

Political Causes of Terrorism after 9/11 in Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Terrorism has strong effects on the behavior of people and the main factor to disturb the social, political and economic life of the people. It also disturbs the government and their routine activities in terrorist occupied region. After 9/11 attacks Pakistan joined the block formed in the war against terrorism like the United States and their allies. Pakistan gave much support to them against terrorist and insurgent groups in Afghanistan. Therefore Pakistan faced difficulties and complexities, like death, destruction and other socio-political impacts being a frontline ally in the anti-terrorist campaign. The consequences of such policies also brought terrorism in Pakistan. To counter that terrorism; Pakistan uses hard power and military operations. In FATA and Malakand Division-KP where the literacy is low and people have a strong belief in religion, they have strict culture norms. It was therefore easy for terrorist groups to mold people towards anti-state activities. As per this research the political causes like government carelessness, ideological clash between state and society, lack of public rights, ineffective negotiations with militant groups and legacy of past policies were the reasons for the attraction of terrorism in the region.

Key words: Terrorism, Military Operations, United States, 9/11 Attacks, Pakistan.

Introduction

Pak-US coalition mostly suffered Pakistan in many occasions. Pakistan suffered in 1980s Cold War between US and Russia. In Cold War Pak-US partnership against USSR earned antagonism of Russia and India for Pakistan. Pakistan's support to US against Soviet Union brought millions of refugees to its territory. Those refugees and US partnership brought so many political, economic and social problems to Pakistan. They disturbed peace, harmony, social structure of Pakistan and introduced sectarianism,

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extremism, drugs and small arms business in Pakistan. The post 9/11 alliance of Pakistan and US against the war against terrorism caused variety of social problems for Pakistan. They included extremism and violence in society.¹ These problems facilitated terrorism in society. The other main socio-political cause of terrorism in Pakistan was lack of public interest and support to Pakistan agenda against terrorism.

Government's poor and fragile polices contributed in terrorism in Pakistan after 9/11. Government's sudden U-turns in past and current internal and foreign policies, hard approaches and many aggressive non-favorable decisions were the causes of terrorism in Pakistan. Weak governance, injustice, gap between government and public, no proper check and balance and to some extent government officials' involvement in supporting Taliban was also a prominent cause of terrorism in FATA and KP.²

Unrest in FATA and KP

Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and KP's Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) especially Malakand division have been a bleeding wound of country. Terrorism and insurgency initiated in both areas and now it spilled over in the whole country. In beginning it was limited to border areas of FATA but slowly it engulfed most of FATA and KP.³ Pakistan paid and is still paying heavy costs of the war on terror. It lost a lot of innocent lives, property, social, economic and political benefits. The militants settle their places in FATA and started campaigns against security forces and to some extent even against the civilians in FATA.⁴ Soon after the US and NATO invasion in Afghanistan, Malakand division based organization, *Tehrik-e Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi* (TNSM) leader Sufi Muhammad announced "*Jihad*" (Holy War). He called for war against US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan and gathered 3000 to 4000 people. Soon by pressurizing government they all moved across the border to fight against NATO forces. While in Malakand division the militants started their campaign after the *Lal Masjid* Islamabad military operation on July 03 2007. Even they were challenging the writ of government before *Lal Masjid* Islamabad operations.⁵ The US president referred FATA as "the most dangerous place of the world," and they said the militants giving shelter in FATA and they are not only operating in Afghanistan or Pakistan while they are also operating their missions in all over the world including US.⁶

Methodology

The method used for this research is qualitative method of research. Usually the qualitative research contains mostly books, research articles, journals, news articles and reports. In this research the interview schedule was also used to examine the actual causes of terrorism in FATA and KP, post 9/11.

