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Proxy Warfare and Regional Instability: The role of Non State Actors in the Pakistan-India-Afghanistan Triangle (2015-2025)

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ABSTRACT

Proxy warfare has become a prominent feature of modern warfare and conflicts as both large and small states alike are pursuing these tactics to attain greater strategic leverage with minimal financial and political costs. South Asia has long been suffering from regional rivalries and disputes marked by tacit pitching of non-state actors or proxies having ramifications for the region and beyond. The geopolitical position of Pakistan coupled with the neighbourhood of India and Afghanistan has made the country highly susceptible to proxy warfare as evident from the events and incidents of past few years. The Indo-Afghan patronage of the militancy and separatism in Pakistan is not only detrimental to Pakistan's security but also has implications for the regional security and stability. The qualitative research design has been applied to commission the instant study. For data collection, secondary sources including research articles, official statements and press releases, think-tank publications and newspapers have been consulted. The study will assist the government and policy-makers to adopt corrective measures to counter shenanigans of proxies and their handlers, thereby ensuring the stability, security and integrity of Pakistan.



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Introduction

The Encyclopedia Britannica has described the proxy warfare as “a military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or non-state combatants in an effort to influence the conflict’s outcome and thereby to advance their own strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents”. Almost the whole human recorded military history is conspicuous by the employment of surrogates or proxy actors in relation to irregular conflict within or between states, yet the same phenomenon has assumed urgent relevance in the face of currently evolving conflicts in Ukraine and Middle East (Marshall, 2016). Post 9/11 era has modified the nature and character of war as evident from the conflicts involving states and non-state entities, wherein proxies or non-state actors are increasingly adopting asymmetric tactics with the aim of achieving disproportionate effect (Lele, 2014). Contemporary dynamics of the proxy warfare have potential to mold the same as prominent feature of future conflicts, while certain changes in the nature of the modern warfare have prompted states to adopt proxy strategies (Mumford, 2013).

At present, the state of Pakistan is facing a plethora of challenges and the most pressing among them is to facing and countering a proxy war unleashed by her eastern and western neighbour i.e., India and Afghanistan. Amin (2021) observed that since the independence of Pakistan from the British Empire in 1947, both these countries have adopted an unfriendly and belligerent posture thereby generating complexities and crises for Pakistan from time to time ranging from ordinary to the existential. Pakistan’s participation as a frontline state against global war on terror following the incident of 9/11 brought significant repercussions for society and polity. Rising trends of militancy and extremism, which were in fact spillover effects of the war in Afghanistan, strengthened and generated certain hostile and anti-state armed entities such as the Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is vehemently opposing and fighting the state of Pakistan (Iqbal & De Silva, 2013). Initially, they captured Swat valley and nearby

areas and imposed their own version of ‘Sharia’, which made lives of local populace harsh and miserable. Ultimately, the state of Pakistan launched comprehensive military operation which drove them away from the settled areas. Since then, they have retreated to the erstwhile FATA and Afghanistan and are resorting to militancy and terrorism against innocent people and security forces alike (Sayed, 2025).

The TTP is responsible for unleashing a reign of terror in Pakistan, most prominently in areas bordering Pak-Afghan region and KPK, through suicide bombings, target killings, kidnapping for ransom and extortion. Their attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014 killing around 150 school children and their teachers truly revealed their brutality and ruthless character. The state of Pakistan is continually fighting their nefarious tactics and designs, which have tremendously increased since the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan in 2021 and subsequent takeover by the Afghan Taliban (Abbasi, 2024). In fact, the Afghan Taliban are rendering safe havens and sanctuaries to the TTP for their cross border attacks and incursions into Pakistan as evident from the ever increasing infiltration attempts on the part of TTP militants, wishing to enter Pakistan for subversion. Thus the TTP is behaving as an Afghan proxy, enjoying Indian support as well, for destabilizing Pakistan.

