

Withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan (Endgame): Issues and challenges for Pakistan

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Abstract

Obama administration seems to have fulfilled the US agenda in Afghanistan: killing of Osama Bin Ladin, breaking the backbone of terrorism in the region, reconstruction and democratization of Afghanistan. President Obama asserted recently that Afghanistan no longer represents a terrorist threat to the US. According to him, “tide of war is receding” and that “America, it is time to focus on nation-building here at home”. If, largely, the goals in Afghanistan are achieved, this means setting in motion a substantial withdrawal of the US forces. This would acknowledge the formal end of terrorism and a shift of his administration’s focus towards the fast-changing political and economic landscape in the US. His second woe can be accepted in harsh reality of domestic economic restrains. However, the tide of war against terrorism has not receded. This paper/ presentation will focus on the US announcement of the withdrawal of forces, the endgame in Afghanistan and its implications on Pakistan with a futuristic view.

Key words: US, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Taliban, Policy

Mr. Obama announced plans to withdraw 10,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year. He said the drawdown would continue “at a steady pace” until the United States handed over security to the Afghan authorities in 2014. The decision to withdraw forces from Afghanistan has been taken by the president who faces relentless budget pressures, an increasingly restive American public and a re-election campaign next year (*The New York Time*, 2011, June 22).

It is well-understood that the US is facing a deep but challenging financial crunch at home. However, “ending the war responsibly” is just the other way round. This conflict has cost hundreds of billions of dollars and 1,500 American lives (*The New York Time*, 2011, June 22). Exit strategy in haste will ruin all the sacrifices and investment. Terrorism is a menace which has not yet been curbed in Afghanistan or Pakistan in its totality. The American policy makers have coined a unique term to define two nations fighting against the terror despite believing in –one nation one state- phenomenon. They call

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Pakistan and Afghanistan as “AfPak” (Raza, 2009: 120). AfPak region is worse affected by the terror and terrorism as a threat. Terrorism is still persistent and the threat is still looming on the heads of not only the ‘Af-Pak’ but also for the US interests in the region.

After the Death of Osama Bin Ladin (OBL)

In September 2001, OBL was a major factor in US attack over Afghanistan in 2001. However, when the mastermind of the 11 September attacks in the US and the world most wanted man was killed in a US operation in the north-western Pakistan in May 2011, the US president Barak Obama announced it in a statement that, “justice has been done” (The Guardian, 2011, May 2). Back then some section of people were considering the OBL death not only a great achievement for the US forces in Afghanistan so far, but they also were not sure of any phenomenal role left anymore for the US forces to stay longer in Afghanistan. But the high US officials have made it clearer when they started giving an impression that with the end of OBL, the war on terrorism is not yet over.

Of course, when it comes to the US adversaries in the region, Taliban are stronger than the last time. The use of extensive military force to eliminate the Taliban and its Al-Qaeda supporters has not yielded positive military results in Afghanistan. The Taliban movement has shown greater resilience over the years, deepening its roots amongst the Afghan populace. Particularly, their resistance had increased in the Pashtun-dominated north-southern provinces along the Pakistan border. So much so that the NATO forces have removed their bases from the bordering Afghan provinces of Nuristan and Kunar after growing Taliban attacks. Similarly, the allied forces have struggled to keep security of the Capital Kabul intact due to off and on attacks from Taliban. In one such terrorism incident the Afghan President Karzai narrowly escaped after a military parade to mark the 16 years since the overthrow of the country’s Soviet backed rule was attacked. The security forces whisked Karzai away, however, three people including a parliamentarian were killed. But, more importantly, the message was wide clear in a subsequent media statement, which the local journalists attributed to Taliban. It said, “they (Taliban) had not targeted Karzai directly, but wanted to show how easily they could get access to such events” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7369540.stm>).