Phenomenological Design

Qualitative phenomenological designis followed to acquire the specific results. The goal of this design is to describe a “lived experience” of a phenomenon. During the research, participant or experts described their lived *phenomenal experience* and used to gather data in a phenomenological study. Those participants are the experts and scholars as well the majority of them witnessed the phenomena means the unrest situation in FATA and KP. Research used interviewees to gather the participant’s experiences. Interview schedule, in the phenomenological study asked from participants to describe their experience. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are perfect to understand the subjective experience, gaining insights into people’s motivations and actions, and finishing the misunderstood assumptions which are far away from the ground realities.⁷

Political Causes of Terrorism in FATA and KP

There are many core causes of terrorism in FATA and KP. Those causes provided a rich ground for the rise of terrorism which some external and internal factors accelerated in the course of time. The basic causes of terrorism in FATA and KP include political, and socio-political, administrative and legal vacuum, unemployment, illiteracy, legacy of past policies, underdevelopment and so many other economic causes. However this research focuses only the political causes of terrorism in FATA and KP.

Government Carelessness

As the 9/11 incident changed the global political social and economic situation, it changed the scenario for Pakistan as well. This incident changed the conditions of FATA and KP. According to some interviewees it was US pressure that compelled Pakistani government to deploy its troops while some said it was government’s own well to deploy army on its border and in FATA.

But to counter al-Qaeda, Taliban, TTP and other militant organization in FATA and KP, Pakistan government launched military operation to minimize the threat and take part in war against terrorism. They also took military actions to arrest the suspected militants settled in KP and FATA. FATA was considered to be the hiding place for foreign “militants”⁸ who came during Cold War and were living in FATA. Military and Political actions both were taken against these organizations and foreign settlers (al-Qaeda members etc) to clear the region under the war on terror agenda. But the government’s hard approach also created a clash between society and state while some scholars said that government “sowed hatred seed in people’s hearts” against itself and its policies. This hatred includes different institutions, agencies, security and army forces.⁹ Militants as well as reactionary elements took arms against the government and joined anti state organizations.

In the beginning Pakistan did not take action directly but alternatively they welcomed the US actions in FATA. The US government launched drone strikes and CIA’s operations in FATA. This decision resulted in the killing of thousands lives of innocent people while only a small number of militants were targeted. Sahibzada Tariq Ullah,¹⁰ Sahibzada Haroonur Rasheed,¹¹ Professor Ibrahim,¹² Bakare Najimudeen,¹³ Manzoor Khan Afridi,¹⁴ and majority experts said that drone strikes mostly hit the innocent lives in FATA. During the interview with former Member of National Assembly (MNA) of Bajaur agency Sahibzada Haroonur Rasheed and Ex-senator Professor Ibrahim, they said that first drone strikes hit the innocent citizens in FATA while mostly drone strikes took innocent lives and not militants. Government this approach sparked anti-state sentiments and draw a clash between society and state (Johnston and Sarbahi, 2016).¹⁵

According to Prof. Fakhru ul Islam¹⁶ and Rutum Shah Muhmand¹⁷ military operations resulted many collateral damages in FATA and KP. However experts also agreed that military use in FATA and KP was a wrong decision of government.¹⁸ Experts mentioning that why military operations increase militancy and terrorism in the regions. Actually military actions and their harsh behavior, collateral damages, displacement of people from their houses with rough treatment, no care for their cultural values and lives promote hate in people’s hearts. During the military operations innocent people are more suffered than militants, while joint military actions in the form of drone attacks suffered innocent people more. This kind of government approach created the

environment of payback (revenge). The many experts opinion always said that military operations never end this terrorism or militancy while it prompted anti-state attitude in public.¹⁹

According to BakareNajimudin²⁰ a Nigerian scholar, military use against public to settle a dispute is not a suitable solution. He said in African countries government uses its military against insurgent groups but still we see no success. Same is the situation in Pakistan. Government cannot minimize terrorism or insurgencies through this mechanism. Government has to take sincere steps by adopting soft approach, negotiations and peace deals with concern authorities and people.

