Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review
www.plhr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

War on Terror and Public Opinion: A Case of Pakistan

Dr. Tayyaba Muzammal [1] Dr. Muqrab Akbar [2]

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & International Relations, Government Islamia Graduate College for Women, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Professor, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakirya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research work was to investigate the socio-economic and political impacts of War on Terror on Pakistani society in the interpretation of public opinion. War on Terror has introduced the new essential task for any state to secure its national security and integrity. War on Terror has affected the international security environment and concepts of sovereignty. Pakistan's contributions in War on Terror are countless. Pakistan is confronting multiple security challenges due to participation in said war. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The explores that mainstream of masses believed national security issues as well as socio-economic and political issues of Pakistan have increased due to participation in War on Terror. Pakistan has lost its soft image in international community. Furthermore, national security issues are also emerged due to participation in said war. Peace, stability and security cannot be maintained without the elevation of social, economic, political and security conditions. So at this critical juncture its need of time to focus on social, economic, political and security conditions to boost up.

Introduction

Actually, War on Terror was planned to punish the mastermind of the 9/11 incident that threaten international peace and stability. But latter, in international prospect War on Terror became a burning and critical question. Indeed, in said war Pakistan's losses were in the form of deaths of public and Army persons as well as devastation in psychological political, economic and social spheres. Certainly, Pakistan's decision to participate in War on Terror upshot various domestic and international concerns e.g. national security dilemma, terrorists, militant outfits, suicidal attacks, bomb blasting, target killings, fundamentalism, intolerance, extremism, abnormality/deficiency destruction in all-inclusive units of Pakistani society.

Additionally, Drone strikes and NATO attacks were violation of territorial sovereignty of Pakistan. Pakistan should participate in war on terror with its own terms and conditions with the approval of parliament and National Security Council in favor of national Interests. As, national interests are superior to all, in international relations; there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests.

Since September, 2001, Pakistan has lost above 126.7 billion US dollars, and above 80000 citizens' lives including 6695 security personnel and 33456 terrorists. US War on Terror has failed to check terrorism, anarchy, corrupt governance, security problem and ethnic division in Afghanistan. US also lost $650 billion 2300 live and about 19000 were wounded or crippled. US sudden withdraw from Afghanistan created a political turmoil in Afghanistan; all stakeholders recognized the need of peace process in the region.

Literature Review

Rashid (2012**)** describes the reason of US policies failure in Afghanistan and Pakistan in his work *Descent into Chaos: The United State and Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*. He said that US and its coalition partner were trying to crush al-Qaeda leaders and terrorists but had been overlooked other possible negative results. Rashid's book critically assessed the cost of the War on Terror and its influence on the AF-PAK combat environment. This book would be helpful to make sense and understand the current situation.

Riedel (2012) in *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America and future of the Global Threat* expounded the result of Maryland poll report. Report clarified that civil society of Pakistan considers drone attacks unfair and unacceptable with 82% opposing votes. These notorious attacks started in 2004, in Pakistan. US achieved high value targets in these attacks so didn't halt it. Riedal's book was comprehensive works to get knowledge about drone attacks and its impact on Pakistan.

Bolger **(**2014**)** *Why We Lost in Iraq and Afghanistan: A general's account of the military's mistakes* is a book which explains the comprehensive and exhaustive knowledge about the War on Terror strategy. Bolger discusses the Counter-insurgency policy of America. This book also reveals that American army has admitted that terrorists know the topography, people and culture but US army doesn't know it. That is the reasons behind the American and its allies' failure in Afghan war. Bolger also said, US cannot stabilize government and system of Afghanistan by invasion even in 50 years. This is an outstanding book which described some reason of American failure in War on Terror.

Hashmi & Rahman (2014) *The Drawdown of US and NATO Forces from Afghanistan in 2014 – Implications for Pakistan* describe in their journal that Pakistan has to face multi-dimensional domestic and international challenges after withdrew of US and NATO forces. Writers suggested to re-evaluation of security policies, political and economic priorities in the region as well as in Globe to shrink challenges for Pakistan. This research journal would be helpful to analyze war impacts on Pakistan and post-war challenges.

Mann (2014) said in his journal *Pakistan's Drone Dilemma* that unfortunately; Pakistani society is divided on the controversial issue e.g. drone strikes and involvement in War on Terror. The opponents of drone strikes said they are against human rights, territorial sovereignty and International Law. At the other spectrum, supporters said many high-profile terrorists are killed in these strikes. Mann also suggests; diplomatic relations, indigenous policies, socioeconomic uplift, state's writ and redrawing relations with US are need of time**.**

Malik (2015) *Pakistan's Security Problems and Challenges in the Next Decade* describes that Pakistan's geo-strategic location is blessing as well as curse. Pakistan is facing internal issues e.g. state identity, good governance, civil-military relations, policy

making and external issues e.g. War on Terror, deteriorating relations with India, involvement of foreign elements in Pakistan especially, in Baluchistan and Karachi. Writer also said co-relation between national identity and state security also neglected in Pakistan. Furthermore, he said Pakistan's position of deterrence was very weak and required a full spectrum of deterrence policy to curb external threats. The information in this book would be valuable in this research work

Berman (2017) *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* is a works to figure out how religiously oriented terrorist groups plan and perform their tasks. Berman explains that the Taliban took control of Afghanistan and go in the Civil War. The authors also discussed internal issues such as corruption, literacy, vicious nerves, and conservative approaches. The repressive combination of government corruption and violent opportunism, the afghan warlords are powerful persons that can gain the support of the people, something as simple as the security of the country's major highways for people to travel.

Juss (2018) in her work *Human Rights and America's War on Terror* examined that 9/11 attacks damaged the US agenda of democracy, free speech and tolerance. As a result, US led to War on Terror, and used drone attacks, imprisonment without trial, forbidden torture. Author claimed that US security agencies spread all over the World and embedded within the institution. This research work was also an assessment of costs of the war on terror and human rights. Fundamentally, this book would be helpful to elaborate damages of War on Terror and human rights violation in the said war.

Kochai (2019) in his book said *99 Nights in Logar* during his stay of three months in a village of Logar; Afghanistan observed that US War on Terror was odd in nature. Author examined war policies were made in the fear to secure foreigner troops. Author further said that War on Terror had made Islamic world against US and allay. On the other side fundamentalists became more violent and more chaotic.

