



## U.S DRONE STRATEGY IN WAR AGAINST TERRORISM AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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### ABSTRACT

Respective research intended to examine the effect of the US drone strategy on Pakistan's national security. It is based on the diverse opinion of analysts some of whom suggest that these incursions were the clear defilement of International Law and sovereignty of Pakistan thus enhancing resentment provoking more terrorism. Others argue the effectiveness of drone attacks against terrorists. Though unpopular these strikes have helped U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Pakistan. As a partner of America in the war against terror, Pakistan is being adversely affected by this strategy. It has resulted in not only civilian casualties but has further provoked terrorists to retaliate thus affecting internal security and law and order concerns of Pakistan. Should these strikes continue or be abandoned altogether or be brought within a prescribed format is now the issue of concern. This will be dealt with considering various approaches, implications, and regulations.

**KEYWORDS:** UAVs, Counter-Terrorism, Safe havens, Surveillance, Drone warfare, suicidal Bombing.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Drones have become an important contrivance of the United States in the WAT and against confrontational groups. Such use of drones has growingly become the focus of worldwide debate particularly; inside Pakistan. Regardless of all excitement about drone strikes, the relative data is insufficient and without complete facts. Due to the secret classified CIA program, the data collection on drone strikes is not easy. On the other hand government of Pakistan never officially accepted the association with the US in this program. The only source was the leaked information gathered by different reporters (Becker & Shane, 2012). Therefore, there is no way to authorize all those statistics are exactly reveal the real procedure by which drone attacks are decided and conceded (Miller, 2012). In addition, the U.S. government never vocal upfront about the drone strategy; therefore scholars have no other option left, except to gather information from other possible sources.

Mostly accessible information related to drone strikes is accumulated from official sources, by the US or in the affected state. The affected areas are in Pakistan, FATA (Federally Administrated Tribal Area) is not within the reach of the national and international media and scholars. Thus, there are nearly no available authentic records about the attacks and sufferings of drone assaults, hence reaching definite ends is tremendously hard.

## **TECHNOLOGY OF DRONES**

The drone personified the extraordinary technology of artillery: sophisticated in the act, smooth in look, and swift in performance. It was enigmatic, reserved, fatal, and extremely bereft of mortal existence. It is the note of devastation by the names of Slayer and eradicator (Ahmed, 2013). Officially titled American unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), can mutely detect a person, cluster, or site for hours, but act swiftly without endangering a pilot's life. It is a Remote control aircraft roughly 27 feet long with a 55-foot wingspan. It is capable of inspection as well as has ground strikes capability with two Hellfire missiles in the MQ-1B and the ability of resounding laser-guided bombs on the MQ-9 (Krock, 2002). They can remain concealed from radar, thus can serve near 50,000 feet on land, which makes to a vital intelligence and rapid warfare device (Ibid). It can be controlled from any part of the world with the help of satellites. This blend of skills is exceptional and has permitted the U.S to thrash the safe heavens of al-Qaeda and intrude on the actions of other radical factions.



## LEGAL STATUS OF DRONE STRIKES

The US drone forays are often criticized on legal grounds. The United States litigating the strikes is validly allowed. Although the administration has not yet presented any law in favor of the use of drones in extra-jurisdiction beset bloodsheds (Frieden, 2012). The failure in providing legal justification accuses the US of profane global legitimate outlines on national force and sovereignty (Bowcott, 2012). Moreover, analysts claimed that US drone programs in some countries set a treacherous model that could lead others to use parallel strategies in a “global drone war”(Morely, 2012). The Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, a state has

*“The inherent right of individual or collective self-defense [sic]”* until the UN Security Council takes action (Charter of UNO).

Which use as in favor of the usage of interstate force against another nation’s territory during times of peace. Whereas the other group of analysts placed Article 20 of the United Nations’ “Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts”. Therefore drone incursions infringe the Charter of United Nations, Rome Statute of International Criminal Court, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter states “All Members shall refrain in their international relation from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. (UN Charter, 1945)

The strikes also break articles of the Additional Protocol I; Article 51(2) states “The civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against dangers arising from military operations”.