Ineffective Negotiations and Peace Deals

After 9/11 incident, government of Pakistan was confused on the policy of war against terrorism. Even the government was confused how to tackle the problem of terrorism and militancy because the opinion of government and people were far different from each other on said issue. Therefore, government's reaction against terrorism was not uniform (Yousufi and Khan, 2014).²¹ Sometimes military forces while at times local *lashkars* (local armed civilian in government favor) were used. Sometimes the way of negotiations was adopted. But no single policy got succeeded because of the temporary- based approach of government.²² It was not clear till the end, what was government's interest, in military operations or peaceful negotiations. Government used both options to eliminate terrorism from FATA and KP but the option of peace deal was not given special consideration. They neither honestly adopted peaceful mean to address the crisis and to avoid the use of military actions. Peaceful solutions for these problems were mostly hunted by foreign involvements, sometime directly and sometime indirectly.²³ Foreign involvement also played active role to sabotage the peace deals and negotiations. Due to this confused strategy, the militants have been victorious in increasing their activities and influence in FATA, KP and to other parts of the country.²⁴

Khalid Rahman,²⁵Manzoor Khan Afridi,²⁶ Professor Fakhru Islam²⁷ and other experts possess same viewpoint that the government did many peace deals before operation Zarb-e-Azb 2014. Most of the negotiations and peace deals were conducted with the irrelevant authorities, like peace agreement with Sufi Muhammad in 2007 in Swat. In 2007 in Swat peace agreement was needed with TTP and Fazlullah but they conducted peace negotiations with irrelevant people. This showed the non-serious

attitude of government towards peace through other means i.e. negotiations or mediations.

According to Mulana Sami ul Haq,²⁸ and other members of Taliban and government peace committee, government was never in the favor of peaceful end of this issue. Committee always tried to minimize the issue through mediation not with military operations but government and military officials did not cooperate in peaceful mechanism of the problem. Members of peace committee said that peace talks with Taliban in 2014 got started with the consent of government. Taliban were also ready for the peaceful mechanism of the problem but government was not in the favor of peace deal. Mulana Sami ul Haq and Professor Ibrahim mentioned that they wrote many letters to Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif and army officials after beginning peace talks with Taliban but they did not respond.²⁹

Religious and Ideological Reason

Soon after 9/11 Pakistan took U-turn in its external and internal policies. External or foreign policy especially towards Afghanistan took a sudden U-turn. Pakistan withdrew the Afghan government recognition and stopped its support to Afghan Taliban government. Pakistan decided to join US agenda on the war on terror to defeat "Islamic militancy" in Afghanistan and within its own territory. Pakistan provided every possible support to US and NATO forces against Taliban and *al-Qaeda* within country and across border in Afghanistan. During these military actions, government of Pakistan conducted several actions against Afghan Taliban and their supporters within the country.³⁰ Former Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan Rustum Shah Muhmand said that it was a wrong policy of Pakistan. He especially mentioned Musharraf in this regard. He further said no law or ethics legalize that a government arrest an ambassador and give him to foreign forces with inhuman treatment.³¹

Rustum Shah Muhmand³² informed that the government of Pakistan arrested the incumbent Ambassador of Afghanistan, Mullah Zaeef from Islamabad in 2001 just after 9/11. He in 2001 was handed over to US forces without any legal trial. This move started touching and making people's ideological and religious sentiment against the government of Pakistan. Mostly the experts mentioned that this kind of government behavior created hatred in people's hearts. Mehar Tauqeer Hussain Sargana³³ Musa Khan³⁴ and some other experts possess same opinion that the ideological reason which contributed in extremism and in the emergence of

Taliban organization was the liberal agenda of the then President Musharraf.³⁵

. Rustum Shah Muhmand³⁶ and Prof. Misbahur Rehman³⁷ argued, Pakistan along US gave full fledged support to these Arabs, pan Islamists and to Islamic revivalist organizations. But the sudden U-turn in policy, Pakistan labeled *Jihad* before 9/11 to terrorism after 9/11. This kind of changing priorities opened room to all organizations and to people to wage war against US, NATO forces and Pakistani forces. In simple terms, to encourage anybody to wage "*Jihad*" against a state recognized as "home of *Jihadis*" was not an easy task.³⁸ The *Lal Masjid* Islamabad operation by military forces provided them a strong logic to wage war against government and its machinery. Therefore militancy in FATA and KP, especially in Swat, Lower Dir and Shangla sparked after *Lal Masjid* military operation.³⁹