Slahi (2019) explains in his work *Guantánamo Diary* that he was held in Guantanamo Bay about fourteen years without any trial or charge. Author wrote his memoir in imprisonment therefore; large part of this book was omitted or censored. US Government censorship and elimination from a book provided scary evidence of US state of censorship and Islamaphobia. This book described that America held in Guantanamo Bay many people without any trial or charge just in under the umbrella of War on Terror.

Material and Methods

This research work has discussed the old and new trends of national security; national security issues of Pakistan since its inception and in 21ˢᵗ century. More importantly, this study has elaborated the Pakistan's contributions in War on Terror, regional situation and politics due to War on Terror and impacts of the said war in socio-economic, political, religious and psychological spheres of Pakistani society. This work is an effort to explore the public opinion about national security dilemma of Pakistan as front-line state to war-torn state with a survey. This survey comprises on the views of 1100 academic staff and students of Political Science and International Relations from FATA and four provinces of the country. Questionnaire data has been codified on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to get statistical analysis of data and graphical representation. Data has been analyzed with descriptive statistical option to know percentage and Frequency. Moreover, graph designed with legacy dialogs option in bar, pie and line style. This survey has achieved its target and attained the public opinion. This survey has supported the central idea of this research work that Pakistan is facing many internal and external national security issues and War on Terror has increased its socio-economic and political challenges.

A questionnaire was designed with the aim to collect public opinion about the concerning issue national security challenges of Pakistan in the era of War on Terror. Questionnaire consists on some basic information about respondents (gender, age, qualification, profession and province) as well as extensive and inclusive opinion about the national security challenges of Pakistan in 21ˢᵗ century. Convenient Sampling Technique which is also known as Availability Sampling Technique is a type of non-probability sampling method of data collection from huge amount of population where specific population was selected into a sample (Sedgwick, 2013).

This survey was conducted in Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Baluchistan and FATA to acquire opinion of the population from all over the Pakistan. It was difficult to find authentic opinion from illiterate people on this issue therefore; sampling population was teachers and students of Political Science and International Relations. Pakistan Bureau of Statistic PSB (2017) reported in 6ᵗʰ census 2017 population size is 207774520 (Punjab: 110012442, Sindh: 47886051, KPK: 30523371, Baluchistan: 12344408 and FATA: 5001676) so, number of respondents were different from each province.

Results and Discussion

In this survey 71.7 percent were male and 28.3 percent respondents were female and were conducted in Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Baluchistan and FATA to age of 20 to above 50 to acquire opinion of the population from all over the Pakistan. In which 88.6 percent population age was 20 to 35, 10.9 percent age were 35 to 50 and 0.5 percent were above 50 male and female. In order to get maximum and authentic opinion only educated people were selected. In which out of a sample of 1100 there were 571 respondent's education were MA, 460 were M. Phil and 69 were PhD. In order to get maximum and authentic opinion only Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers, experts and students of Political Science and International Relations were particular selected. In which out of a sample of 1100, there were 20.82 percent teachers and 79.18 percent respondents were students. Moreover, educations of respondents were 51.91 percent Master of Arts, 41.82 percent Master of Philosophy

and 6.27 percent had a degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Results were summarized in table and figure.
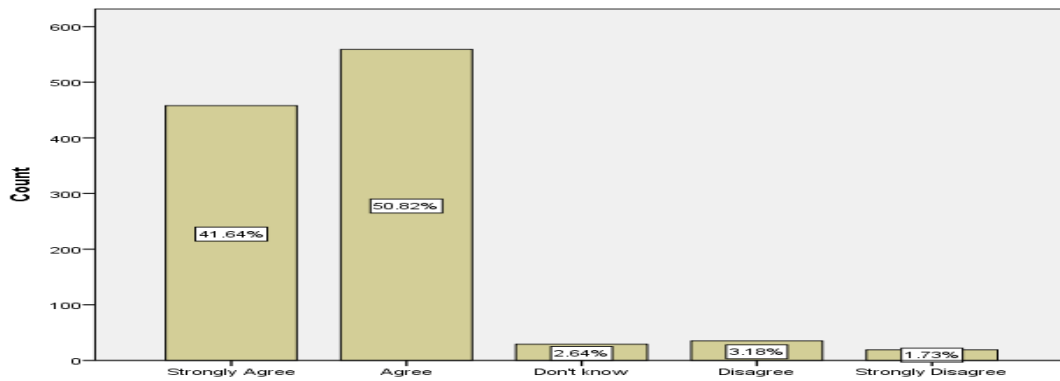

Figure: 1- National Security Issues Of Pakistan Have Increased Due To War On Terror

This pragmatic research results shows that majority with 92.46 percent of masses believed factual whereas, 4.83 percent denied and 2.64 percent were uncertain in response to the question whether national security issues of Pakistan have increased due to participation in War on Terror. It means most of the Pakistani considered that security issues have increased due to participation in said war
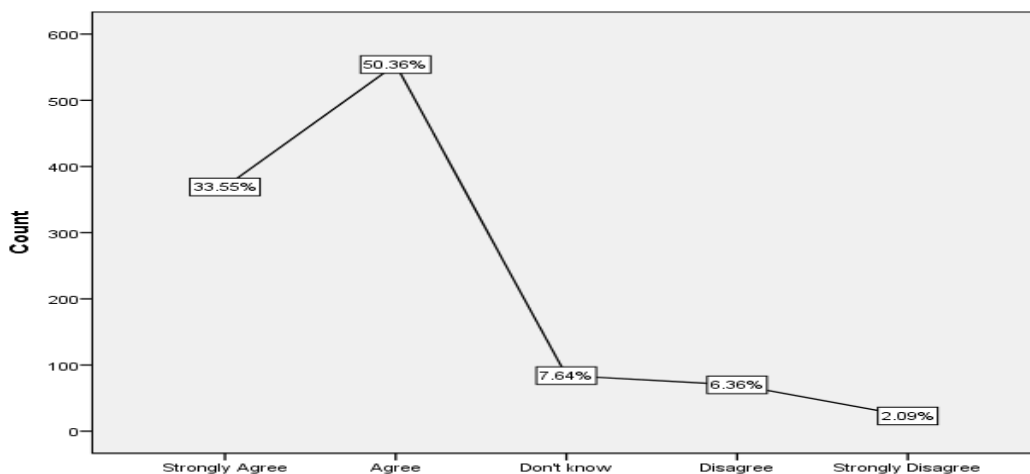
Figure: 2- Pakistan's Participation in War on Terror Caused Emergence of Terrorist Organizations in Pakistan