Article 51(5) states “Among others, the following types of attacks are to be considered as indiscriminate”:

(a) “An attack by bombardment by any methods or means which treats as a single military objective several separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects;”

(b) “An attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive to the concrete and direct military advantage.” (UN Charter, 1945)

Similarly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICC-PR), which has been certified by the US, rules out extrajudicial killing. According to Article 6(1) “every



individual has the inherent right to life and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.” According to Article 6(2) “in countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes following the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This punishment can only be carried out under a final judgment rendered by a competent court.” (UN Charter, 1945)

The US committed 414 drone strikes in Pakistan from 2004 to 2018, mostly targeted on FATA, particularly North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Kurram agencies. The tribal region was in federal control with limited political rights. Drones attacks largely occurred in Pashtun areas, where people generally not very fond of the military. Most of the surveys clarified that locals do not trust on Pakistani Army (Shinwari, 2011). The attacks have wiped out numbers of important most wanted militant commanders including al-Qaeda leaders and Pak/Afghan Taliban but also notches several acquitted citizens. Pakistan is failed to compel its statutory responsibility to safeguard the lives of its citizens on its land. The country was not in a war situation or even in that case, Islamabad would still be indulged to safeguard their citizens from the U.S actions, at least, it had to ensure the principles of peculiarity and proportionality under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) (Rogers, 2010).

The table gives the complete detail of drone strikes in Pakistan and their effects.



### DRONE ATTACK IN PAKISTAN: 2004-2018

Year	Incidents	Killed
2004	1	7
2005	3	15
2006	0	0
2007	1	20
2008	19	156
2009	46	536
2010	90	831
2011	59	548
2012	46	344
2013	24	158
2014	19	879
2015	14	85
2016	03	07
2017	08	43
2018	13	33-68
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>20857</b>

(Data till July 4, 2018)

Source of Table:

<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Droneattack.htm>

The table illustrates the rapid growth the drone attacks awing the last decade. There have been a total of 414 attacks till July, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The highest number of strikes took place in 2010 while there was no attack in 2006. After 2010 a slow decline can be seen in drone strikes. To sum it, the above table exhibits increase and then a decrease in attacks which is an indication of the effectiveness of UAVs in the tribal area of Pakistan.

### MILITARY PERSPECTIVE OF DRONES

From the US defense perspective, drone warfare is an effective tactic in the WAT and countering terrorism. They believed that drone attacks are precise and accurate to achieve targets without risking the lives of their soldiers also can target terrorist movement, and eliminate the threats immediately once they exposed in those places that are almost unreachable to man. These strikes are led under the CIA which emphasizes that military affairs have been changed since 9/11 as they clearly stated:



*CIA formally established the joined elements under the Associate Director for Military Affairs (ADMA) in 2007. Today, ADMA is jointly manned by Agency and uniformed military professionals, operating as one team to coordinate, plan, execute, and sustain joint CIA and DOD worldwide activities based upon priorities established by the Director of the CIA, to achieve National Security objectives (CIA, 2013).*

The U.S forces have launched its drone policy under the CIA and the Department of Defense (DOD), but the extended range of such operations is always been questioned since the program was started. The facts highlighted that the US drone strategy has not ended any culprit organization utterly but only disturbed them. Brian Williams believed that 'every new US regime has kept this tactic from the previous administration knowingly as 'its best, "worst option" in the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban'. Furthermore, he also highlights the dual face of Pakistan's officials who publically condemn the strikes, and furtively abide them' (Brian, 2011). This ruthless acceptance by the Pakistani government is often obviously discussed in media and elsewhere. Nonetheless, the U.S continued its drone strategy till 2018, even though it had failed in eliminating any terrorist group.