Despite the beefed up security, Kabul still has not recovered from such attacks. The show of strength led many stakeholders to believe that solution of Afghan problem would not be easy without including Taliban into any peace process. This was the start of the end of a US policy to purge Afghanistan of all terrorism networks. Hence, efforts were launched to integrate “flexible” militants into a broader governmental framework. By employing secret ways

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and means, the US officials did try to woo Taliban through the connivance of Karzai government. Such efforts, however, have hardly bore fruits so far now. Partly, because Taliban understand that they are in a much stronger position today than they were in the past. So, therefore, their tone and tenor is least flexible (Interview with Riffat Orakzai, 2011, December, 17). They did agree to hold dialogues but the terms and conditions, which they put forward, through informal means of communication, are seemingly too rigid for the U.S. to make them part of any possible future political settlement (Interview with Riffat Orakzai, 2011, December, 17).

Mulla Nasir, the Taliban Commander at Hilmand says: 'if formal talks are initiated, our first demand is the withdrawal of foreign forces. This is the condition set by the head of the Emirate- Mulla Omer. We will not move from this position. As of the Karzai, he is installed by the US. Ordinary Afghans will not cooperate with his government. Not after so much bloodshed and sacrifice'. Mulla Nasir made the remarkable but startling remark that the Polish troops stationed in Ghazani had offered him thousands of dollars not to attack on their supply convoys. According to him, 'I have been offered 30,000 per convoy by the Polish soldiers to provide them safe passage. A day after the 30,000 offer, we attacked them and inflicted millions of dollars of losses on them. The torched vehicles are still present in the battlefield. Its true. They have offered us hefty bribes to stop attacking them.' Mulla Nasir's ideas and opinion is both hard line and moderate. Refusing to say if any future Taliban regime will give Al-Qaeda sanctuary, he is insisting that his movement is not against girls' schools, music or television. Yet he had one uncompromising message for the families of NATO troops fighting in Afghanistan: I want to address the [western] parents who sent their soldiers to Afghanistan. Don't sacrifice your sons for this war. It can't be won. You should look at the Afghan history. No force on the face of the earth; not the Russians; not [the] NATO have defeated the Afghans' (Interview with Hilmand Mullah Nasir). Given the intricacy of the conflict, with many actors involved pursuing varying agendas, the likelihood of reconciliation and negotiation with the Taliban insurgents is being questioned. Scepticism prevails amongst many Afghans about the possibility of incorporating Taliban in a power sharing formula.

Basically, Afghanistan is a diverse country in view of its ethnic composition. Due to ragging fighting ever since the Soviet intervention in 1979, peace has never visited the land-locked country. It badly damaged ethnic composition of Afghans. Major communities such as Tajik, Uzbek, Hazarajat etc have all fought the war, but Pashtuns (45 percent) were the most powerful vehicle of resistance against the Soviets. Resultantly, they suffered the most. After the Soviets withdrawal in 1989, factional fighting ensued. Mujahideen commanders turned into mighty warlords (Kurt, 1993: 134). Every one of them was the *de facto* representative of their respective ethnic communities. In the

eastern provinces along the border of Pakistan, many such warlords carried out exploitation of the local Afghans through setting up roadside checkpoints. The emergence of the Taliban movement starting from Qandahar province in early 1994 was the reaction of this exploitation. However, role of the neighboring Pakistan in extending support to this movement throughout its rigid six years rule in Afghanistan is an open secret. This support apparently ended when Pakistan became a non-NATO ally of the U.S in its war on terror and provided its ground and space to facilitate the U.S. attack on Afghanistan in 2001, which brought an end to the Taliban rule (Interview with Mumtaz Bangash, 2012, January 12).

With all this background in view, the U.S. policies in Afghanistan lack on two vital fronts. First, the policy makers have empowered relatively smaller communities at the expense of a larger one, which has altered the balance of ethnic composition by giving more political leverage to communities other than the majority Pashtuns. Second, the U.S. policy makers have tried to reach solution to Afghan problem by isolating the issue from its regional geo-strategic realities. Addressing both these factors are vital for post-withdrawal Afghanistan. Otherwise, long-lasting peace in this war-torn country would get solid hurdles on its way.

Pakistan as a factor

Though Pakistan claimed to have severed its relations with Taliban, but there are enough indications that elements within its official machinery have always enjoyed soft corner for the movement. Partly because Taliban is mostly ethnic Pashtuns and a sizable part of Pashtuns also live on Pakistan side of the divide, where they are more integrated in the mainstream than their ethnic cousins, at present, in Afghanistan. Hence the influence of Pashtun factor in the official decision-making can hardly be ignored and so is the possibility of their support for the Taliban in Afghanistan.