The biggest internal security challenge for Pakistan is terrorist organizations (Malik, 2015). War on Terror introduces many militant brands of terrorist organizations (Javaid, 2013). An Interior Ministry report describes that in Pakistan there are almost 50 to 70 extremist and terrorist organizations and 14 to 16 effective groups (groups having only 150 to 200 militants) are also exist (Ministry of Information, 2013). Above table illustrates that 83.9% of respondents agreed, 8.5% disagreed and 7.6% undecided on the opinion that Pakistan's participation in War on Terror caused emergence of terrorist organizations in Pakistan.
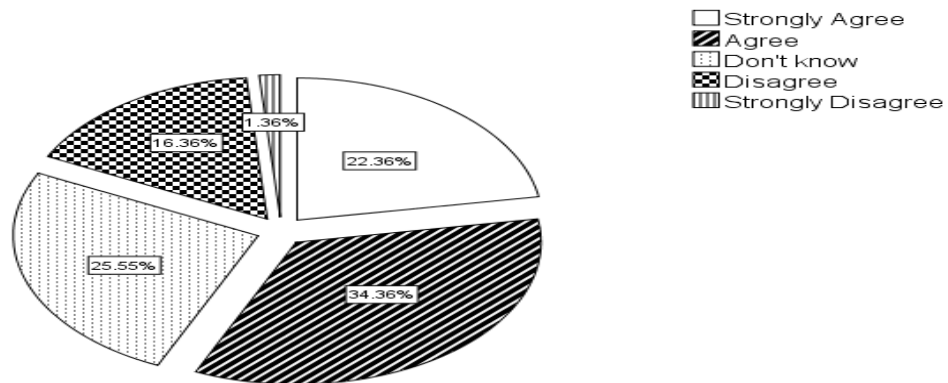
Figure: 3- Pakistan is involved in proxy war

In response to question whether Pakistan is involved in proxy war, this relentlessly research concluded that majority with17.8 percent disagreed whereas 56.8 percent considered it right and 25.5 percent don't know about it. So, it is clear from the above result that the majority considered Pakistan had involved in proxy war.
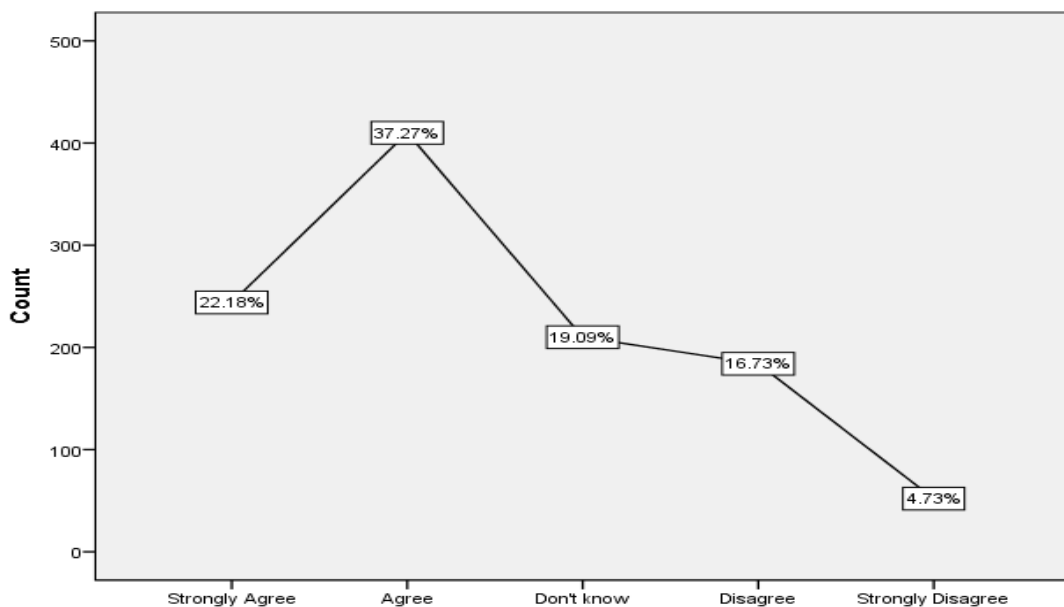

Figure: 4- Religious fundamentalist organizations are threat to democratic set-up in Pakistan.

The data collected from a survey conducted by researcher elaborated that 59.45 percent respondents agreed 19.09 percent were doubtful and 21.46 percent disagreed about that religious fundamentalist organizations are threat to democratic set-up in Pakistan. It denotes that majority of Pakistani think about that religious fundamentalist organizations were threat to democratic set-up in Pakistan
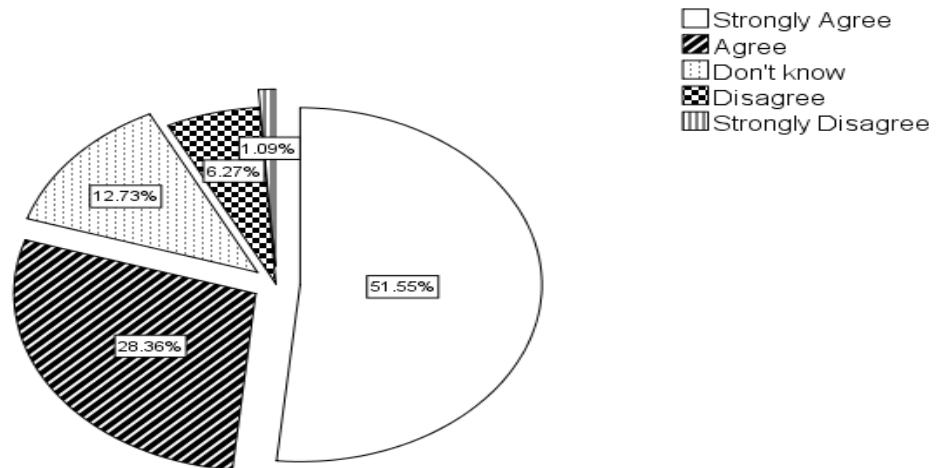
Figure: 5- Terrorist organizations are funded by foreign states

