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## **The Role of “Operation Rah-e-Raast” in the Establishment of Peace in Swat**

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### ***Abstract:***

*The Role of “Operation Rah-e-Raast” in the Establishment of Peace in Swat, how Militancy developed in Swat and Maulana Sufi Mohammad and Mullah Fazalullah supported militancy with the collaboration of Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan. Pak-Army was decided military action against the militants in Swat. This study shows the weakness of the Provincial and local government of Swat which made cause of the militancy. This study also shows the effects on the residents after the military operation in Swat.*

### ***Keywords:***

*Tahrir-e-Taliban Swat TTS, Mullah Fazalullah, Maulana Sufi Mohammad, Pak Army, Tahrir-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, Provincial Administered Tribal Area PATA*

### **1. Introduction**

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lies between the Indus River and it cover the area of 74,521 sq/ km but the area of Swat has 5337 sq/km. According to Census 1998, approximately population is 1,257,602 persons. 86.17 percent of the population lives in rural areas while only 13.83 percent lives in urban areas. Literacy rate in male is higher than female. According to census 43.16 % in male and 13.45 % is Female. The predominant religion is Islam which covers 96.67 % population. Some other religions are also preaching their teachings like as Christianity, Buddhism and Qadiani.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***1.1. Brief Profile of Mullah Fazalullah***

Mullah Fazalullah was born on March 1, 1975 in Mamdheri village District Mangora which is located in KPK. After passing Intermediate exams from Government College Swat, he admitted in Madrassa in District Dir. He received Islamic education from Maulana Sufi Mohammad. His father sold all properties for illness and shifted into Dir. He married the daughter of Maulana Sufi Mohammad and became the member of TNSM and Taliban society. He participated in all events and processions along with Mulana Sufi Mohammad. After the 9/11 incident, he also moved with Maulana Sufi Mohammad and participated in the Global war on terror against NATO forces. After the defeat, he along with other TNSM followers was arrested by the security forces in January 2002. He was sentenced to Jail in Dera Ismail Khan KPK and released after 17 months.

After released, he went to hometown, where he had no job opportunity. He started his career as a chairlift operator and made relations with local people. With the help of Habib Khan, he started FM radio station in Mandheri in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Local people made him the chief of TNSM in the absence of Sufi Mohammad. He and his followers collected the sympathies during the earthquake on October 08, 2005 and released the people that these difficulties come for the negligences of God’s orders.

He captured on the FM broadcast in PATA and banned on songs and other western broadcast services. On a daily basis, his sermons about religious education to all stations and enforce the people for the Shariah system. He had good relations with Ghazi Abdul Rashid who was the head of Lal Mosque. For the revenge of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa, he started brutal attacks on military forces and destroyed Government institutions and hospitals and etc. He interlinked TNSM with Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan in FATA (Baitullah Mehsud) and elected chief of Tahrir-e-Taliban Swat.

In 2007, Government started various military operations like as Operation Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Raast, but could not be able to arrest him. The Government announced a cash reward of fifty million for the arrest of Mullah Fazalullah.<sup>3</sup> After the successful military

<sup>1</sup>Salman Bangash, Socio-Economic Conditions of Post-Conflict Swat: A Critical Appraisal, TIGAH, *A Journal of Peace and Development*02, and (December 2012): 75.

<sup>2</sup>Khadam, *The Militant Discourse Religious Militancy in Pakistan*, 94.

<sup>3</sup> Amir Mir, Khaled Ahmed, Talibanization of Pakistan from 9/11 to 26/11 and Beyond. (New Delhi, Pentagon Security International Press, 2010): 436.

operation Rah-e-Raast, he escaped to Afghanistan, some Army officials said that Mullah Fazalullah killed in Army operation but all news were wrong at that time when Mullah interviewed on media and warned Pak Army that I am alive.

### 1.2. Why Pak-Army needed for military operation Rah-e-Raast

After Silence Operation, Mullah Fazlullah affiliated TNSM with Tahrir-i-Taliban Pakistan. He was appointed as Chief of Tahrir Taliban Pakistan Swat. He and his followers started their anti-state activities like ban on female education, judiciary system, closed barber shops, controlled local radio stations and implementation of their own home rules and regulations, it could be said that Taliban is running Swat.