More so, the geographical dependency of Afghanistan on Pakistan makes the latter indispensable for the former. On top of that, tribal affinities on both sides of the divide are stronger than any border restriction and this factor has so far made Pakistan a natural route for all Afghans to avail health and business facilities in Khyber Pashtunkhwa (KPK) and FATA (Interview with Dr. Alam Shah, 2011, December 11). Such geographical compulsion has taken shape of emotional and sentimental attachments, which could be witnessed in CIA-ISI war against the ex-USSR in the early 1980s. Mujahideen from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA fought hand in hand with their ethnic Pashtuns in Afghanistan and together both of them drove the Soviets out. Long-lasting geographical and demographical affiliations of the sort could hardly be evaded easily. That is one reason that Pakistan army have faced severe resistance in

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establishing State *writ* in Pashtun's areas after the country became US ally in 2001. Pakistan so far has lost three thousand troops so far in fighting against Taliban and 35 thousands of its civilians have fallen prey to suicide bombing and bomb blasts (<http://ipripak.org/factfiles/ff105.pdf>). Overall Pakistan claims that its economy has suffered a loss of 70 billion during the last one decade, which severely hits every sector of the society. Keeping in view this vital role of Pakistan in the US war on terror, how could the US afford to ignore geographical and demographical sensibilities of its ally—Pakistan—when it comes to talks with Taliban? (Interview with Dilawar Wazir, 2011, December 15).

The U.S., however, seems to have little sympathies left for Pakistan. Ever since they attacked Afghanistan, the U.S officials have always looked at Pakistan suspiciously. In this regard the role of Inter-service Intelligence Agency (ISI) invited huge criticism, which was directly blamed for backing Taliban. Afghan President Karzai went to the extent of suggesting the U.S. authorities to hold talks with Pakistan on behalf of the Taliban (*The Express Tribune*, 2011, December 4). The biggest obstacle to such an approach was always Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who presides over a bureaucracy so riddled with corruption that it is seemingly incapable of providing either basic services or competent governance. Without a reliable partner in Kabul, the counterinsurgency strategy successfully employed in Iraq by Gen. David A. Petraeus, the top NATO commander in the region, was bound to fail (http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-06-30/news/bs-ed-afghanistan-20110630_1_insurgents-afghanistan-drone). This situation got further complicated when Pakistan-based-Taliban killed security forces and civilians by penetrating inside the bordering areas of Pakistan (*Daily Dawn*, 2011, October 24).

On top of all, withdrawal of the US forces will hardly achieve a desired result unless and until the US put the issue in its local context. Growing Indian influence in Afghanistan and continuous US support to boost India as regional power in South East Asia is bound to polarize regional environment. Traditional rivalry between Pakistan and India will always be a factor to influence any peace effort in Afghanistan. Some analysts have also predicted that USD 2 billion Indian investments in Afghanistan (*The Hindustan Times*, 2011, May 13) have already shifted confrontation between Pakistan and India from its eastern borders along Line of Control (LOC) to the western borders along Afghanistan. That is one reason that for the first time in history Pakistan has deployed over 1,50,000 of its troops on its borders along with Afghanistan (*Pakistan Observer*, 2012, January 30). To further complicate the situation, Afghanistan has reached a strategic partnership agreement with India after

the Afghan President Karzai meet its Indian counterpart in Delhi in October 2011 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15161776>).

Looking at all such developments reaching with the active U.S. consent, if not dictates, the region has got more volatile nature now than it was at any point of time during the last one decade.

The US exit-strategy

Will the US exit-strategy from Afghanistan will succeed or falter in the coming years? It is the major question on which the future of stability in Afghanistan largely depends. The US exit strategy without completely eradicating terrorism in the region can be equated with the US pack-up just after the Cold War in 1992. They left their most allied ally- Pakistan- at the mercy of terrorists in the offing- the former Mujahideens against the Soviet Union. These Mujahideens turned into the Taliban later and that cost of the US haste exit strategy was suffered by Pakistan. Mulla Nasir's affirmation confirms that the Taliban are in full spirits. Their backbone is yet to be broken. Death of Osama does not mean the end of terrorism. We would not like to go into the controversy of how and why the war on terror began and how best we could muster its results. But the fact remains that the mess created the US in the post-9/11 haste must not be left for Pakistan again.