According to this research activity the opinion of public about the question that terrorist organizations are funded by foreign states 79.9 percent agreed 7.4 disagreed and 12.7 said don't know. It means that most of Pakistani expressed that terrorist organizations are funded by foreign states.
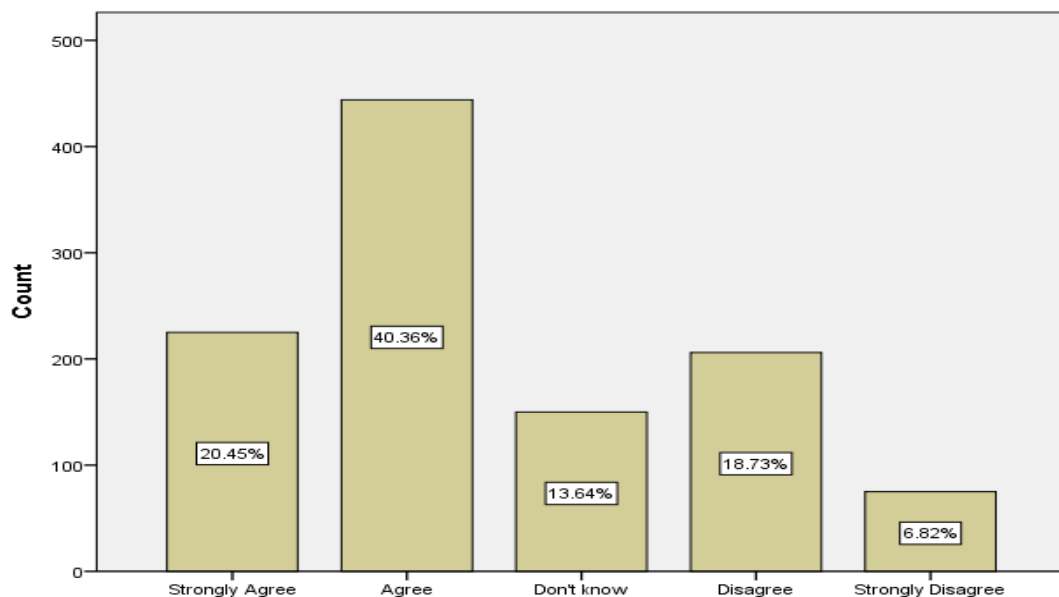

Figure: 6- Pakistan's policies in War on Terror are successful

The survey on the question that Pakistan's policies in War on Terror are successful, this steadfastly research determined that majority with 60.9 percent said yes 13.6 percent were uncertain and 25.5 percent replied no. It signified that majority said Pakistan's policies in War on Terror are successful.
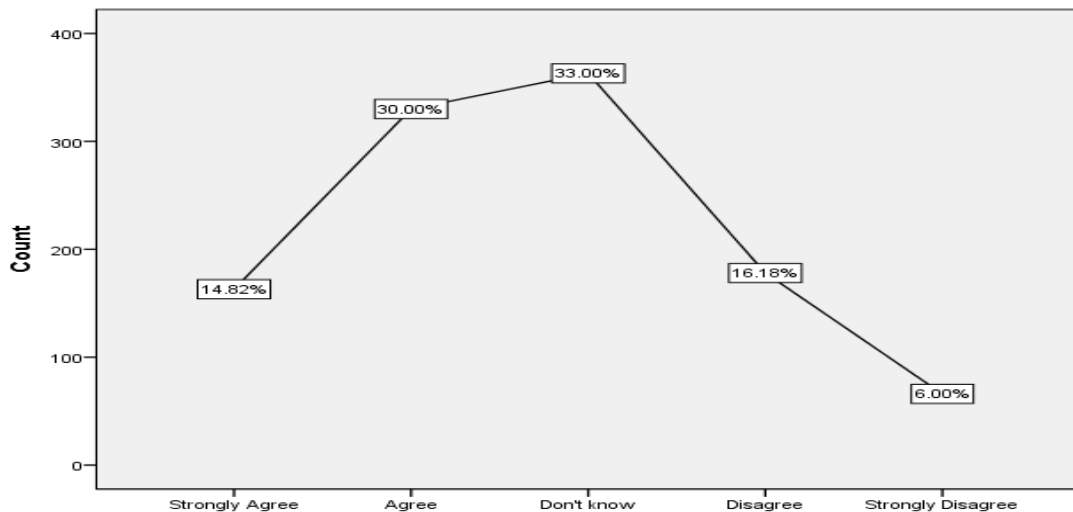
Figure: 7- Government policies to combat terrorism created anti- government sentiments in people of Pakistan

This constantly research concluded that majority with 44.8 said certainly yes 22.2 percent said no 33 percent were uncertain in response to the question asked about Government policies to combat terrorism created anti- government sentiments in people of Pakistan. It means that major part of public considered that Government policies to combat terrorism created anti- government sentiments in people of Pakistan.
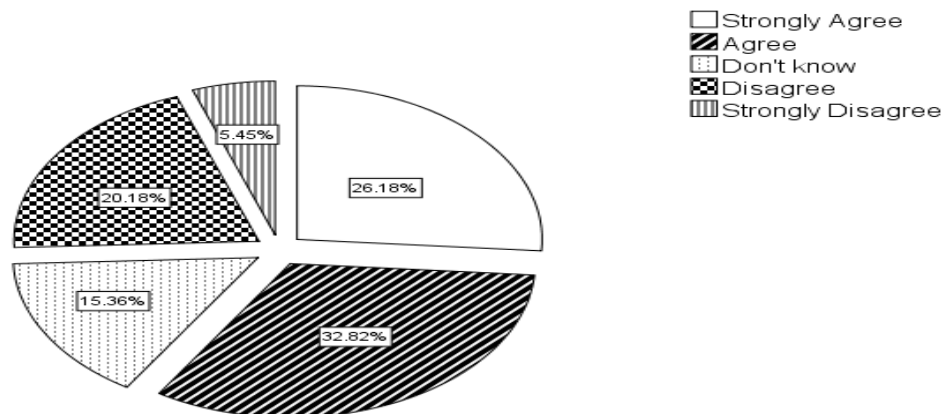
Figure: 8- Lal masjid operation 2007 increased terrorist's activities in Pakistan