Similarly, the sense of deprivation, extreme poverty and backwardness in less privileged and under-developed province of Baluchistan culminates into localised insurgencies from time to time, which too is perpetually haunting the federation of Pakistan in the shape of armed separatism and militancy as unleashed by the separatist groups (Raza, Zaman & Mustafa, 2025). The most notorious among them is the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which is responsible for carrying out acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism throughout Baluchistan. Apart from targeting security forces, the BLA has adopted new tactics over the years to pursue their ulterior motives. They are specifically attacking the settlers from other provinces, specifically innocent Punjabis after verifying their identities, thereby

sowing the seeds of discord among federating units of Pakistan. They are also destroying civilian infrastructure such as railway bridges so as to disconnect Baluchistan from rest of the country. Their activities and approach became so brazen that they even hijacked a passenger train from Bolan valley, killing several passengers and injuring many others. That incident of hijacking was covered live on majority of Indian TV channels, wherein anchors and analysts were celebrating the incident by declaring BLA terrorists as so called freedom fighters. This interest on the part of Indian authorities into the internal affairs of Pakistan speaks volumes of their nefarious designs and anti-Pakistan mentality.

As modern warfare is predominantly hinging upon the shenanigans of proxies, both the TTP and BLA are receiving political, financial and logistical support from India and Afghanistan to target Pakistan, thus fulfilling the desired agendas of their handlers. Thus the internal disturbances and weaknesses of Pakistan are being exploited by her disgruntled rather ungrateful neighbours with the underlying purpose of not only destabilizing a nuclear armed state but also with the ultimate aim of disintegrating and undoing the federation of Pakistan. Actually both India and Afghanistan have finally realized their incapacity to achieve their objectives and interests through diplomatic, political and military means. They are now patronizing and relying upon proxies to harm Pakistan, which is not only detrimental to the stability and integrity of Pakistan but has the potential to destabilize the whole region having far-reaching consequences for regional security and beyond. The instant study has examined this Indo-Afghan sponsorship of militancy and separatism in Pakistan through the framework of proxy warfare / non-state actors and suggested remedies for government and policy-makers to contain the same.

Literature Review

Salikuddin (2021) explained that emerging new realities are prompting states to support proxy groups in several worldwide conflicts. Some of these realities and trends revolve around the

notion of multipolarity, renewed great powers rivalry and ever increasing capabilities of non-state actors. Although the US actively supported the proxies during Cold War yet in the wake of the incident of 9/11, the concerned authorities have authorized the Pentagon to push, equip and utilize the proxies. Significant changes in the global security posture over the years has exacerbated the utility and efficacies of proxy groups. Furthermore, postcolonial realities and unresolved disputes in the context of India and Pakistan somehow explain the patronage of proxies on the part of nuclear armed rivals.

Jan & Islam (2022) examined the resurgence of the Afghan Taliban in 2021 and its security implications for Pakistan. Many experts and scholars initially opined that the re-emergence of Afghan Taliban will not only enhance security outlook of the region but also boost economic activities between the two countries. But the change of guards at Kabul emboldened the Afghan based militant groups, the prominent being the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), to resume their subversive activities against the state of Pakistan. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan suits Pakistan's geo-strategic interests and Pakistan rightfully proposed regional strategy to respond to the emerging new realities in Afghanistan after Taliban takeover. However, the Afghan Taliban's leadership seems less interested and is tacitly aiding and abetting militants' hostile to Pakistan.

Fawad, Khan & Ullah (2025) highlighted proxy warfare as a chief component of hybrid warfare whereby states indirectly influence conflicts. South Asia is one such region where complex socio-political landscape, historical disputes and colonial legacies have strengthened the utility of proxies / non state actors towards achieving strategic objectives. Political instability and fractured institutional mechanism coupled with deployment of advanced technologies has enabled non state actors to extend their influence, thereby disrupting governance models and weakening state authority of established nations. The engagement of proxy groups and state sponsored militias with the

formal military apparatus has shaped the regional security environment in unpredictable ways.