Practically, counter-insurgency is aimed at sowing the seeds of long-term peace in war ravaged areas like Afghanistan and the Pakistan's tribal belt. Since their arrival during October 2001, this was the mandate of the US forces' presence in Afghanistan. Theoretically, questions regarding the legitimacy of intervention over state sovereignty and whether counter insurgency as state-policy can succeed, raise doubt over the states' intervention at all. Due to the enormity and complexities of such a task, democratizing Afghanistan and pacifying Pakistan are recent examples of failure. The fact remains that the US 'war on terror' in Afghanistan and Pakistan is lacking long term commitment required for successful counter-insurgency and state-building. This intervention might initially have gained domestic and international support but, as casualties and costs mount up, pressures build to the contrary. This can lead states to rush for an exit.

The steep rise in the cost of the 'War on Terror' has pressed upon the international coalition forces especially the US to adopt a withdrawal strategy to reduce its losses and achieve a face saving withdrawal from the country. Still, the growing disenchantment in the United States with the war, particularly given the ballooning national debt, the country's slow economic recovery and the whopping \$120 billion price tag of the Afghan conflict this year alone, were all considerations weighed by the US president. At an occasion he said, "Over

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the last decade, we have spent a trillion dollars on war at a time of rising debt and hard economic times,” Mr. Obama said. “Now, we must invest in America’s greatest resource: our people.” (*The Washington Post*, 2011, May 31)

Where is Pakistan- the most allied ally during the War on Terror- in the US exit strategy? Are they sensitive about the Pakistani interests in the region? Are Americans repeating the saga of 1992- leaving its ally in the lurch after their supposedly fulfilment of agenda? Is their agenda fulfilled in true sense? These are some of the questions, which deserve an answer by the American administration. However, the withdrawal shows that the the administration may have concluded it can no longer achieve its loftiest ambitions there. This was also acknowledged by President Obama when he stated: “We will not try to make Afghanistan a perfect place,” he said. “We will not police its streets or patrol its mountains indefinitely. That is the responsibility of the Afghan government.” (*The New York Times*, 2011, June 22)

The US Pakistan relationship is always based on unequal footings. Its purpose is self-serving interests rather than on mutually compatible objectives. The US policies and actions are guided by its global objectives and determinations. However, Pakistan’s regional interests guide its relationship: defense against India and Afghanistan. Since the relationship between the US and Pakistan has always been an affiliation between the two asymmetrical states; the relationship is always dictated by the superior. It was quite visible in the rise and fall of the mercury of relations since 1947. In the past, despite the alliances such as SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan enjoyed less US priority than India which followed a policy of non-alignment. Similarly, the US tilt towards India during the decade long war on terror is a proof of the US insensitivity towards Pakistan’s regional interests.

Pakistan has suffered terrorism over the last three decades. As a democratic Islamic republic and a supporter of the West against Communism, she has been subject to intensive terrorist activities in a systematic way. Since its creation, Pakistan has taken certain progressive steps to create a modern Islamic society aiming at the contemporary values of Eastern civilization. Within this context, one of the pillars of the Pakistani foreign policy has been based on the motto given by the great Quaid-e-Azam, “*Our foreign policy is one of the friendliness and goodwill towards the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world.*” Being loyal to this basic principle, Pakistan had always followed the policy of peaceful solutions of regional and

international problems (<http://pakteahouse.net/2011/02/19/the-pak-us-conundrum/>).

As is obvious, during the last three decades, Pakistan has been affected by the social, economic and political outcomes of the Afghan conflicts and clashes by international and local actors. Despite the negative impact of Afghan imbroglio, Pakistan has always been very supportive to erstwhile friends- west- in order to reach a peaceful solution to the problems on their own terms. Following this policy, Pakistan has played a very active role in winning the wars for the west and hence gave more sacrifices for the friends off the shores of Atlanta. As a most recent example, Pakistan did not hesitate to play a leading role in fighting the war on terror.

