I shall not wipe it away. It is a testament to my honesty and labour of love.

When you say "too sensitive", I hear "too human". Yes, I am too human. This world can do with more real humans than pretentious ones. It sure needs them. It needs us. It needs me!

Always have a bloated stomach? Here's why and how to avoid it!



Lubna Khan Faraz

Lubna Khan Faraz is a holistic health and lifestyle coach. She is a certified fitness leadership trainer and speaker from Canada.

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Having a bloated stomach is different from gaining actual fat mass around your stomach, since bloating is temporary and mostly caused by air becoming stuck around your abdomen, making it distend outward. Simply put, being “bloated” is the feeling of having built-up gas in your digestive system that makes your stomach protrude uncomfortably.

Stomach bloating is so common these days it's been called an “epidemic.” With most people's poor diets, high levels of stress, need for daily medications and exposure to various pollutants, it's no wonder they're suffering some sort of bloating more days than not.

While a bloated stomach is certainly uncomfortable — even embarrassing when it comes along with gas or the need to run to the bathroom — it might be a bigger deal than you'd think. Stomach bloating can sometimes signify serious health problems lurking below the surface. It's one of the most common candida symptoms.

Having a bloated stomach is different from gaining actual fat mass around your stomach, since bloating is temporary and mostly caused by air becoming stuck around your abdomen, making it distend outward. Simply put, being “bloated” is the feeling of having built-up gas in your digestive system that makes your stomach protrude uncomfortably.

Luckily, in some cases, stomach bloating isn't anything to be alarmed about. It can usually be cleared up by making some simple changes to your diet and routine, although not always. Along with feeling full, gassy and having pain in your abdomen, you should check if your bloated stomach occurs simultaneously with other symptoms (fever, skin rashes, blood in urine etc) throughout the body. This can clue you in on what's causing the problem and whether it might be serious enough to warrant a doctor's visit.

So what causes our stomach to bloat? For many people, the cause of excessive gas in the intestines boils down to: inadequate protein digestion (causing some foods to ferment), inability to break down sugar and carbohydrates fully (certain complex sugar compounds need the presence of enzymes to be digested fully, yet people can be lacking these), and imbalances in gut bacteria. In the digestive tract, there are trillions of healthy and unhealthy bacteria that compete, and when “bad bacteria” outweigh the good for one reason or another, an imbalance can lead to abdominal bloating and excessive gas.

Here are 7 reasons you could be experiencing a bloated stomach:

1. Digestive Disorders

Most people dealing with various functional gastrointestinal disorders like IBS and celiac disease have bloating, gas, and other symptoms. Some reports show that stomach bloating is experienced by 23 percent to 96 percent of people with IBS, 50 percent with functional dyspepsia and 56 percent with chronic constipation.

2. Fluid Retention (Called Edema or Ascites)

Sometimes bodily fluids can be stored around the body, including near the abdomen or pelvis area, which causes excess bloating and temporary weight gain. You might also notice jewellery and clothes becoming tighter, extra swelling, and pain around joints or tightness in the skin. Fluid retention in the abdomen is known as ascites and it can be a sign of a more serious health condition. Ascites can be due to an abdominal infection or liver disease.

3. Dehydration

Ever notice the day after you've been eating salty foods or drinking alcohol that you become dehydrated and bloated as a result? It might seem counterintuitive, but the more water you drink (or consume in water-heavy foods) and better you stay hydrated, the less bloating you're likely to deal with. Dehydration and electrolyte

imbalances both cease digestion.

When your body tries to recover from dehydration, it holds on to excess water to prevent the situation from happening again. Plus, you might find yourself becoming constipated. This means when you do finally drink more fluids, you're likely to store them around your midsection and feel extra puffy.

4. Constipation

This might be the most obvious reason you have a bloated stomach — you need to go to the bathroom! The biggest reasons for constipation include eating too little fiber, not drinking enough water, avoiding physical activity and stress.

5. Food Allergies or Sensitivities

Food allergies, sensitivities or intolerances (like lactose intolerance) are common reasons for gas and bloating. The foods that cause include dairy products, gluten-containing foods (most bread, pasta, rolls, cereals, etc.) and certain kinds of carbohydrates called FODMAPs.

There are dozens of other possible food allergies (like shellfish, nuts and eggs), but you're likely to know if this is what you're reacting to since symptoms are usually more noticeable. FODMAPs can be tricky to rule out since there are so many different kinds and everyone is unique in terms of tolerability. An elimination diet can help you pinpoint which foods might cause bloating (like apples or avocados, for example) because they're not being properly broken down and digested.

