**From Grief to Triumph**

[Omay Aimen](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/omay-aimen/)

December 16, 2023

An unsettling recollection of the horrific terrorist attack that took place at the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, lingers in the hearts of the people of Pakistan. The responsibility for this appalling incident lies with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claiming the lives of 134 students, teachers, and the school principal. As the nation observes the ninth anniversary of this tragic event, it is imperative to not only reflect on the resilience displayed in the face of terrorism but also to cast light upon another disconcerting chapter – the downfall of Dhaka. These events reflect a significant turning point in Pakistan’s continuous fight against extremism and unwanted outside intervention.

Pakistanis come together to honour the “Martyrs of APS” on this day marking the ninth anniversary of the horrific incident. In recognition of the irreversible loss, the entire country expresses solidarity with the bereaved family. The sorrow and suffering endure, but so does the resolve to stop the terrorists from Khawariji and their foreign backers from achieving their evil plans. Pakistan commits to fighting terrorism as a unified front and will stop at nothing to remove its agents of chaos and devastation.

Pakistan’s people, their armed forces, and law enforcement agencies reaffirm their unwavering resolve to combat the scourge of terrorism on this mournful day. The TTP is the Khawariji fitna, and the State will use all of its might and resolve to destroy them. Pakistan is dedicated to combating terrorism head-on, regardless of the cost or difference in severity, with “zero tolerance” for this evil. The government is unwavering in its pursuit of its objectives despite the difficulties encountered in completing the National Action Plan (NAP) post-APS, demonstrating the country’s resolve and fortitude in the face of terrorism.

The cooperation that exists between the TTP and foreign intelligence organizations like RAW and NDS highlights the continuous and unabated difficulty of outside intervention in Pakistan’s domestic affairs.

The Pakistan Army faced significant security issues between 2001 and 2010, as the number of criminal charges before Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) increased significantly. Local violent players complicated the larger War on Terror by taking advantage of legal gaps and frequently requesting mercy. Twelve of the NAP’s thirteen principles were devoted to eliminating terrorism. The creation of special military tribunals was an essential component of the NAP and a critical first step in tackling the complex national security environment. Pakistan conducted several noteworthy military actions following the APS catastrophe, including Operation Zarb-e-Azb in erstwhile North Waziristan Agency, and Radd-ul-Fissad across the country including urban areas and South Punjab. These actions had extensive national backing and were carried out with perfect coordination amongst all law enforcement agencies. The Pakistani Armed Forces showcased a strong commitment to eradicating terrorism and maintaining the state’s writ throughout the country by making immense sacrifices to maintain peace and security.

The TTP, identified as a Khawariji fitna, has actively sowed discord and chaos, distorting the principles of Islam to rationalize its violent agenda. Religious academics worldwide and in Pakistan have categorically denounced the group’s conduct, which they consider to be against Islam. Mullah Fazal Ullah, the mastermind behind the APS attack, and his accomplices communicated with handlers connected to the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) of Afghanistan. This complex relationship with adversarial intelligence services reveals a more profound and international aspect of TTP operations, suggesting a wider network that supports the group’s endeavours.

As we commemorate the APS attack, we also need to talk about another terrible chapter in Pakistan’s fight against extremism: Dhaka’s downfall. This episode is a sobering reminder of the numerous difficulties the country faces. The once-thriving city of Dhaka met a terrible end as a result of the schemes of outside forces. This demonstrates the complexity of the dangers that Pakistan faces both within its boundaries and in its western neighbouring regions.

The cooperation that exists between the TTP and foreign intelligence organizations like RAW and NDS highlights the continuous and unabated difficulty of outside intervention in Pakistan’s domestic affairs. Especially noteworthy was the claimed 2020 involvement of RAW, which allegedly funded and planned the TTP’s merger with other terrorist groups, exposing a calculated plan to destabilize the area. The deliberate endeavour demonstrates the intricate and interrelated character of foreign engagement in Pakistan’s domestic disputes. Moreover, the disclosure that India has been transferring financial resources to Baloch separatists via middlemen in Afghanistan highlights the complex network of external influence causing internal conflict in Pakistan.

It is a time to consider the sacrifices made and the ongoing fight against terrorism and foreign meddling as Pakistan marks the 9th anniversary of the APS tragedy. A parallel story that emphasizes the complexity of the problems the country faces is provided by Dhaka’s downfall. The Pakistani people’s tenacity and resolve, along with the State’s determined actions, provide hope for a future free from the shadow of terrorism and outside manipulation, notwithstanding the darkness surrounding these events.

*The writer frequently contributes to issues concerning national and regional security; focusing on matters having a critical impact on these milieus. She can be reached at omayaimen333@gmail.com*