These organizations also said that Pakistan came into being by the name of Islam and the aim of Pakistan was implementation of Islamic Law in the country. But Pakistan's administration failed to codify *Shariah* in the country. They further mentioned in their agenda that government must implement *Shariah* and *Khilafah* in the country.⁴⁰ The same argument was laid down by Dr. Ismail⁴¹ leading Taliban group in Bajaur. He had very strong links with Sufi Muhammad and TNSM. During interview he mentioned same reasons for waging war against government. The Taliban organizations in FATA and KP said, they will continue their struggle until government establishes *Shariah*, *Khilafah* and stop support for the foreign agenda.⁴²

Political Flaws and Poor Administration

The present system of Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), administrative, political and legal gaps provided favorable ground to militants or Taliban. Once Taliban rose up in FATA, there was no effective legal, political and administrative strategy to stop them. There was no mechanism to stop that threats and attempts at local level. As mentioned above the administrative system of FATA agencies relies on *Maliks* but when Taliban killed local *Maliks*, the whole political and administrative set-up traumatized in the area.⁴³ Poorly trained FATA local security forces, *Khasadar* were unable to meet the Taliban challenge and at the same time the defective legal system also helped Taliban's rise in FATA. Taliban forces established their own judicial system and courts. They professed to provide speedy and free justice according to the code of Islamic law (*Shariah*). People of FATA welcomed Taliban's

agenda and supported them in the establishment of *Shariah* courts.⁴⁴ The common people supported Taliban agenda because they were exhausted from the current political and administrative system of FATA. People wanted speedy and free justice which the current FCR system was not able to provide it. Taliban announced that they will provide free and speedy justice on the basis of Islamic *Shariah*. This announcement got the attentions and sympathies of common people. The people of FATA provided strong support to challenge the local political and administrative authorities. Second reason of people support to Taliban was the proximity to Afghanistan. The people of FATA were well aware of Afghan Taliban government in Afghanistan. They were also so impressed from Afghan Taliban Justice system which was not provided by government of Pakistan to FATA as well as to PATA KP.⁴⁵

The Case of KP

The case of KP has some differences from FATA. In FATA the militants groups took place after 9/11 while FATA has close nexus with Afghanistan with shared border. KP region Malakand division and especially Swat where the extremism took place has no share border with Afghanistan even with FATA. But then what were the causes of terrorism in KP. The so called Islamic extremist group was active before 9/11 with the name of TNSM. Maulana Sufi Muhammad belonged to Maidan, a small town in Lower Dir. He received his religious education from the father of Major Amir, Mulana Tahir *Sheikh-ul-Quran* at PanjPir village in district Swabi, (NWFP). During Afghan *Jihad* Sufi Muhammad supported Hikmatyar *Hizbi-e-Islami* financially and through man-power. In 1989 TNSM leader Mulana Sufi Muhammad started a campaign, the objective of which was implementation of *Shariah*. Foundation of *Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi* was laid down in June 1989 in lower Dir. Mulana Sufi Muhammad's activities were limited to Malakand division districts like Swat, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Shangla, Malakand, Buner, Kohistan district of Hazara division and Bajaur Agency in FATA. Soon TNSM got strong support of people in that regions and Sufi Muhammad demanded implementation of Islamic law.⁴⁶ The people not only followed him in that campaign before 9/11 but they were supporting him in November 2001 as well, when he called people for "*Jihad*" against US and NATO allies in Afghanistan.