The military view is the only angle that remains silent on the failure of their drone policy, and still defending its effectiveness with the acute modifications. Although it is the clear acceptance of defeat CIA is not officially accepted it, due to the conceivable response of all factions from every corner of the world. Yet, it appears that the U.S seems to be unaware of the worldwide view and still reluctant to maintain optimistic relations with affected countries such as Pakistan.

## **PAKISTAN'S OFFICIAL POSITION ON DRONES**

Pakistan's official stance towards drones is ambiguous. Rather than integrally opposing the drone attacks on its soil, the political leadership generally prefers to be quiet or deliberately avoid the issue, whereas, the military was keener on attainment for more control over optimal targets, mostly to chastise nemeses. Sometimes, they ostensibly guard radicals who are good with them, or some radical groups with whom the forces have made peace contracts. It is yet evident that Pakistan has not submitted an official complaint to the UNSC or any other international forum. It constantly clear airspace for the drones, which the US administration interprets as tacit consent (Entous, et al, 2012). Ample signs exist of implied Pakistani approval and vigorous assistance with the drone program including acknowledgments by General Musharraf in April 2013 and former



Prime Minister Gilani in 2008 and 2010, challenging the official stance that it infringes the state's authority.

Moreover, in September 2012, then-Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar stated, "the use of unilateral strikes on Pakistani territory is illegal" but while accusing independent attacks, Khar also articulated her regime's provision for the plan's goal: "What the drones are trying to achieve, we may not disagree. If they're going for terrorists, we do not disagree but we have to find ways which are lawful, which are legal" (AFP, 2012). Although the intelligence-sharing deteriorated in 2011 and 2012, official consultations were continued between both countries. CIA Director Leon Panetta while visiting Pakistan was mainly vigorous about getting more authority to fly drones in more areas in the tribal areas (Schmitt & Mazzetti, 2011). ISI chief General Zaheerul Islam's was allegedly aimed at looking for "direct control of predators (drones) for perfect attacks and for reducing their dogmatic consequences" during his visit to the U.S in July 2012 (Spymaster 2012).

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DRONES STRIKES IN PAKISTAN**

Local demises, grievances, shifts, and assets loss instigated agony in common Pakistani citizens. Furtive drone incursions have their knell, unexpected attacks with no prior indications are difficult to engross by a common villager of remote areas. People who were suffering from collateral damage without any crime receives no condolences from any faction. They did not receive any apology or explanation of their grief. Moreover, no one comes upfront to take responsibility for their disturbing lives under the constant watch of surveillance drones (Perlez & Shah, 2010). Sometimes that surveillance buzz was continued for 24 hours a day in the northern province which traumatized people and created psychotic issues. Michael Kugelman of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars notes:

*I have heard Pakistanis speak about children in the tribal areas who become hysterical when they hear the characteristic buzz of a drone. [...] Imagine the effect this has on psyches, and particularly on young ones already scarred by war and displacement (Kugelman, 2012).*

An investigator at the UK charity, Reprieve, who met a young man named Tariq Aziz shortly before he was killed in a March 17, 2011 strike, reported: "I asked him, 'Have you seen a drone,' and I expected him to say, 'Yes, I see one a week.' But he said they

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saw 10 or 15 every day. And he was saying at night time, it was making him crazy because he couldn't sleep. All he was thinking about at home was whether everyone was okay. I could see it in his face. He looked terrified" (Schifrin, 2011). Thus losses and destruction of property may affect some people, but the dread related to clandestine drone forays disturbs almost everyone. NGOs may occasionally offer aid to drone-affected people in remote areas, but most of them practically lost everything and need complete assistance in circumstances where no one has accepted their damage's responsibility thus, no compensation or assistance either from the US or Pakistani Government.

