Gilgit schools attacked

[Senator Rehman Malik](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/senator-rehman-malik)

August 08, 2018

The attack on 12 schools in Gilgit Baltistan has once again reminded us of TTP .The syndicate between Al Qaeda, TTP and Daesh is re-emerging.

If we review the whole phenomenon of extremism, militancy and finally terrorism we would find that the entire phenomenon has been based on religious thoughts. The fighters created by USA in Afghanistan under the cover of jihad were pitched against Soviet Union by exploiting and manoeuvring the religious thoughts of the fighters. Pakistan jumped in voluntarily without considering the future repercussions on its national horizon. USA needed the support of ‘mujaheddin’ – religious zealots - to confront and contain Soviet Union and, therefore, USA encouraged and supported the recruitment and influx of foreign mujaheddin in Afghanistan via Pakistan thus attracting the focus of the world. Abrupt withdrawal of USA and the sudden stoppage of salaries and funds to the jihadis created Taliban in Afghanistan. This phenomenon further accelerated with the support of Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden and his supporters within the Muslim world.

The suffering of Pakistan started when the unemployed ‘mujaheddin’ from Pakistan and abroad mingled with Pakistani militant religious groups and started a sectarian war in the country. With the re-entry of USA in Afghanistan post-9/11 as an invading force, Pakistan once again joined hands with USA to fight against Taliban in a so-called ‘war on terror’. The engagement of Pakistan in the war on terror provided an opportunity to religious militant groups to apparently support their Muslim brethren in Afghanistan but at the same time it was an opportunity for grabbing share of the booty. These scattered militants ultimately gathered under the umbrella of newly formed terrorist group called Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan under the now dead Baitullah Mahsud.  TTP and its affiliated groups besides carrying out their militant activities inside Afghanistan against US and its allied forces also started terrorist activities inside Pakistan indiscriminately. TTP carried out suicide bombings on innocent civilians, government buildings and personnel including army, police and security agencies for the support of Pakistan to US and its allies in Afghanistan. Pakistan has thus suffered more than 70 thousand casualties due to its participation in the ‘war on terror’.

Geographically the most hit area has been KPK and especially the tribal areas. The narrative built by TTP and its affiliates to justify its terrorist activities mainly centred around three point-agenda, which included: stoppage of support of Pakistan to US and its allies in Afghanistan; implementation of Sharia laws in the country – although TTP and its affiliates has never been found serious on the issue of implementation of Sharia Laws; and last but not the least, denial of right of traditional education to girls, as being un-Islamic.

The nation continued to suffer at the hands of these so called contractors of Islam and while we were expecting the diminishing presence and influence of Al-Qaida and TTP in the country, we started feeling the presence of yet another terrorist outfit internationally known as Daesh or ISIS. Its signatures started emerging in the country through various terrorist activities in Pakistan. There are no reasons to doubt that Daesh also known as ISIS was created and funded by US in Iraq and Syria and supported by its allies, not only in Europe but in Middle East, for their geo-political interests. Its presence in Afghanistan after throwing out of Iraq could not happen without the support of US for obvious reasons. It has now become an anti-Pakistan entity with the support of US and India for carrying out terrorist activities inside Pakistan to keep it destabilised.

With the background of Pakistan being targeted by terrorism, the burning of 12 schools in Diamer in CEPK zone is some kind of a message from the inimical forces. I as a student of investigation am worried about it as the regions is between China and Pakistan and I have already warned about destruction and repercussions in future in the region. There is also a possibility that CPEC is also under threat.

We must not forget that the statement of US Defense Secretary that “The One Belt, One Road also goes through disputed territory, and I think that in itself shows the vulnerability of trying to establish that sort of a dictate”. Similarly we must also not forget the statement of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi where he had termed CPEC as “unacceptable” project for India.

CPEC is a project which is in the benefit of both China and Pakistan and inimical forces have been trying to sabotage it through a variety of tactics including creating terror in the region – burning of 12 schools could be one of those tactics. These forces would continue to do the same; therefore, our law enforcing agencies have to be extra ordinary vigilant to counter the inimical forces in the background of stances of both US and India vis-à-vis CPEC.

Attack on 12 schools in Diamer is not an attack on the buildings, but it is a challenge and an attack on our entire nation. This terrorist attack was to create fear and destabilise the region being part of CPEC project at a time when the new government was in the process of being formed. The way the terrorists are re-emerging, it looks as if these forces will continue their anti-Pakistan efforts.

The provincial government of KPK and Gilgit-Baltistan government including AJK governments should have extended support to Gilgit-Baltistan government in terms of intelligence, as it does not have any Special Branch outfit there.

It is also more worrisome that nobody from Gilgit-Baltistan government came forward to decide action against those people who have been preaching against the girls’ schools. I have a big question that is it not the State, which is sleeping and has failed to perform their constitutional duty to protect the life and property of its citizens.

My worry is that the terrorists have started their terrorist’s action around Shahrah-e-Karakoram (KKH - CPEC route) and therefore we need to increase our security and intelligence from Khanjrab to Gwadar to ensure that such conspiracies, planning to sabotage the CPEC project or destabilising Pakistan in Gilgit-Baltistan should be frustrated.

This part of Pakistan has become highly sensitive with CPEC corridor hence there is dire need to enhance the security of Gilgit Baltistan to ensure full protection of CPEC from militants from Gilgit Baltistan and other inimical elements including Indian agents present in this area. Our elite agencies have to double up their role to provide effective intelligence on such extremists for timely actions.

The writer is a PPP Senator, former Interior Minister of Pakistan, and Chairman of think tank “Global Eye” and Senate Body on Interior and Narcotics.

[rmalik1212@gmail.com](mailto:rmalik1212@gmail.com)

@senrehmanmalik