The residents of Swat were demanded for the implementation of Islamic Laws which consists on Quran and Sunnah. Mullah Fazlullah and his followers met chance to settle down their terrorist activities in Swat. Religious extremism in Swat is very high than other districts of Malakand Division. TTPs supporters wanted to implement their extreme Islamic rules to pose new challenges to Muslim world.<sup>4</sup> Foreign funds were available for the terrorist activities from India, Russia and Israel. These countries were use Fazalullah for the name of Jihad.<sup>5</sup>

Present problem in Swat is low literacy rate, poor economic condition of the residents, no health facilities, poor agricultural system, no implementation of constitutional laws, strict on religious thoughts and cultures and simultaneously dangerous problem is Terrorism and militancy

Mullah Fazlullah and Mulana Sufi Mohammad made various agreements with Provincial Government of KPK and Federal Government of Pakistan, but short while they broke it and started terrorists' attacks on military forces and suicide attacks on poor people. From January to May 2008, 29 schools out of which 17 were girls' educational institutions had been destroyed by TTPs.<sup>6</sup>

After facing these lyric problems, the Provincial Government of KPK decided military action against Mullah Fazalullah and his supporters. Military operation "Rah-e-Haq" was started on October 25, 2007 in Swat. It was consisted on three phases. It has completed in 2009. This operation was not completely successful, Mullah Fazlullah ran away in Poacher hills with the cooperation of Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan.

In the beginning, Asif Ali Zardari President of Pakistan should immediately rescind the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation 2009 and reaffirm the jurisdiction of Malakand's civil courts, the Peshawar High Court and the Supreme Court.<sup>7</sup> The Awami National Party has rejected any foreign concern against the implementation of the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation in Malakand Division and said that the step was purely aimed for bringing peace in this region.<sup>8</sup> On 17 May 2009, the National Assembly unanimously passed a resolution endorsing the counterinsurgency operation in Malakand.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3. Military Operation Rah-e-Raast

#### 1.3.1. Operational Areas

Following areas were known as the terrorists' areas or supporters of Mullah Fazalullah in Malakand Division. Detail is as under:- Biha valley, Shamoza, Peochar, Chaparral, Matta, Khawazakhela, Mangora, Kabal, Banai Baba Ziarat, Sakhra Valley, Saidu Sharif, Khel Kandao, Bunir, Dangram, Kukarai, Jambil, Khazana, ZarraKhela, Garai Shalkosar Jukhtai, Balasur, Kabal, Dhadara, Akhun Khalle, and Rangeela.

Pakistan military launched a massive offensive against Fazalullah group in the last week of April 2009. This operation which continued for three months was described as a routine military exercise by the Inter Services Public Relations.<sup>10</sup> In the military operation Rah-e-Raast started in May 2009 to clear areas Swat and capture or kill key militants with name and prominent Mullah Fazlullah and Mulana Sufi Mohammad. During the operation Pak Army used heavy weapons on militants in Swat, Bunir and Dir. On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Pak Army announced that it has re-controlled all of the Mangora.<sup>11</sup>

During the military operation Army attacked on militants without any discrimination and killed a large number of innocent people. This was the heavy loss of population and economy of Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> On the other side al-Qaida too join with militants during the fight

<sup>4</sup>Rashid Ahmed, *Taliban: The Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond*, Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd, UK, (April 30, 2010) p. 87

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, *The Militant: Development of a Jihadi Character in Pakistan*, Narrative Publications Islamabad, March 28, 2015 p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>Kiran Firdous, *Militancy in Pakistan Strategic Studies*, Volume 29 Issue Summer & Autumn (2&3-112009).

<sup>7</sup>Islamabad/Brussels, Asia Briefing N°93, 3 June 2009, Pakistan's *IDP Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities*, Policy Briefing, International Crisis Group, working to prevent Conflict Worldwide.

<sup>8</sup> United States Department of State Review Authority: Archie M Bolster Date/Case ID: 24 JUN 2011 201000373, DRONE/DOS/000826 (23-01-2001)

<sup>9</sup>Sadia M Malik. *Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflict in Pakistan: Is There a Link?* Economic & Political Weekly Volume 54, Issue 34 (22 August 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Rashid Ahmed, *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan and Afghanistan*, Penguins Book England, March 15, 2012 p. 159

<sup>11</sup>Seth G. Jones, C. Christine Fair, *Pakistani Operation against Militancy, Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*. Santa Monica, United States of America; RAND National Security Research Division (2010) p.194.