Lee, Sims & Kornphetcharat (2025) elaborated the concepts of state sponsored terrorism and proxy war and their significance towards shaping global security dynamics. These two concepts particularly become relevant and interlinked when states patronize terrorist entities as their proxies to advance their national interests and affect regional security paradigms. However, the role of non-state actors in proxy wars is expected to be evolved owing to continuously transforming international relations and emergence of new security challenges. In the face of rising global counter terror efforts and enhanced security measures, the efficacy of state sponsored proxies is likely to diminish forcing states to reconsider their approach.

Saeed, Yasin & Saif (2025) explored the role of non-state actors and militant groups in Pakistan as detrimental to the stability and national security. Pakistan has been facing this problem since 1980s from the times of Afghan-Soviet War and the recurring acts of militancy cum violence incurred huge losses upon Pakistan both in terms of men and material. Various military operations and counter terror strategies were initiated from time to time but still the militant groups such as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are continuously vitiating the internal and external security of Pakistan by exploiting local grievances and psyche of people. Several corrective measures including kinetic operations, development projects and dialogue in combination with regional collaboration under international oversight would have to be adopted to curb the menace of militancy in Pakistan.

Raza, Zaman & Mustafa (2025) described terrorism as the most challenging non-traditional security threat being faced by the state of Pakistan in the 21st century since it is adversely affecting security, governance and socio-economic development. The Afghan neighborhood has exacerbated the grave challenge of terrorism as long porous border between the two states has made easier for militant groups like TTP and ISIS

Khorasan to launch cross border attacks targeting civilians and the security forces alike. However, kinetic operations and use of the military is not sufficient enough to contain the scourge of terrorism rather poverty, illiteracy and bad governance should be responded befittingly, thereby enhancing the efficacy of counter-terror measures.

Verma (2025) stated that since the beginning of 2025, the Baloch insurgency has sharply intensified as evident from plethora of subversive activities on the part of separatist groups notably the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). The magnitude of such terror incidents has become so enormous that the militants brazenly hijacked a passenger train carrying 400 passengers, whereby 26 hostages lost their lives. On the other hand, the Chinese nationals and the staff associated with CPEC Projects are being targeted as well making Pakistan's internal security more complicated and undermining counter terror efforts. A solid political resolve is needed to address long-standing sense of deprivation failing which the situation may worsen further, thereby threatening national and regional security.

Ugwu (2025) described the emergence of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in 2000 as a separatist organization claiming to represent Baloch ethno-nationalistic sentiments in the province of Baluchistan, while some termed its evolution as revival of the 1970s movements. Over the years, the BLA has transformed from a tribal based separatist entity into a potent militant outfit capable of carrying out large scale militant attacks while continuing to portray its activities in the name of Baloch nationalism. The question of foreign patronage to the Baloch militant organizations, particularly the BLA, has made the regional security outlook intricate as Pakistan is consistently alleging the Indian intelligence agencies for aiding proxies and fomenting unrest in Baluchistan.

Bukhari (2025) pointed out that although the province of Baluchistan is the largest and most strategic federating unit of Pakistan, yet the same is marred with unrest and political instability since

long. Bordering Afghanistan and Iran, having a coastline along the Arabian sea with a major deep sea port of Gwadar and abundance of natural resources enhances geopolitical profile of Baluchistan. However, years of neglect resulted into economic disparity, poor political representation and various phases of armed insurgencies. But militancy and armed confrontation has escalated recently with outfits like the BLA employing sophisticated tactics, coordinated attacks and targeting of Chinese nationals associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The recent designation of the BLA and its armed wing the Majeed Brigade as Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US State Department vindicated Pakistan's stance of foreign patronage of such militant groups.