6. SIBO

Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) is caused by high levels of abnormal bacteria living in the digestive tract, where they can accumulate after taking antibiotics or due to inflammation and poor digestion. Normally, different strains of bacteria are in proper balance in the colon, which helps with absorption of essential nutrients. But when harmful bacteria invade and take over, damage of the stomach lining can occur along with numerous symptoms. Some foods are capable of causing bacterial overgrowth

7. Infection

You can become bloated and swollen, or develop ascites if you're dealing with an infection because this triggers inflammation levels to rise, caused by an elevated white blood cell count around the pelvic, urinary and gastrointestinal organs. Check for signs of a fever, redness and pain which usually accompany a serious infection.

Your diet plays a huge role in regulating how much air and waste is trapped inside your digestive tract. To keep things flowing normally, you want to eat a high fiber diet, 25-30 grams or more daily. So what are the foods that can help the bloat? Here are some of the best and worst foods for bloating:

Foods to beat the bloat:

- Probiotics: "Good bacteria" called probiotics act like

friendly gut bugs in your digestive tract, killing off bad bacteria that can trigger digestive issues and reactions. You can take probiotic supplements, but acquiring them from natural probiotic foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, yogurt, kefir and kombucha is also beneficial.

- Raw dairy: In the case of dairy, I always recommend consuming raw dairy as opposed to the conventional kind sold in supermarkets, which has been pasteurized/homogenized. Consume aged/raw cheeses instead of soft cheese, and kefir/yogurt instead of milk, which are lower in lactose.
- Water-rich fruits and veggies: Veggies and fruits that provide water, key electrolytes and beneficial enzymes are your best friend when it comes to relieving stomach bloating naturally. Try eating more raw or cooked leafy greens, cucumber, celery, fennel, artichoke, melon, berries, steamed veggies and cultured/fermented vegetables.
- Herbs, spices and teas: Natural digestion-soothing herbs like ginger, dandelion, aloe vera and fennel have been used for thousands of years to soothe an uncomfortable belly. Many herbs act like diuretics and help the body release extra fluid, while some, like ginger, can also help the stomach release its contents and relax the muscles in the digestive tract, which relieves constipation.
- Now that you know what you should be eating, let's look at some of the foods that might be making your bloating even worse.
- Sugar and sweetened snacks: Sugar easily ferments in the gut, can contribute to candida overgrowth and promotes inflammation.
- Most dairy products: These include flavored yogurts with sugar and artificial ingredients, but also other kinds since modern-day manufacturing processes can remove important enzymes in dairy.
- Refined grains and grain products: Gluten is difficult to digest for many people, and so are corn, oats and other grains in some cases.
- In some cases difficult-to-digest veggies like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onion and even garlic: These contain sulfur and certain types of FODMAP carbohydrates.
- Beans and legumes, which can promote gas
- Carbonated drinks
- Chewing gum
- In some cases, certain types of fermentable fruit, including apples, peaches/other stone fruit and avocados can cause bloating.
- Artificial sweeteners and sugar alcohols: These include aspartame, sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol.

It's not too difficult when you eat plenty of whole foods, including veggies, fruits, nuts and seeds, legumes and ancient grains to help your bloating. It can certainly help you to track your symptoms after eating certain foods known to cause bloating, but remember that bloating is caused by your entire lifestyle, not just the food on your plate.

Has 'Superstar' hit all the rating stars on the scale?



Mawara Tahir

Mawara Tahir is a young, passionate person with lively and energetic attitude towards her profession. She is a writer and a fine-artist. She has two years of experience serving a news daily as a correspondent and a content writer.

The leading lady of Pakistan's film and drama industry; Mahira Khan has been conquering the hearts of people with her on-screen performances not only in Pakistan but also across the border. With Superstar, she has once more won the hearts with a power-packed performance alongside Bilal Ashraf.

Mahira plays the character "Noori" who lives in a fantasy world. Resting on the clouds of her dreams she sets her foot in the film industry but the realities strike her disgustingly. The film also provides us a chance to see her struggle with her family to pursue her career while being on the strum and drand of romance and curiosity.

Bilal Ashraf plays the role of an eminent film star and heartthrob Sameer Khan, who falls for her. However the duo in love with each other ends up with broken hearts in order to chase their own dreams. Sameer embarks on a journey of fame across the border, leaving behind all of his beloved relations, abandoning them and returning back with utmost remorse. Both actors flared the magic on the screen and box office and pulled the fans to their dream world.

The dazzling color palette has been used by the cinematographer adorned with chandeliers, wall paintings and breathtaking views of Islamabad and certain hill stations to add to the extravaganza of the movie.