This reliably research concluded that majority with 59 percent respondents agreed Lal masjid operation 2007, increased terrorist's activities in Pakistan whereas 25.7 percent disagreed and 15.4 percent were unclear. It spells that majority of the respondents agreed Lal masjid operation 2007, increased terrorist's activities in Pakistan.
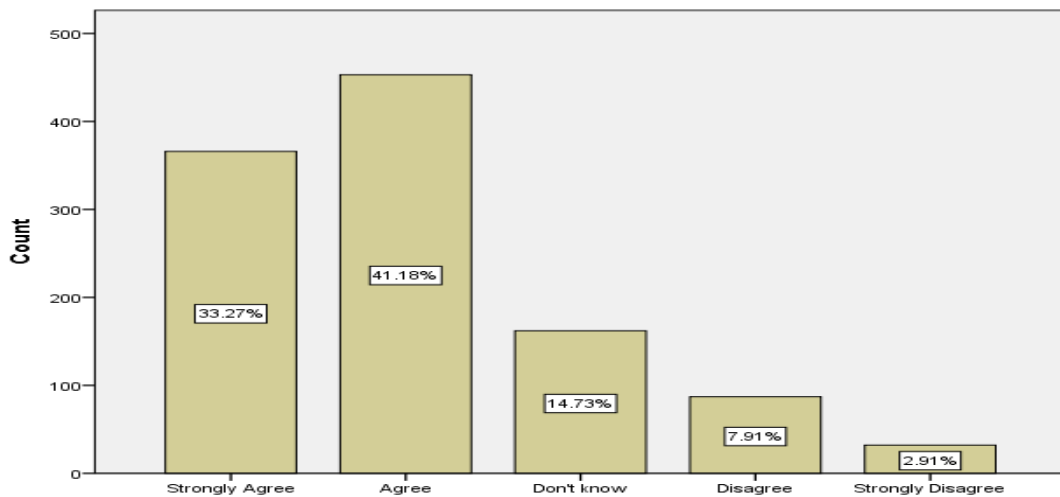
Figure: 9- People of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against TTP

This particular research concluded that majority with 74.5 percent of respondents agreed 10.8 percent didn't agree and 14.7 were doubtful about the opinion that People of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against TTP. It denoted that most of the public were in favor of military operations against TTP
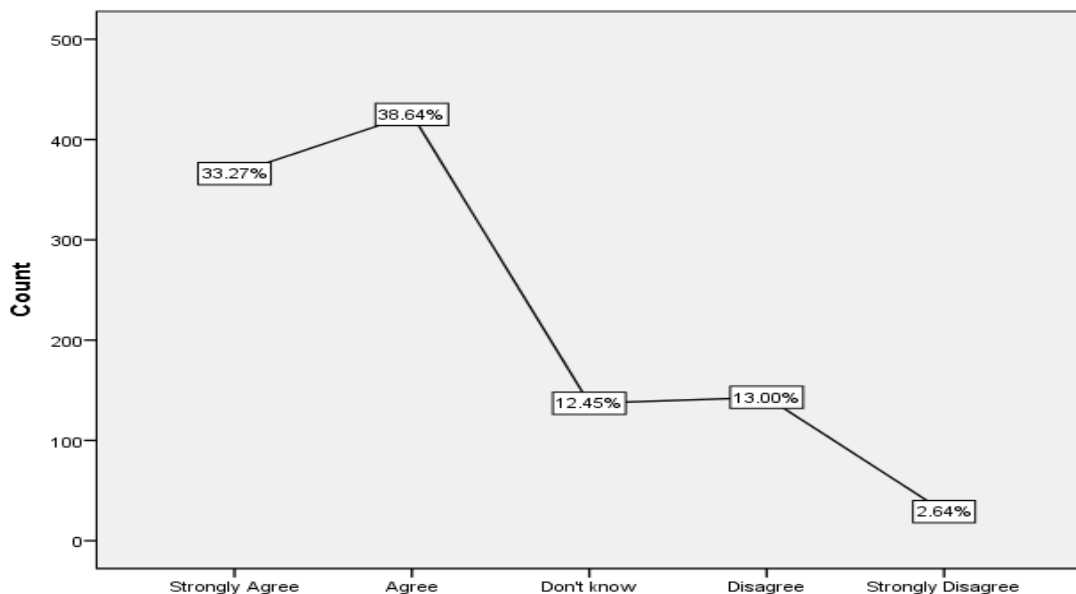

Figure: 10- People of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against Afghan Taliban

Answer to the question whether people of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against Afghan Taliban the finding reveals that 71.9 percent respondents approved, 12.5 percent were uncertain and 15.6 percent differed this opinion. It means that most of Pakistani is in favor of military operations against Afghan Taliban
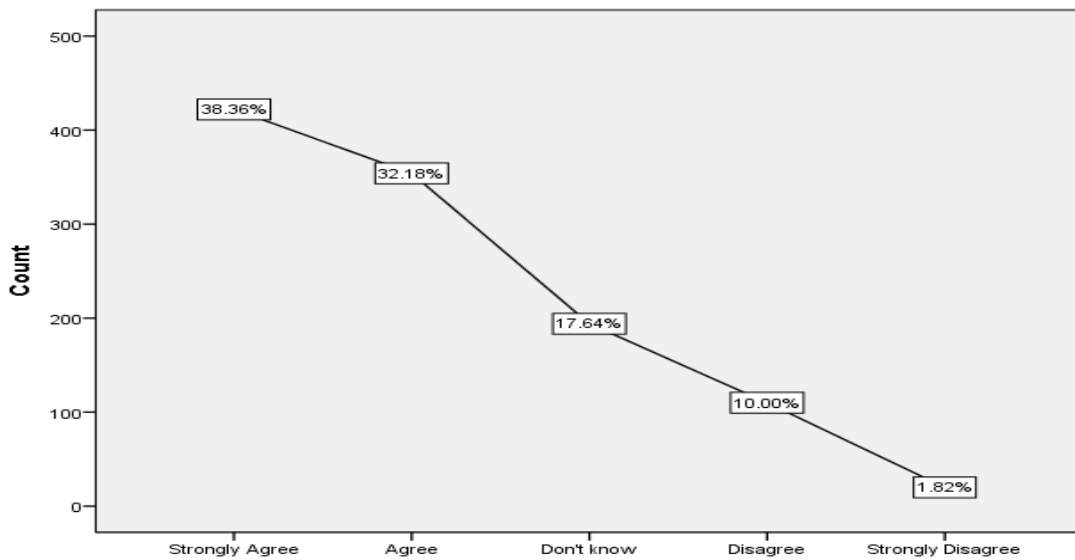
Figure: 11- Civil society has trust on operation Radd-ul-Fasad throughout the country against terrorists