Kausar & Iqbal (2026) narrated that the nature of conflicts in the 21st century has transformed profoundly, so the traditional *modus operandi* of warfare among states has also witnessed significant tactical shifts. Accordingly, a new dimension of contemporary international relations has emerged where states can be seen sponsoring and abetting violence beyond their borders. In the context of South Asian security environment, non-traditional forms of conflict have increasingly become dominant too and the most significant among them is the proxy engagement. Regional rivalries and festering territorial disputes under nuclear overhang have forced the South Asian competitors, chief being India and Pakistan, to explore indirect conflict strategies while retaining the escalation ladder.

Objectives

- 1- To study various dimensions of proxy warfare and its implications for regional stability in the context of South Asia.
- 2- To examine the role of non-state actors operating through Indo-Afghan sponsorship and fomenting militancy in Pakistan.
- 3- To suggest remedies and guidelines for concerned authorities to counter the inimical designs of proxies and their handlers.

Research Questions

- 1- Why proxy warfare has become prominent feature of modern warfare and conflicts?
- 2- How Indo-Afghan sponsorship is pitching and patronizing the TTP and BLA for sowing militancy in Pakistan?
- 3- What strategies need to be adopted by the state functionaries to counter the menace of militancy in Pakistan?

Analysis / Discussion

Mumford (2013) described the proxy war as an intervention on the part of third parties in a particular conflict with the intended purpose of influencing its strategic outcome and rendered the same as '**war on the cheap**'. Although proxy warfare has remained a permanent feature of warfare through ages owing to its low cost and potential benefits yet it attained prominence within the contours of modern warfare since 1945 as the shadow of nuclear war has made warring actors more selective and cautious. In fact, contemporary conflicts are embedded in scenarios and situations wherein major players try to attain their goals through surrogates and proxies (Fox, 2019). Wither in his seminal work has examined different types of armed proxy groups, identified their features and elaborated the *modus operandi* of their sponsors and handlers. According to him, proxy wars shall remain relevant in future conflicts owing to two strategic compulsions. Firstly, the great power rivalry has renewed afresh and secondly, the competing states shall pursue their security and material interests by avoiding major wars (Wither, 2020).

Proxy warfare has proved to be a conspicuous feature of the conflicts of the past and present century. Both large and small states alike pursue these tactics not only to gain strategic leverage but also to challenge peer competitors and responding rival proxy forces. For instance, the United States adopted proxy mode by supporting Afghan Mujahedeen in the 1980s. Similar approach was followed by the Soviet Union during pendency of the Cold war when she patronized various nationalist liberation groups throughout the developing world to counter Western-backed

regimes (Paffenorth, 2014). Rauta, however, has termed the proxy warfare as underrepresented in conflict research owing to lack of conceptual and terminological clarity and has sought to minimize terminological nuances with the aim of enhancing analytical stability coupled with conceptual rigour (Rauta, 2018). On the contrary, Lebid has attributed the notion of hybrid or proxy warfare as quite relevant to modern military doctrine and more prominently it is a combination of conventional, irregular and asymmetric manner of conducting war. Economic showdown, cyber-attacks, surrogates, paramilitaries and even terrorist and criminal elements constitute some of the tools employed in the modern proxy warfare (Lebid, 2019).

The 21st century conflicts are increasingly reflecting a new phenomenon wherein states employ locally armed non-state actors combined with airpower, drones and cyber warfare to remain relevant. Against the backdrop of post-Westphalian global order marred with non-state violence and in the face of increasing priority for risk management connected with global conflicts, states have identified new ways to assume the role as primary communal security provider. Thus proxy warfare is a socio-political phenomenon associated with post-modern conflicts, owing to changing rules of engagement between state and its military agent (Kreig & Rickli, 2018). Greater visibility of non-state actors on the contemporary war theatres speaks volumes of the increasing reliance of states upon these entities to pursue their objectives, primarily due to their low political and financial costs. Thus future conflicts are likely to be characterized by proxy based model of warfare with limited or no role at all for regular armed forces (Kozera et al, 2020).