The songs have already ignited the fire on the TV screens, radio and social media. The film also introduces Azaan- son of Adnan Sami Khan- as a musician. Azaan Sami Khan has contributed track titled 'In Dinon'

voiced by Atif Aslam which really sets the tone of the movie.

Another song 'Noori' which added to the glamour of the film is sung by melodious Sunidhi Chauhan and Jabar Abbas where Khan swirls and twirls to the beat of the song penned by Shakeel Sohail.

The dialogues are quite powerful. Also, The onscreen chemistry between Mahira and Bilal is pretty alluring, who are sharing screen space for the first time and they did it pretty good.

The film boasts of a stellar cast with Bilal Ashraf as the lead alongside Mahira Khan, Nadeem Baig, Javaid Sheikh, Marina Khan, Asma Abbas, Saife Hassan, Alizay Shah, Osman Khalid Butt and Ali Kazmi all stars in Superstar, with special appearances by Hania Amir and Syra Shahroz.

The Star studded movie has hit the theaters this Eid-ul-Azha and made it even more exciting as the houses went full. The movie did quite a business in its seven days long extended weekend. As per estimates, Superstar has posted over PKR 132 million in its first seven days already making it second highest grossing film for Mahira Khan. The Momina & Duraid Films

HUM Films/ production was released in Bahrain, Britain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Canada, France, Ireland, Morocco, UK and the US. The movie collectively generated revenue of Rs. 19.63 Crore altogether crossing over the business done by other two movies released simultaneously; 'Parey Hut Love' & 'Heer Maan Ja'.

Superstar





Wazir Khan Mosque

A jewel in the crown of Lahore...

Matrix Report

When it comes to history and culture, Lahore is the hub of fine antiquity, art, literature and architecture. Lahore is also known as 'Paris of the East'. A rich cultural heritage and social legacy along with tumultuous history, shading its avenues and landmarks. Situated in Lahore's inner city, the Wazir Khan Mosque is one of the most dynamic locales in Pakistan's cultural capital.

The mosque was built by the Governor (or Wazir) of the Punjab, Hakim Shaikh IIm-ud-clamor Ansari in the reign of the Emperor Shah Jahan. During Shah Jahan's reign, architecture emerged across Mughal Empire. The construction of the mosque started in 1634. It is set on what has come to be known as the Royal Trail, a 1.6 kilometer stretch from Delhi Gate - one of the 13 gates of the walled city of Lahore - that faced the seat of the Mughal Empire. Mughal Emperors rode through this gate to the Lahore Fort into the mosque that procured political significance as it turned into the official destination for the Emperor's Friday congregational prayers. The Wazir Khan Mosque is considered to be the most ornately decorated Mughal-era mosque.

It is famous for its architectural attributes as well as its spiritual mysticism. The Wazir Khan Mosque is considered to be the most ornately decorated Mughal-era mosque. Its intricately embellished structure adds glory to its grandeur. This beautiful building is in itself, the construction work took seven years. Wazir Khan Mosque has borne witness to least a dozen Mughal rulers, the transformative era of the British Raj, the grisly Partition of the Indian subcontinent, and the short however momentous history of current Pakistan. The mosque was situated in the focal point of the city. Four octagonal minarets mark the sides of the

fundamental patio, loaning the structure equalization and adding to its splendor.

As you enter inside from the primary passageway, you will find that the fundamental mosque is built from block and kashi-kari tile work, a construction run of the mill of the region and period in which Wazir Khan was built. Every one of the mosque's five compartments is delegated by a vault and opens onto an enormous courtyard. The one in the middle is the main prayer hall – larger than the rest, it includes a high confined portal jutting from the façade, and its walls are secured by intricate frescoes. This type of architectural design was employed for the first time in Lahore. In the courtyards of mosque is the tomb of Syed Muhammad Ishaq, a renowned saint who is also popularly known as Miran Badshah.

The Wazir Khan Mosque contains some of the best instances of mosaic tile work from the Mughal time frame. Amazing calligraphy verses from the Holy Quran embellish the walls alongside by Persian verse in its exquisite structures. Floral designs and patterns glows in symmetrical, harmonious waves, also adorned with motifs and palette which display strong influences from 17th century Persia. It delivers a feeling of peacefulness and tranquility to the mosque's reverberating corridors.

Its impressive blend of calligraphic insignias, geometrical structures and botanical beautification dimension to the structure, and makes the Wazir Khan Mosque stand out as a paragon of magnificence, parity and grandiosity.



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