On the question that civil society has trust on operation Radd-ul-Fasad throughout the country against terrorist's 70.6 percent replied positive17.6 percent remained neutral and 11.8 percent replied negative. It anticipated that most of the public has trust on operation Radd-ul-Fasad.
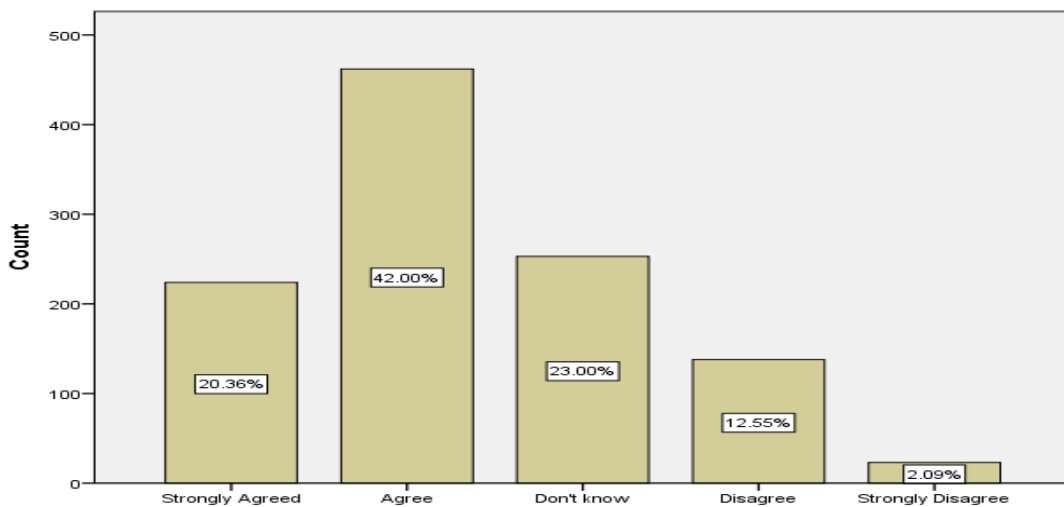

Figure: 12- Military operations in Pakistan have made Al-Qaeda a fragile organization in Pakistan

In response to question military operations in Pakistan have made Al-Qaeda a fragile organization in Pakistan, 14.6 percent disagreed, 62.4 percent agreed and 23.0 percent said that they were unclear.
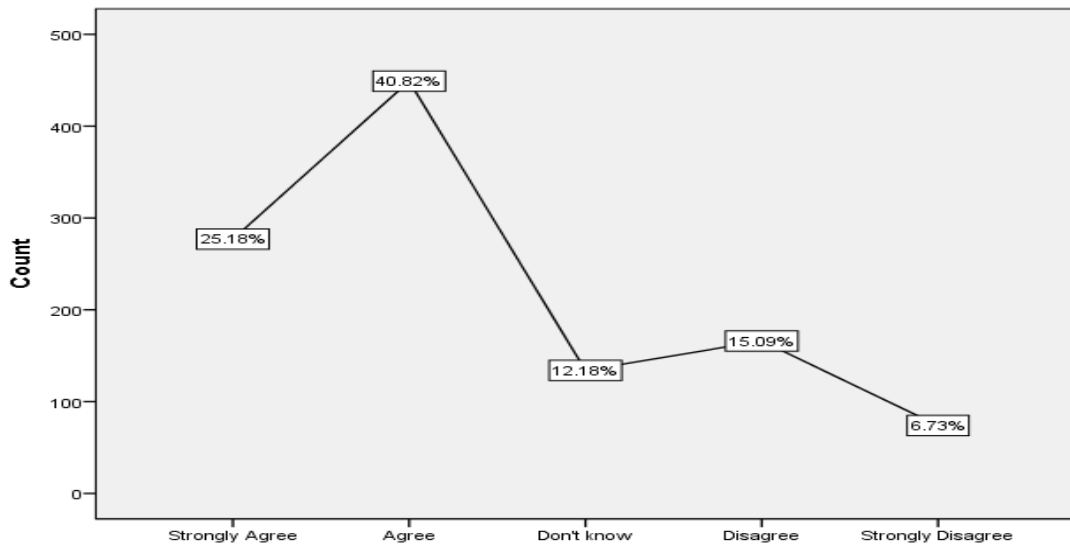
Figure: 13- War on Terror has made Pakistan a weak state

On asking this question War on Terror has made Pakistan a weak state, 66.0 percent public remarks were yes 12.2 percent hesitated to answer and 21.8 people opinions were definitely not. It signified that majority said that War on Terror was made Pakistan a weak state.
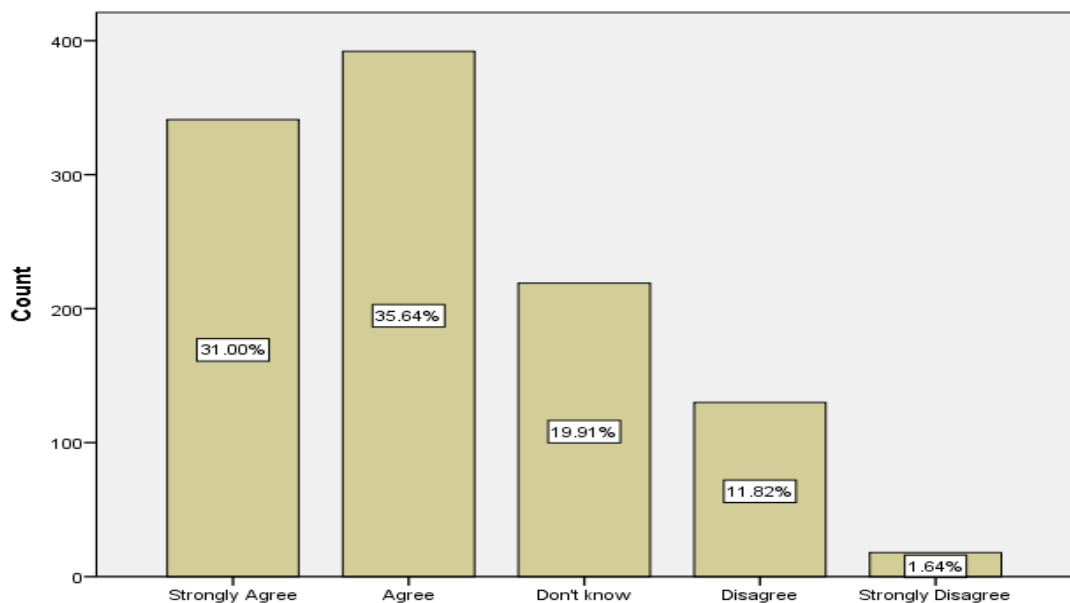