### **INCREASE IN DOMESTIC MILITANCY AND SUICIDE BOMBING IN PAKISTAN**

Despite civilian deaths, damages, dislodgment, and property loss, increase in domestic militancy and suicide bombing are the other impacts on Pakistan which grow even greater due to drone strikes. Although both of these issues started after the cooperation of Pakistan in the US war on terror but picked up speed during the years when drone attacks on tribal areas of Pakistan were casual. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is the byproduct of these attacks increase and played a very important role in most of the suicide bombing and other terrorist activities all over Pakistan. Their victims are not only civilians but also government and military officials. It is a fact that Pakistan has experienced an unbelievable escalation in suicide attacks after the Lal Masjid operation by the security forces in July 2007 (Akhlaque, 2007). There were 42 suicide attacks before the operation, but after that 100% increase had been seen. The table gives complete detail about such attacks during 2002-2017 not because of occupation by foreign forces but for being an ally of the US.

#### **SUICIDE ATTACK IN PAKISTAN: 2002-2018**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>
2002	01	15	34
2003	02	69	103
2004	07	89	321
2005	04	84	219
2006	07	161	352
2007	54	765	1677
2008	59	893	1846
2009	77	949	2356
2010	49	1167	2199



2011	41	628	1183
2012	39	365	607
2013	37	719	1293
2014	25	336	601
2015	19	161	360
2016	19	401	935
2017	07	134	476
2018	11	61	132
<b>Total</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>7291</b>	<b>15428+</b>

**Data till June17, 2018**

<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Fidayeenattack.htm>

The first terrorist suicide attack happened in 2002, killing 15 people while 34 were injured making a total of 49 victims. A gradual increasing trend can be seen in the incidents from 2002 to 2006 targeting more people with each attack. The number jumped from 7 to 54 attacks in just a year. In 2007, 54 suicidal attacks took place, resulting in 765 deaths and 1677 injured people portraying suicide attacks as a swift killing strategy and suicide bombers became the most devastating phenomenon for the internal security of Pakistan. This rapid increase in the attacks created an atmosphere of terror and uncertainty in the country. Since then the attacks have been increasing in numbers every year and casualties have crossed the limits of the patience of the people of Pakistan.

## **U.S STANCE ON CIVILIAN DEATHS**

White House never accepted the actual number of innocent deaths by secret drone operations. The officials emphasize fewer civilian deaths on Pakistan soil by US attacks. One of the Obama Administration officials has claimed only 20 to 50 non-combatant deaths have happened since 2008 (Capaccio & Bliss, 2011). A similar claim was occurred by other officials, who believed that just 50 civilians were killed from 2001 to 2011, or less than 2.5 % of people were losing their lives from drone strikes (Shane, 2011). The New York Times reported in May 2012, by an administration official that civilian losses from drone strikes in Pakistan during the Obama era were in the "single digits," probably meaning over a year (Becker & Shane, 2012). The data provided by US officials were contradictory because they were glued with the digit of 50 in 2008 and 2010 even in 2011 (Delanian, 2011). The information from the CIA was continuously given without facts or civilian death details which raised many questions on its authenticity. Government officials back up their claims because they do not have any backup strategy of evading forays that might result in civilian deaths



## **PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL STANCE ON DRONES**

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, stated in United Nations General Assembly: *My country condemned terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations", but the use of drone strikes could never be accepted as it was "a continued violation of our [Pakistan's] territorial integrity (Gull, 2013).*

All major political parties in Pakistan have already professed their disagreement with these assaults in a declaration on 28 December 2010, finding them "tantamount to compromising the sovereignty of Pakistan" (Nawaz, 2011). Faisal Karim Kundi, then-National Assembly deputy speaker said:

*Not a single political party supports drones. But what can we do aside from ordering our air force to shoot them down? This would mean declaring war on a superpower (Crisis Group Interview, 2013).*