According to Prof. Dr. Fakhru ul Islam, Sahib Zada Tariq Ullah, Prof. Misbahur Rehman, Rustum Shah Muhmand,⁴⁷ KP

situation overall was different from FATA. In KP Malakand division the anti-government extremist group TNSM was active before 9/11. As we know Sufi protested several times in 1991, 1994 and 1999 at Dir, Temergarah and Swat with thousands of supporters. They demanded the enforcement of *Shariah* but when ever government rejected Sufi's demands he protested and launched armed campaign for that purpose. So it is true that Malakand has no close nexus with Afghanistan but the weak administration did not minimized the influence of organizations like TNSM even they supported those organizations for some short term benefits. These administrative weaknesses and their policies paved the way to strengthen these organizations. In future it resulted in strong opposition to government of Pakistan after 9/11. Sufi Muhammad later mobilized the people in Malakand division for war against NATO forces in Afghanistan. He organized a protest demonstration in Swat, Mingora in September, 2001 for raising a "voluntary army" for anti-US *Jihad* in Afghanistan. He collected 10000 persons equipped poorly with weapons and crossed the Pak-Afghan border in 2001 to wage war against US and their allies.

When the then US president George W. Bush announced to invade Afghanistan against Taliban, Sufi Muhammad once again motivated people to support Afghan Taliban. He sent so many people to "*Jihad*". Dr Ismail mentioned in the interview that he also supported Sufi Muhammad's agenda against NATO forces and he personally joined Sufi Muhammad group and waged "*Jihad*" in Afghanistan. After that Sufi Muhammad was sentenced to imprisonment with his son in law Mulana Fazlullah. Fazlullah was released from jail. He established unauthorized FM radio channel in his native village Imamdheri (three kilometers away from Saidu Sharif). He started the preaching Islam from channel. In the beginning he was supported by the TNSM members. He motivated people through polite speeches. Every night at 8 p.m. he used to start his (dars) speeches. Up to 2005, he was preaching peacefully. In 2007 he established his own Taliban organization and started strong anti-state campaign. The *Lal Masjid* military operation provided him strong social and economic support. The people of Malakand division gave him every possible financial support. The females donated their jewelry, money and other financial assets to the cause "*Jihad*" followers of Fazlullah. Actually *Lal Masjid* operation increased Mulana Fazlullah support and thousands of people joined Swat Taliban, to them the *Lal Masjid* Operation presented government as an anti-Islamic and

unjust institution. After the death of Hakeem Ullah Mehsud he (Fazlullah) appeared as TTP leader.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Terrorism has very negative political, social and economic impacts and strongly affected the people of FATA and KP. Terrorism changed the people positive attitude to negative towards government. It made a lot of trouble for government in socio, political and economic sectors. Politically it made strong clash between state and society. It had stable implications on national cohesiveness. It divided the government, nation and political authorities in different ideological reasons. The state got confused to tackle this problem. It had direct implications on state policies and state objectives. It also injured the state diplomatic image in world while hurt the religious sentiments of the people and Muslims in the world. It divided the people of Pakistan nationally and religiously. In short it divided the nation and socio and political authorities of the country towards the state and government. The socio-political factors had also permanent impacts on the Pakistani society especially on FATA and KP. The government's commitment for war on terror created anti state sentiment. It resulted in military operation in FATA and KP as well in settled areas like *Lal Masjid* operation in capital of the country (Islamabad) in 2007. That were socio-political impacts by the state that people stood against the state machinery. The anti state mind and behavior emerged in the masses as result of state political and socio-political poor policies.

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⁸ Arabs *Mujahideen*, freedom fighters from Africa and from other part of the world came to Pakistan in Afghan war. After, the end of the Cold War (Afghan war) they settled in FATA, KP and in different regions in Pakistan. They got married here with the locals and many of them were settled here in Pakistan with their families, while a lot of them obtained Pakistani nationality.

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¹⁰Sahib Zada Tariq Ullah, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, 2016. Sahib Zada Tariq Ullah Member of National Assembly from KP (PATA, Upper Dir) and Parliamentary Leader of *Jamat-e-Islami* Pakistan in National Assembly. He was the member of government and Taliban Peace Committee in KP.

¹¹Sahib Zada Hroon-ur-Rasheed, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Sahib Zada Hroon-ur-Rasheed is the President of *Jamat-e-Islami* FATA and ex-Member of National Assembly (2002-2008) from FATA (Bajaur Agency). He was the member of Several Peace Committee between the government and Taliban in FATA. He is the only political leader targeted by the drone attack and his mother along with few other family members died in that drone strike in Bajaur.