<sup>12</sup>Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the War Within*, Oxford University Press, (November 05, 2008) p.86

with military forces. Even Tahrir-e-Taliban Pakistan supported the Taliban in Swat with full powers.<sup>13</sup> Sufi Mohammad was arrested again along with two sons in Lower Dir. After these two military operations Operation Rah-e-Haq and Rah-e-Raast, Pak Army in collaboration with civil administration made them success. During the ISPR reports, 2635 militants were killed and 254 arrested by military forces, but while 168 persons were martyred and 454 wounded during the fight. But the most danger thing is approximately 2.5 million population moved to different areas of KPK and other provinces of Pakistan for the sake of safe atmosphere.

#### *1.4. Effects of Military Operation Rah-e-Raast on the Residents*

The residents were afraid from Mullah Fazalullah and his companions. They were supported him for the spreading of religious education. But he preached the young generation extremism and militancy. In these operations public much supported of military forces against militants in Swat.<sup>14</sup> Now they are living with peace, harmony and also enjoying life according to their choices.

## **2. Educational Facilities in Swat**

Local government of Swat took necessary action on educational field. They have increased the schools, colleges and staff in all Tehsils. They have been provided security staff for male and female educational institutions. Female students were also provided meals and books. There are 1497 primary schools in which 943 for boys and 554 for girls. There are also 135 High and Higher Secondary Schools in which 40 are girl's school and 95 for male

#### *2.1. Health Facilities in Swat*

Militants were destroyed hospitals and health facilities which were erected for residents. The population of Swat consists of 1.25 million but the health facilities which are provided by the local government are not sufficient. There are 18 BHU; RHC and THQ hospitals which are providing health facilities for the residents of Swat. It was the biggest negligence of the government for the provision of health facilities to the residents. They have to carry their patients in other areas of the KPK and Punjab and Islamabad. Government was failed to provide basic facilities of life and people were ready to use drugs and increased quackery in that areas.

#### *2.2. Effects of Military Operation on Agriculture*

During military operation residents had to bear heavy loss in agriculture. Militants were destroyed their crops and use their lands in war against military forces. Residents were facing economic problems and died with hunger due to shortage of food. Estimated loss in agricultural areas in Swat was 1804.75 million.<sup>15</sup> After military operation, Government provided seed and chemicals etc. so that residents could cultivate their lands.

#### *2.3. Internal Placed Persons*

Federal and Provincial governments provided basic facilities to the residents of Swat. They were provided cash amounts to build houses for residency with the support of NGO's and INGO's and International agencies like as UNO, UNESCO, WFP and etc. America provided help under the agency of USAID. Under this program, the residents were facilitated in all forms. IDPs were starting returning their native after the completion of rehabilitation works.

## **3. Conclusion**

Maulana Sufi Mohammad and Mullah Fazalullah tried to impose extreme rules on the residents of Swat. These rules were against Constitution of Pakistan. The residents supported them economically, politically, socially and morally. Both militants have had close contacts with foreign terrorists and agencies. These agencies provided funds for the terrorist activities, suicide attacks on military forces and bomb blasts on crowded places. They were doing such misdeed by using the name of Islam and Jihad. Many dead bodies of non-Muslims militants were founded during military action. They belonged to Hindu religion. Thousands of innocent people were killed and injured in these attacks. These militants were challenged the writ of the state and refuse to obey the rules and regulation of the government. In 2009, Sufi Mohammad condemned on Democracy system and called it Kufr. Pak-Army and Pak-military forces successfully clear the militants' areas and restored the writ of State. Now the peoples of Swat are living with peace and calm since then and spending their lives with delight.

<sup>13</sup>Rashid Ahmed, *Decent into Choas: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Viking Penguin; First Edition (June 3, 2008) p.144.

<sup>14</sup> Rashid Ahmed, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in central Asia*, Yale Press United States, April 13, 2010) p. 210

<sup>15</sup> Perception Survey on Reconciliation in Malakand division, 2012 United Nations Development Programme Pakistan Material in this publication may be freely quoted or reprinted, but acknowledgement is requested. This publication is available from: United Nations Development Programme 4 Floor Serena Business Complex Islamabad, Pakistan. P. 14 (1-94)

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