Figure: 14- National Action Plan 2011 is effective to counter terrorism and other security issues of Pakistan

Above graph indicates that National Action Plan 2011 is effective to counter terrorism and other security issues of Pakistan, as 66.6 percent respondents agreed with it, 13.4 percent disagreed and 19.9 percent were uncertain. . It indicates that most of the Pakistani contemplated that National Action Plan 2011 was effective to counter terrorism and other security issues of Pakistan.
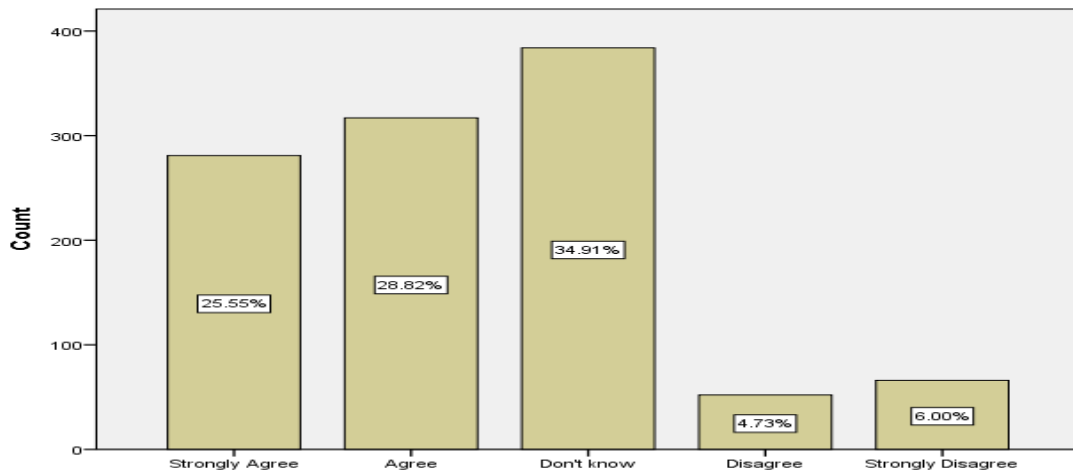
Figure: 15- Front-line state role has made Pakistan a war-torn state

It revealed from the response of the respondents that majority of 54.3 percent agreed with the perception that front-line state role has made Pakistan a war-torn state, while 34.9 percent were unclear and 10.7 percent disagreed. Thus, final observation showed that Pakistani public thought Pakistan's front-line state role has made it a war-torn state.
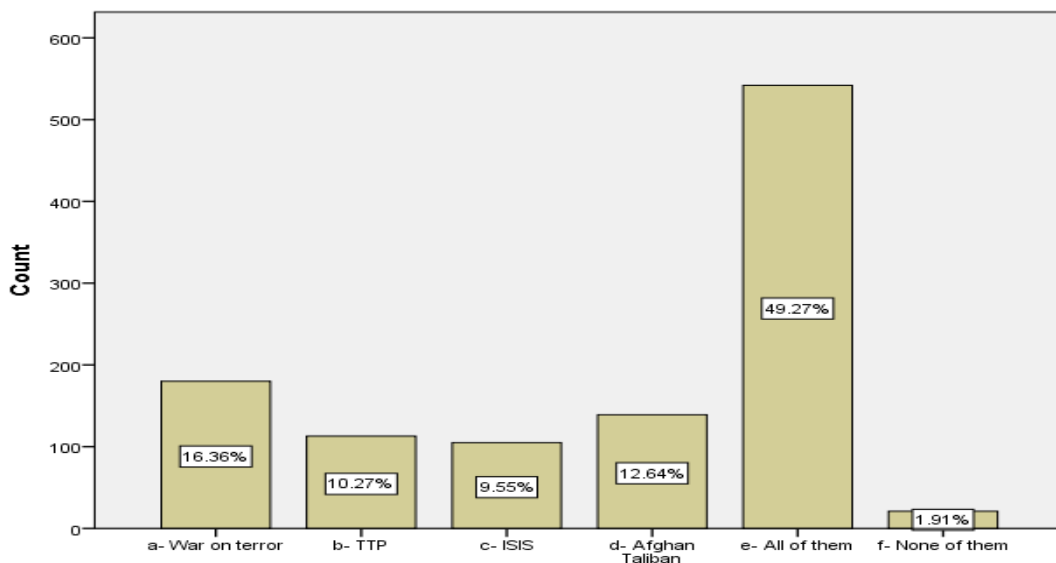

Figure: 16- Which is the major factor of terrorism in Pakistan?

A question asked by public which is the most significant factor to reduce terrorism major factor of terrorism in Pakistan, 16.3 percent said war on terror, 10.2 percent said TTP, 9.5 percent said ISIS, 12.6 percent said Afghan Taliban and 49.2 percent said all of them while 1.9 percent said none of them. It means most of the Pakistani considered that all the above mention factors are responsible of terrorism in Pakistan.
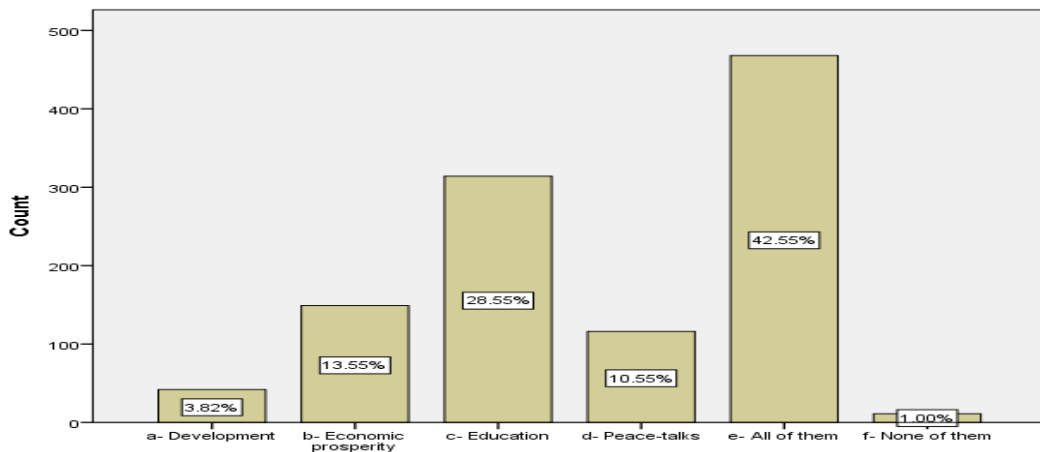
Figure: 17- Which is the most significant factor to reduce terrorism?