TTP as an Afghan Proxy for destabilising Pakistan

Although Pakistan and Afghanistan are immediate neighbours having a longest common border stretching approximately 2240 Km (Durand Line) and sharing many commonalities in terms of faith, culture and historical proximity, bilateral relations have largely remained fragile owing to Afghan

hostility and her India-centric policies (Durrani & Khan, 2002). The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 prompted Pakistan to join the Western campaign, in fact the proxy war of the United States, to oust the Soviet forces from the region under the umbrella of 'global jihad' against the infidels (Soviet Forces). But the US led initiative strengthened the religious extremist forces in the region leading to the taking over of Afghanistan by the Taliban. Radicalization and militancy was also thrived in Pakistan, more prominently in areas bordering Afghanistan. The incident of 9/11 and subsequent 'war on terror' further aggravated the situation as more brutal entities such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) emerged, waging all-out war and militant attacks against the state of Pakistan (Khan & Wei, 2016).

After the collapse of Taliban regime in the wake of the US and Allies attack on Afghanistan in 2001, Hamid Karzai assumed the echelons of power at Kabul followed by Ashraf Ghani. Pakistan tried to maintain conducive and cordial relations with both administrations but the Indian factor, past irritants and alleged cross-border militant attacks from Pakistan continued to vitiate the environment, thus affecting the trajectory of bilateral relations despite international backing and emergence of new realities (Idrees & Nazeer, 2022). At the same time, Pakistan's role as frontline state against global war on terror also brought severe repercussions in terms of instability, insecurity and ever increasing incidents of terrorism (Abbasi, 2013). The ensuing counter-terror measures within the country brought institutional instability and generated considerable social problems (Rabbi, 2012). From 2001 to 2021, more than 83000 civilians and security personnel lost their lives in terror related incidents, while economy of the country suffered a loss to the tune of approximately \$150 Billion Dollars. At the same time, Pakistan's role in the war on terror also brought political and humanitarian crises having far-reaching implications for the society and the polity (Rashid, Fatima & Wasif, 2023).

Against the said backdrop, the most significant catastrophe which shook the collective conscience of the people of Pakistan and the world at large was

the terrorist attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar on December 16, 2014 wherein about 132 innocent children and their teachers were murdered in cold blood. Although several anti-state terrorist outfits and entities were active against Pakistan, most specifically in the aftermath of war on terror, the single-most deadlier organization came out to be the TTP and it proclaimed responsibility for the APS tragedy by declaring the attack as a revenge against operation Zarb e Azab in which large number of their fighters were killed (Qayyum, 2016). The brutality and impunity associated with the horrendous act of terrorism enabled the state of Pakistan to take decisive measures against the scourge of terrorism. A comprehensive National Action Plan was issued and agreed upon by all stakeholders to reign in subversive elements. These measures soon started to exhibit tangible progress in terms of progressively decreasing acts of terrorism and violence.

However, the change of regime in the US and Biden Administration's abrupt decision to pull out the US forces from Afghanistan massively changed the geo-political landscape of the region (Khan, Khan & Muzamal, 2023). The incumbent Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani collapsed immediately and the Afghan Taliban again became the masters of Kabul in August 2021. Pakistan being immediate neighbour cautiously welcomed these developments, while a considerable segment of the decision makers was satisfied as Pakistan didn't bear any acrimony against Afghan Taliban and had a history of cordial relations with them before the events of 9/11. So it was assumed that the change of guards at Kabul would not only bring back strategic depth but also ushered into general environment of peace, particularly into the areas bordering both countries (Jan & Islam, 2022). But all these assumptions and aspirations subsequently shattered when the Afghan Taliban started to harbour the TTP militants, who in turn, significantly increased their cross-border attacks into Pakistan thereby unleashing an unprecedented wave of sabotage, violence and terrorism (Akhtar & Ahmad, 2023).

