

Clashes between the Pakistani State and Afghan Government, and the Pakistani State and TTP

Pakistan's rulers are seeking international attention to threat of militancy in border areas in the hope of converting such attention to geopolitical rents. This is one of the reasons why they are highlighting the threat of militancy in border areas.

Strict border enforcement by Pakistani authorities is a source of tension between Pakistan and Afghan Taliban. Pakistan's authorities are fearful of opening the borders with Afghanistan as this will lead to natural integration of both economies and Pakistan's productive capacity will have to cater for both Pakistani and Afghan markets (something which is actually an advantage for local industry). Smuggling of dollars, fertilizer, wheat, etc. to Afghanistan is a concern for the incompetent rulers of Pakistan. The Pakistani authorities also fear the movement of militants from Afghanistan to Pakistan and the radicalization of Pakistani Madrassahs through their interaction with Afghan Taliban cadres. For the Afghan Taliban the connection with Pakistan and its economy is a lifeline for their economy and hence they are interested in opening the border. The border is also a very sensitive issue for the Pashtun tribes which never accepted it, viewing it as dividing the same tribes and people in two different countries.

There is a clash between militants in Pakistan's border areas and Pakistani State with passive but not active support from the Afghan Taliban. The frontier tribes have never accepted deep penetration of state structures in their areas and see such structures as infringement upon their autonomy and freedom. That is why they view the merger of FATA region with KPK as an assault by the Pakistani state on their autonomy and have demanded the reversion of this merger. This and their ideological conviction of the illegitimacy of the Pakistani state as a secular American client state has resulted in them picking up arms against the Pakistani state.

The Afghan Taliban are not actively supporting the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but refuse to target their bases in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban are not willing to crack down on TTP bases on their side because:

a- In their view if Pakistan and America were not successful in crushing militancy in border areas, the Afghan Taliban won't be successful in such an endeavor either.

b- Afghan Taliban don't have the capacity to conduct such large scale operations against militancy in border areas.

c- Afghan Taliban will undermine their Jihadi legitimacy if they act against fellow Jihadis. They fear loss of legitimacy within their cadres if they crack down against TTP bases in Afghanistan.

d- The Afghan government under Taliban has itself come under a wave of continuous bombings claimed by the Islamic State in Khorasan. They fear that any operations against TTP may actually encourage TTP elements to join the Islamic State in Khorasan ranks or they may train their guns on the regime in Kabul themselves. If not dealt with wisely, the militancy threat in Eastern Afghanistan, in their view, can morph into an anti-Afghan Taliban front.

e- The Afghan Taliban want to soften the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The TTP threat in border areas and military operations by Pakistan Army against TTP will

make their goal of making the Durand Line a soft border more difficult. This is why they want to help Pakistan resolve the TTP threat without much cost to themselves. They see the best way to do this through facilitating negotiations between Pakistani authorities and TTP, which they tried to broker but which didn't result in significant results.

The Afghan Taliban do view the threat of TTP on Pakistan's border area as a way of pushing back against Pakistan's influence within Afghanistan. And they may view this as leverage against the Pakistani state. However such a policy is not of active support for the TTP rather, as mentioned above, this is passive support by trying to help facilitate negotiations between TTP and the Pakistani state.

Militant attacks by the TTP on the Pakistani state is reflective of a low level struggle by them to preserve the autonomy of border tribes and reach some sort of settlement with Pakistani authorities where they can carve out some independence and autonomy for the FATA region. The Pakistani military establishment however is not willing to concede such space to militants in border areas fearing a Jihadi nexus which extends from Wana to Kabul. The Pakistani military establishment want the Afghan Taliban to put pressure on TTP and does not want to conduct large scale operations against militants in the border areas as such operations will entail a large economic and military cost. They also fear for the economic consequences of such military operations in terms of scaring away foreign investment from Pakistan. The Pakistani regime through public rhetoric want to pressurize the Afghan Taliban and seek their help in dealing with TTP.

America views the issue of militancy on the Pak-Afghan border areas as an excuse to interfere in the region's security matters and to keep its counter terrorism infrastructure in the region intact. It seems that America wants to use the pressure from Pakistan's military establishment on the Afghan Taliban as a stick to force them to comply with its demand of completely submitting before the international liberal order and accept American demands on opening Afghanistan's political system to American agents from the old regime and introducing reforms in the Afghan state. The Afghan Taliban- Pakistan clash helps keeping Pakistan focused on its Western border and keeps the Pakistan Army's attention away from its Eastern border thus allowing India to focus its military preparations on China instead of Pakistan.

In conclusion, the clash between Pakistani authorities and Afghan Taliban is a clash between Muslims which is a direct result of the artificial border drawn between two Muslim people by the British colonialism. It is only Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood which will unify the Muslims of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia under the authority of Islam, eliminating the animosity between brothers and unifying Muslim lands, strength and resources and bringing security and prosperity to Muslim society.

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