¹² Professor Muhammad Ibraheem Khan, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Professor Muhammad Ibraheem Khan is Deputy Chief of *Jamat-e-Islami* Pakistan. He also served as Senator (member of

upper house) till 2012. He was the Member of Taliban Peace Committee (till 2017).

¹³ Dr. BakareNajimudeen , by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Dr. BakareNajimudeen is Assistant Professor in National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Islamabad. He is also visiting faculty member of National Defense University Islamabad (NDU), Preston University Islamabad Campus & IIU Islamabad. He is also a Member of Gallup International Pakistan.

¹⁴ Dr. Manzoor Khan Afridi, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Dr. Manzoor Khan Afridi is Chairman Department of Politics and IR in International Islamic University Islamabad. He was chosen for the interview because he is the member of different national intellectual forums like FATA research Center. He conducted a verity of research on terrorism in Pakistan after 9/11. He belongs to FATA (Khyber Agency) where the military operations was launched for the elimination of terrorism.

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¹⁶Professor Dr. Fakhar-ul-Islam, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Professor Dr. Fakhar-ul-Islam is Director, Pakistan Study Center, University of Peshawar. He has served in several other universities like IIU Islamabad. He has conducted many surveys and research on military operations in FATA and KP and their related issues. He is the member of several distinguished national and international Intellectual Forums i.e. Institute of Policies Studies (IPS) Islamabad etc.

¹⁷Rustum Shah Muhmand, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Rustum Shah Muhmand is a Former Chief Secretary of KP and was the ambassador of Pakistan in Afghanistan (2002-05). The intellectual community of Pakistan considers Rustum Shah Muhmand a leading authority on Pak-Afghan relations and post 9/11 situation.

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²⁵ Khalid Rahman, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Khalid Rahman is intellectual and the Director General, Institute of Policies Studies (IPS) Islamabad. IPS conducted verity of research on terrorism, post 9/11 situation and Pak-Afghan relations. The institute gives policies to the government of Pakistan and conduct conferences on the said issues.

²⁶ Interview with Manzoor Khan Afridi, October 2016.

²⁷ Interview with Prof Fakhru ul Islam, October 2016.

²⁸ Mulana Sami-ul-Haq, by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Mulana Sami-ul-Haq is an Islamic Scholar and the Vice-Chancellor (*Muhtamim*) of Haqqania University (*JamiaHaqqania*) AkoraKhattak, Nowshera KP. He is the president of a political party JUI(S). He was the Member of Taliban Peace Committee (till 2017). The government and Taliban consider Mulana as father of Taliban because many of Taliban leaders graduated from *JamiaHaqqania* AkoraKhattak. Mulana Sami-ul-Haq wrote many books on Taliban, Afghan Taliban government and 9/11. He is also ex-Senator and ex-member of national assembly Pakistan.

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³¹ Mullah Zaeef was Afghan Ambassador (during Taliban Regime), government of Pakistan arrested him and give him to US forces with very inhuman and unethical way as mentioned by the interviewees i.e. Rustum Shah Muhmand, Prof Ibraheem, Misbahur Rehman and others.

³² Interview with Rustum Shah Muhmand, October 2016.

³³ MeharTauqeerHussainSargana by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. MeharTauqeerHussainSargana is Assistant Professor of Politics and IR in IIU Islamabad.

³⁴ Musa Khan by Musab Yousufi, For PhD Research, October 2016. Musa Khan belongs to KP (PATA, Lower Dir) and that was the core place where the Taliban and specially Mulana Sufi Muhammad launched their campaigns. He is Media Journalist working with different channels of electronic media and news agencies. He is a PhD Scholar in Media & Communication Studies, Istanbul University Turkey.

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scholar (*Mufti*) (till 2016) of Pakistan largest mosque (Faisal Masjid) Islamabad. He was also a professor of Islamic studies in IIU Islamabad and Dawah Academy.

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