Bukhari et al (2024) narrated the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban as one of the most significant events in the country's history having ramifications not only for Afghanistan but beyond. The instant change has generated security cum diplomatic and political challenges for neighboring Pakistan. The incumbent Taliban regime is notorious for their strict interpretation of Sharia Law, violation of human rights and undue restrictions upon women. But major concern for the country itself and Pakistan lies within the security domains as convergence of various militant groups at Afghan soil has started deteriorating the prevalent security environment of the region. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in militant violence, notably attributed to the TTP thereby forcing Pakistan to alter its foreign and security strategies to counter the threat. Despite repeated calls by Pakistan for denying safe havens to the TTP, the Afghan Taliban are turning a blind eye to the same and in fact tacitly supporting the renewed wave of terror in Pakistan, particularly the areas bordering both countries. This resurrection of the TTP is not only threatening for strategically important region but also affecting the trajectory of already tense Pak-Afghan relations (Shah, Mahmood & Kamran, 2024).

Akhtar & Ullah (2024) evaluated the nexus between the neo-Taliban regime and the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its impact on the bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. As the US exit from Afghanistan brought Taliban again at the helm in 2021, Pakistan initially perceived the change as positive development towards bringing peace and stability to an already volatile region. But the Taliban regime's support and patronage of the militant organizations, particularly the TTP, intensified acts of terror inside Pakistan. This scenario has severely affected Pak-Afghan relations despite sharing of historical, religious, cultural, political and economic proximities. In order to counter the situation, the authors have suggested robust foreign policy approach, regional collaboration and comprehensive engagement with the interim Afghan authorities.

Since Pakistan and Afghanistan are not mere neighbours rather they have close historical, ethnic and geo-political arrangements, the rise of Taliban certainly has ramifications for the region. Pakistan has started feeling brunt of the change in the shape of intensifying terror attacks, mostly emanating from Afghan soil. A number of militant outfits, the prominent being the TTP, have strengthened their presence in Afghanistan creating security dilemmas for neighbouring Pakistan. Making situation further challenging for Pakistan, the Afghan Taliban have expressed a desire to improve relations with India and their support for Iran's Chahbahar port project, the regional rival of Pakistan's Gwadar port (Bibi & Muzaffar, 2023).

Indian Proxy War against Pakistan and the BLA

South Asia has had a history of diverse inter-state and intra-state controversies based on several parameters including ethnicity, economy, religion, autonomy, border disputes and the like (Haider & Azad, 2021). Accordingly, Pakistan and India have a chequered, bitter and acrimonious history since their independence from the British Empire in 1947. Although several disputes and differences have plagued the bilateral relations, the main point of conflict between them is the northern territory of Jammu & Kashmir (Khalil, 2020). Since 1947, both countries have fought three major wars, undergone border skirmishes, intrusions, war-like situation and limited conflicts. Efforts for rapprochement and peaceful co-existence were also initiated from time to time but without any tangible progress (Malik, 2019).

Since the beginning of indigenous resistance movement in Kashmir against illegal Indian occupation in 1989, the Indian government and establishment has always blamed Pakistan for these developments by labelling the same as terrorism. This trend is continued to date as witnessed by the posture and behaviour of the Indian government in the wake of every terrorist attack on Indian soil. On every occasion, India has accused Pakistan as a perpetrator and abettor of terrorism by employing the same as an instrument of state policy. Pakistan, being a massive victim of

terrorism itself, has always denied such baseless propaganda. On the contrary, the state of India is supporting subversive and separatist elements and terrorist outfits such as the TTP and BLA, who are waging a bloody war against the innocent civilians and security forces of Pakistan (Kellog, 2022). The underlying purpose is to bring chaos and even dismemberment of Pakistan as was done in 1971 in the erstwhile East Pakistan by launching and arming "Mukti Bahni".