As a former ally during the cold war and now a frontline country in the war on terror, Pakistan was compelled to struggle against the strong waves of terrorist challenges both during the cold war and in its aftermath. Pakistan has suffered terrorism for almost four decades and experienced the most bloody terrorist attacks in almost every corner of her soil. Since the very beginning of the terrorist activities on her soil, Pakistan always used the legal means within the limitations of national and international law. Throughout her struggle against this phenomenon, her calls to the neighboring countries and to her allies in the western world had unfortunately not shown the desired effect of uniting against this common enemy of mankind.

The withdrawal of the US forces will have negative implications on Pakistan. The Afghan National Army is yet not able to take control and keep a watchful eye to combat the miscreants. They are inexperienced, not much trained and naïve. Their capability and quality to combat terrorism can be judged from the fact that the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda consider their points of deployment as 'soft belly' to attack and carry out suicide bombs in Kabul. After the withdrawal of the US forces, a weak entity in shape of Afghan National Army will replace them. This will mean more incursions in Pakistan's tribal belt. In fact, the weaknesses in Afghanistan directly affect Pakistan's national and domestic security.

The US administration is also in dialogue with the Taliban in Afghanistan (www.aljazeera.net/mritems/streams/2010/2/21/1_973201_1_51.pdf). They are trying to hammer out a power sharing relationship in Afghanistan. But on the contrary, Pakistan's security forces are fighting against the Taliban in Pakistan's tribal belt tooth and nail. This dichotomy is un-understandable. At one end two nations are united in the name of AfPak. On the other hand two diametrically opposed strategies are adopted by the US and Pakistan towards a similar entity-the Taliban.

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The cost of Second World War was 4.1 trillion U.S. dollars whereas America's war on terror with 4 trillion U.S. dollars already consumed would soon surpass the Second World War's costs (*The Frontier Post*, 2011, August 11). The troops withdrawal have made Taliban bolder and have boosted their bargaining power in secret power sharing talks. Similarly, poor governance, notoriety of the Karzai's regime and massive corruption in Afghanistan have also contributed to the confidence of the Taliban. To soften the Taliban stance on complete withdrawal before any negotiations could take place, the U.S. has already ensured that Taliban leaders are removed from the entities that fell under the UN sanctions (*The Frontier Post*, 2011, August 11). U.S. is working hard to ease out its withdrawal by trying to bring all warring Taliban factions under all acceptable political agreement much before the deadline of 2014. This whole process will encourage the Pakistani government to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban. The irony of fate is that the Pakistani administration doesn't know the terms of dialogue upon which they could and would negotiate with the Taliban. Furthermore, the Pakistani society, unlike the Afghans, is not ready to consummate the role of the Taliban in official process.

The announcement of troops' drawdown has also been linked with 'Strategic Partnership Declaration' with Afghanistan. The declaration, when materialized, will allow the U.S. to retain at least five military bases beyond 2014 in Afghanistan. This will have major implications for Pakistan via-a-vis its relations with its friendly neighboring countries like Iran and China. Afghanistan soil would be used by the US forces for attacking the neighboring countries in the name of countering terrorism. This all can and will take place in the light of "Bush Doctrine". In other words, the historic loyal and strategic role played by Pakistan will be replaced by Afghanistan. This will reduce Pakistan's strategic importance for American administration. Thus in the circumstances, Pakistan has to evolve a balanced strategy with respect to regional actors. The engagement of the US in Afghanistan must be balanced with the Pakistan's consultation with China and Russia.

The stereo-typed definition to a success in terms of Afghanistan has been the creation of a strong government in Kabul with stable law and order established by its indigenous army and police. However, the Karzai government has proved to be very inefficient and lazy. With such accosts, the likelihood of a strong government in Kabul is evaporating. Withdrawal of the US forces will mean his inability to curb terrorism with full force. But keeping his track record, he will blame Pakistan for harboring terrorists and their infiltration. This will further fuel to the terror fire and the future relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan will deteriorate. No wonder, in the circumstances, both nations may go for very bad border skirmishes to gain world support.