A question asked by public which is the most significant factor to reduce terrorism, 3.8 percent said development, 13.5 percent economic prosperity, 28.5 percent education, 10.5 percent said peace-talks, and 42.5 percent said all of them while 1.0 percent said none of them. It expresses that People of Pakistan are believed that all the above mention aspects were significant factor to reduce terrorism.
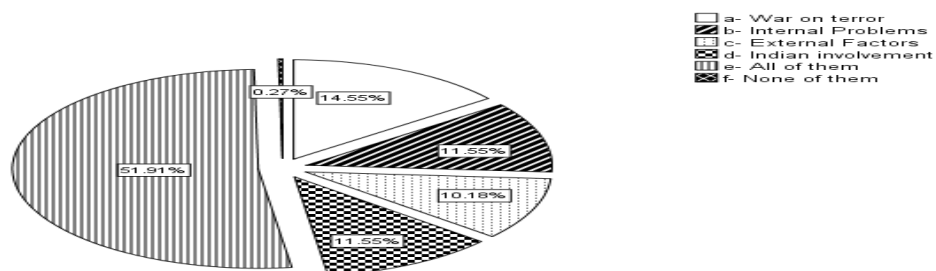

Figure: 18- Which factor contributes to make Pakistan war-torn State?

On the question that which factor contributes to make Pakistan war-torn State, 14.5 Percent said War on Terror, 11.5 Percent internal Problems, 10.2 percent external factors, 11.5 percent said Indian involvement, 51.9 percent said all these factors while 0.3 percent said none of them.

Findings

- Mainstream of masses believed national security issues of Pakistan have increased due to participation in War on Terror.
- 83.9% of respondents are agreed on the opinion that Pakistan's participation in War on Terror caused emergence of terrorist organizations in Pakistan.
- In response to question whether Pakistan is involved in proxy war it is clear from the results that the majority considered Pakistan had involved in proxy war.

- The data collected from a survey conducted by researcher elaborated that majority of respondents agreed that religious fundamentalist organizations are threat to democratic set-up in Pakistan.
- According to this research activity the opinion of public is that terrorist organizations are funded by foreign states.
- The survey indicates majority thought that Pakistan's policies in War on Terror are successful.
- This constantly research concluded that majority assumed Government policies to combat terrorism created anti- government sentiments in people of Pakistan.
- This reliably research concluded that majority agreed Lal masjid operation increased terrorist's activities in Pakistan.
- This particular research concluded that majority agreed that People of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against TTP.
- Answer to the question whether people of Pakistan are in favor of military operations against Afghan Taliban the finding reveals that majority said yes.
- On the question that civil society has trust on operation Radd-ul-Fasad throughout the country against terrorist's majority replied positively.
- In response to question military operations in Pakistan have made Al-Qaeda a fragile organization in Pakistan mainstream agreed.
- In response to question military operations in Pakistan have made Al-Qaeda a fragile organization in Pakistan major bulk of public agreed.
- On asking this question War on Terror has made Pakistan a weak state, 66.0 percent public remarks were yes.
- Research indicates that National Action Plan 2011 is effective to counter terrorism and other security issues of Pakistan.
- It revealed from the response of the respondents that majority agreed with the perception that front-line state role has made Pakistan a war-torn state.
- A question asked by public which is the most significant factor to reduce terrorism are education, development, economic prosperity and peace talks.
- On the question that which factor contributes to make Pakistan war-torn State, majority replied War on Terror, internal Problems, external factors and Indian involvement.

Conclusion

This study discussed old and new national security trends; More importantly, this research has largely identified Pakistan's cooperation in War on Terror and impact of the War on Terror on social, economic, political, religious and psychological sectors of Pakistan. The survey achieved its goal and gained public opinion. The research supported the central idea of the research work that effects of War on Terror in the expectations of the Pakistani people. The general view of the Pakistani people is that involvement in the War on Terror is triggered many national and external national security problems in Pakistan. In views of the majority of Pakistanis Socio-economic and political challenges have increased due to active link in War on Terror.

References

Berman, E. (2017). *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* MIT Press

Bolger, P. D. (2014). *Why We Lost in Iraq and Afghanistan: A General's Account of the Military's Mistakes.* Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Hashmi. A., & Rahman, D. M. (2014). *The Drawdown of US and NATO Forces from Afghanistan in 2014 – Implications for Pakistan. NDU Journal 2014.62.ndu.edu.pk.*

Javaid, U. (2013). *Pakistan Fights Extremism and Terrorism.* Lahore: Vanguard Books.

Juss, S. S. (2018). *Human Rights and America's War on Terror.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Kochai, J. J. (2019). *99 Nights in Logar.* London: Bloomsbury.

Malik, S. (2015). *Pakistan's Security Problems and Challenges in the Next Decade.* Islamabad, [Pakistan] : NUST Publishing

Mann, Z. N. (2014)**.** *Pakistan's Drone Dilemma. http://ndu.pk.articles.*
Ministry of Information, (2013). *Cyber Wing, Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage,* Ministry of Information Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan Bureau of Statistic PSB (2017). *Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census,* Pakistan Bureau of Statistic Islamabad, Pakistan

Rashid, A. (2012). *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.* Viking

Riedel, B. O. (2012). *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan America and Future of the Global Jihad.* New York: Brooking Institution Press.

Sedgwick, P. (2013). *Convenience Sampling, BMJ,* 347:f6304 doi: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.f6304

Slahi, M. O., & Siems, L. (2019). *Guantánamo Diary.*