The unleashing of proxies and hostile non-state actors against the state of Pakistan by India is a significant development against the backdrop of already fragile regional security order. As proxy warfare has become prominent feature of modern conflicts, perhaps India too has realized its efficacy with minimal political and financial costs. As per evidence gathered by the law enforcement and intelligence agencies of Pakistan, India is actively aiding and abetting the TTP and BLA for sowing discord, instability, militancy and separatism in Pakistan. Khetran (2017) narrated the specific Indian involvement in Baluchistan through her intelligence agency RAW and its implications for the national security and economy of Pakistan. The said involvement became evident in March 2016 when Kulbhushan Yadav, a serving Indian naval officer was arrested in Savaran region of Baluchistan. Jahangir & Javed (2015) discussed the establishment of training camps by India along the Pak-Afghan border and subsequent provision of finances and logistics to BLA with the chief purpose of blocking and making Gwadar Port ineffective.

Baluchistan has been facing various insurgencies since the inception of Pakistan. Spearheaded by the nationalist forces, these insurgencies have diverse objectives ranging from autonomy to complete freedom. As a result, the province is in complete turmoil, wherein government installations, security forces and non-Baloch population is being targeted. Without external assistance, such large scale insurgency cannot be sustained and carried forward. Actually the changing geo-political and economic environments have aroused and developed interest on the part of regional countries in Baluchistan. So the root-cause of violence and restiveness in Baluchistan is not solely due to

under-development or poverty, rather vested interests of the foreign actors and covert operations of their intelligence agencies have a hand in vitiating the environment. Various official channels within the state and government of Pakistan have identified the involvement of India and RAW into the internal affairs of Baluchistan through establishing training camps for the rebels and providing them with sophisticated communication systems, ammunition and finances (Iqbal, 2012).

The security outlook of the province of Baluchistan is worsening with each and every passing day. The current deteriorating law & order and governance crisis can be rightly attributed to inherent distrust and misgivings between the Baloch populace and the federation of Pakistan (Rizwan, 2014). Hostile states and intelligence agencies are exploiting the local deprivation and grievances to their advantage by aiding and abetting the militancy and militant outfits. The transformation of the BLA from local tribal insurgent group into fully equipped and trained militant entity speaks volumes of the external support and patronage and the same is acting as a proxy with their strings into the Indian hand and with the sole motive to destabilize a nuclear armed state. In fact, the restlessness and chaos in the most strategically significant province of Pakistan suits some other regional actors as well and the concerned authorities need to study their approach to counter the same.

Findings and Conclusion

The state of Pakistan is facing the shenanigans of proxy warfare as inflicted through Indo-Afghan sponsorship, which is not only costing innocent lives and causing socio-economic distress but has

the potential to affect the whole region. The Indo-Afghan proxies such as the TTP and BLA are unleashing a reign of terror, specifically in Baluchistan and KPK, targeting ordinary civilians and the security forces with impunity. Their brutality and terror has finally prompted the state of Pakistan to take decisive measures by branding them as '**Fitna al Khawarij**' and '**Fitna al Hindustan**', which is itself a significant development reflecting seriousness and resolve of the state functionaries to curb this menace. The enemies of Pakistan have finally realized their inability to defeat Pakistan militarily, so they are employing underhand tactics to fulfil their notorious objectives.

In order to defeat the nefarious designs of non-state actors and their handlers, it is imperative to learn from past mistakes and foster a sense of cohesion among various ethnicities, communities and politico-religious forces. The real challenge facing the state of Pakistan in the first place is to revamp the decades old obsolete system so as to address the grievances and concerns of all disgruntled segments of society, particularly the Baloch and Pakhtun populace. Furthermore, the enhanced geopolitical profile of Pakistan prominently earned through her role as mediator in Iran-US conflict and subsequent joint defense agreements should be capitalized to reiterate international community the subversive behavior of India and Afghanistan and its consequences not only for the state of Pakistan but for the whole region and beyond. Holistic approach ranging from kinetic operations to socio-economic development, diplomacy, national consensus and integration will be most effective to counter proxy warfare and hostile posturing of state adversaries.

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