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) in Pakistan professed on May 9, 2013, that United States drone strikes illegitimately ruptured state authority and was in "blatant violation of Basic Human Rights" and provisions of the Geneva Conventions. The court gave this verdict on complaints of political parties and citizens who were the victims of the attacks. It was the first legal verdict against drone actions in Pakistan by any Pakistani court. The court not only condemn attacks but mentioned their legal status and ordered the government to make every effort to cease these actions; as well as to take the issue in the UN Security Council and "constitute an independent War Crimes Tribunal". The court also requested that the Security Council or General Assembly pass a resolution condemning the drone strikes (Horowitz & Rogers, 2013). There is a clear difference in the public opinion and official position of the country. Official stance generally made by military whereas the political leadership's response, is based on their approach to the high command of armed forces, therefore, its intensity regularly fluctuates. Officially political factions get information through a variety of means, including briefings given to parliament by the army chief and ISI director general (Shaheen, 2011).

## **ROLE OF MEDIA IN CREATING AWARENESS REGARDING U.S DRONE STRATEGY**

Generally, media played the role of the third pillar of the government. The 21<sup>st</sup> century exhibited its role in the true sense. Particularly the awareness created by media during the drone war is commendable because the region which was affected is beyond public reach



therefore, media become the only credible source of information. According to Kaltenthaler, Miller, and Fair:

*One of the major reasons why drone strikes have become such a salient issue among so much of the Pakistani general public is that there is a large amount of media coverage of the drone issue. The killing of major Al Qaeda, Pakistani or Afghan Taliban figures gets regular coverage in the Pakistani print media (Such as the newspapers Dawn in English and Jang in Urdu), as well as television and radio. But the collateral damage from drone strikes also gets major play in the Pakistani media outlets (Karl, et al, 2012).*

The continued reporting of drone attacks in the media awakened the public and it became difficult for both Pakistan and the US regime to continue it vigorously. The pictures of devastation homes of innocent peoples and interviews of victims bothered both regimes' policymakers. The constant highlight reel of US drone attacks, increased anti-U.S feeling in every corner of Pakistan which reported by reporters and neutrals around the sphere, has led to the growing annoyance to the strategy. As Bauman and Lyon asserts that:

*Everything private is now done, potentially in public, and is potentially available for public consumption: and remains available for the duration, till the end of time, as the Internet cannot be made to forget (Bauman & Lyon, 2013).*

Therefore, the reporting of the media and globalization of social media has alleviated the growth of anti-U.S emotions, and the pictures of ammo explosion and slaughtering civilians have become a leading force in the debate of the efficacy of the policy.

## CONCLUSION

The repercussions of American drone strikes in Pakistan are profound, for one or terrorist killing of ten or more innocent poor non-combatants including children, women, and senior citizens, by the United States is hard to justify on any platform (Rashid, 2012) however sustaining public outrage against the U.S. Since the Pakistani media coverage increases, numerous public protests against the drones in Pakistan's major cities have been seen on daily bases. The first reason for these protests is the psychological consequences of attacks on the people of Waziristan. They were suffering from anxiety, dread, rage, and petulance which completely intrude on the people of Pakistan (Wood, 2012). Secondly, drone operations are a peril to the state's autonomy. The nation allows its government to take measures against terrorists but at the same time, they have not allowed American invasion at any cost. However, the U.S has gravely underestimated

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Pakistanis' hostility towards drone attacks. Although America has tried to convince the Pakistani public about the merits of drone operations in FATA it looks like a lost cause. US authorities have also realized that this is an impossible task to convince the people of Pakistan. Therefore the oratory from US State Department officials in Pakistan has shifted from creating the understanding regarding the need for drones towards the understanding of decrease in the number of drone attacks in FATA significantly also promising to end them altogether soon by the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. The United States rethink its policy and altered it immensely. In reviewing counterterrorism tactics along the Afghani border, the U.S. reconsider drone warfare and recognized the impact that drone strikes created not only on terrorist groups' but also on US image in the world and gradually reduced it inside Pakistan. Indications also suggest that drone programs will continue in other parts of the world but they will not effective anymore in Pakistan. However, drone attacks are lethal from the US perspective and they use it in multiple regions today in covert and overt operations.



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