Pakistan absented itself from the Bonn conference 2011 as a mark of protest at the death of two dozen soldiers who had been killed in a Nato air attack in Mohmand Agency. Pakistan has reduced its cooperation with Nato and the US in the war and is asking for a review of all ground rules. The West's Af-Pak strategy is in tatters at a time when it ought to have been at its strongest. In brief, Pakistan at present is no longer a player in the endgame in Afghanistan. This would suggest that as of now there is no solid plan for an endgame to coincide with the withdrawal of forces by December 2014 (*Daily Dawn*, 2011, December 9).

Pakistan would be happy, for an endgame in Afghanistan, with a solution that created an anti-Indian set-up; gave a prominent role to the Taliban in Afghanistan's future; led to the departure of foreign forces; ended drone strikes and weakened insurgent groups in Pakistan (*Daily Dawn*, 2011, December 9). It is clear that the Pakistani establishment is convinced that the US will not wish to reduce India's influence in post-2014 Afghanistan and that to the contrary, the US would wish to see India exercise a dominant role in the future of Afghanistan that is in conjunction with America's strategic pact with India. In view of this disconnect between the US and Pakistan regarding India, Pakistan is now likely to exercise an independent role in the endgame in Afghanistan (*Daily Dawn*, 2011, December 9).

The economies of Afghanistan and Pakistan have always been a central issue with the policy makers of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US alike. Corruption, money laundering, internal strife, sectarian conflicts, and constant warring situation with neighboring countries like India and Afghanistan have often mustered crisis for the people of Pakistan. With the withdrawal of the US forces, guns and grenades will re-emerge, as happened in the post USSR forces withdrawal situation in Afghanistan. The US forces withdrawal will put the situation back to square one. The vacuum created by the departure of the US forces will once again tried to be filled by the war-lords. This will slip Afghanistan into internecine struggle which has been a feature of the Afghan society since long. Pakistan being the neighboring country with sharing of the biggest ethnic Pushtoon entity of 42% in Afghanistan will be drawn into the strife and forced to take side. Pakistan still carries the people in its administration –civil as well as military who believe in the strategic depth phenomenon. These theories will re-emerge and hence the situation will turn to 1998 Afghanistan- a breeding ground of terrorism, religious extremism, pestilence and hate. Pakistan as usual will not be able to keep itself isolated from Afghanistan and hence will be entangled in its internal politics once again.

Conclusion

President Obama is playing troops reduction politics. He is trying to find a political solution to a military role which needs to be other way round. The situation in Afghanistan is very precarious and hence without panicking about the increasing level of violence, the sanity is needed. A long term solution to a three decade long problem needs an extensive strategy rather than just pull-out in haste. Troops reduction politics (TReP) can be a slogan to attract masses in the forthcoming Presidential elections. However, this will lash-back. This will again result in warlordism, sanctuary of terrorists and insecurity of Afghanistan's neighboring countries including countries like the US.

We can never remake Afghanistan into something resembling a Western democracy; what kind of government ultimately emerges there is something only Afghans can decide. Our interest is limited to ensuring that the country doesn't become a haven for terrorists intent on attacking the U.S. The counterterrorism strategy outlined by the administration this week represents a realistic approach to the problem that can accomplish our goals in the region and wherever new threats arise at a price in blood and treasure that is far less than what we have been paying up to now (http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-06-30/news/bs-ed-afghanistan-20110630_1_insurgents-afghanistan-drone).

For many years, Pakistan has relied on the US for its security and economic growth. However, the lack of US support in the 1971 war with India and its abrupt exit after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 created a negative image of the US that persists even today. This image is now confirmed in the minds of the majority of Pakistanis after the US engagement with India under the strategic relationship umbrella (*Daily Dawn*, 2011, September 30).

Peace in Afghanistan will give a sigh of relief to Afghanistan as well as to its neighboring countries. This is the ultimate purpose of the withdrawal of the US forces and action on endgame. This will also mean the end of international terrorism in the region. The questions of the question is what will be the solution to the trouble in FATA. Will peace in Afghanistan mean peace in FATA and Pakistan? The fear is that the end of terrorism in Afghanistan will shift the focus of terrorists to Pakistan and hence the situation will be like out of the frying pan into the fire. Hence, the policy makers are supposed to work comprehensively on every part of the issue including FATA and Pakistan. This is the place where our policy makers must be vigilant in participating the endgame of Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the US forces from the region.

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