

A Strategic Analysis of US Drone Strikes in Pakistan: With Special Reference to FATA

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The current research is an attempt to elucidate the impact of drone attacks keeping in view the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Drone strikes, a phenomenon that have captivated the attention of masses in the dawn of 21st century. The present research assesses the US drone policy and its impacts in the tribal areas of Pakistan with critical evaluation of US policy to combat terrorist activities in the tribal areas of Pakistan with the main objective that any actions have established as a proper strategy to combat terrorist activities. Methodologically, this research is mix-method research. With the view of qualitative method, secondary data (obtained from various journals and books) has been used to examine US strategy of drone strikes whereas for quantitative research survey approach was adopted by employing a structured questionnaire among 200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The research concluded that drone attacks are creating confusion among the masses due to array of problems e.g. casualties of innocent lives, destruction of infrastructure, psychological impact, and indeed bringing the educational and economic turmoil for the residents of the tribal areas of Pakistan. The research recommended that Pakistan government should negotiate with the US to ban the drone attacks and to adopt some alternate policy with minimum loss. Moreover, peoples of the affected areas deserve more education, health facilities and better living standards.

KEY WORDS: Drone, Terrorism, Attacks, Pakistan, Strategic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many changes have been occurred in South Asia after 9/11 due to American policies as this region is the most affected one. America has been using drone after World War II (1). Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Joint Special Operation Command (JSOC) have been using drone strikes to combat terrorism as per Presidential Administration policy that has been devised in recent times by two subsequent Presidents (Sachill, 2013). In past, these were used for security purpose as to have a check on the moment of enemies and suspected yet in present times their uses have been completely altered. Now drones are used for killing the suspects (3). America used these during Iraq and Afghan war for target killing. Now it is part of US policy that has been implemented in Pakistan along with capturing the suspects accused of involvement in terrorist activities.

Drone strike is very important phenomenon and a matter of great responsibility. In this way, it is a complicated matter of utilization of these lethal weapons. There is no particular method of utilization of these drones. CIA also has not any proper logic to prove its effectiveness. No judicial review is present for these target killings, even these drones have been operated by individuals other than military (6). This study will focus on the impact of these strikes in Pakistan yet Afghanistan and Iraq are not included as their matter is totally different, USA was at war with both of these countries at that time. In this way, those strikes can be justified in terms of war as USA was present there in shape of military. In Pakistan situation is totally different as there is no war. Pakistan is not only victim of this policy. America did this thing in Yemen many times and even Yemen (5) was first state of such victim. In 2002, Al-Qaeda leader Salim Sinan al-Harethi was killed along with his six friends yet he himself was involved in killing of 17 American sailors. America claimed that he has been at war with Al-Qaeda since September 11, 2001. So killing of Al-Harethi was legitimate as he had evil designs against USA and his killing was matter of self-defense. Condo Leeza Rice National Security Advisor defended American position by commenting on the murder of Al-Harethi as “well within the limits of the practice.”

Now, on international level serious efforts have been made to fully comprehend the outcomes of drone strikes and measure its benefits in accordance with war on terror. Now a day, these drone strikes are much debated issue yet in Pakistan these strikes have been launched since 2004. Pakistan did not record any impressive protest against these strikes and remained passive. There is a great aggression in general public against these strikes as much damage has been done. Due to drone strikes, many civilians have been killed, economic infrastructure has been destroyed and significant increase in criminal activities too. Yet Obama administration declares these drone attacks as most

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effective strategy because top leadership has been targeted through these and they are in mood to stop these extrajudicial killings (2).

Many academics and researchers have tried to analyze US drone policy with particular reference to Pak-US relationship. US used excessive power in order to combat terrorism that is threat for them and their people. Yet, in doing so, they have produced negative emotions for them. These anti-American sentiments are more dangerous for them and their people also killing of poor civilians, destruction of economic infrastructure, increase in criminal activity, political instability, suicide attacks and extremism.

1. US Strategy for Drone Strikes

9/11 was a big incident in the history of America that forced George W. Bush to take an aggressive stance. So, initiated war against Taliban and it was named “War on Terror”. George. W. Bush declares that they will not stop war with dismissal of Al-Qaeda but they will remain fighting until the last terrorist residing in any corner of the world. He affirmed that they will end the terrorism. With this declaration, US programmed to attack Iraq and Afghanistan. But they did not stop here and further spread this war in the North West region of Pakistan that share border with Afghanistan. Yet Waziristan is the most targeted area of these drone strikes. This whole region is covered by mountains. In 2009, CIA further confirmed that these drone strikes will not be stopped at any rate. After this statement of Director of CIA, Obama reaffirmed that strikes are useful to disrupt major terrorist groups so these will be continued. He even proposed and declared that they are expanding these to Baluchistan. Legal Advisor Harold Koh declared these strikes legal as US is doing so in self-defence because US has an eminent threat from terrorists. He also said that the US engaged in war against Taliban (4). US has right to use power as it’s comes under the rule of self- defence as propounded by international law. Many politicians in the US and scholars have protested against these strikes. Dennis Kucinich, a congress representative, declared these drone strikes as unlawful and as violation of human rights. He also said that it is against the international law.

2. Objectives

1. To analyze the US strategy of drone strikes in Pakistan.
2. To evaluate the impacts of drone strikes in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

3. METHODOLOGY

With the view of research objectives, this research is Mix-Method (both qualitative and quantitative) research. For qualitative method, secondary data has been used to examine US strategy of drone strikes whereas for quantitative research survey approach was adopted by employing a structured questionnaire among 200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. However, the responses received from 134 educated persons (94 males and 40 females) having minimum education equal to Matriculation. This was further used for drawing inferences among the sample. The 7-point scale is used where the figure 1 denotes a strongly disagreement and the figure 7 for strongly agree with the statement. SPSS 12.0 assisted in generating the data based statistical analysis. The sample population was evaluated in different groups based on gender (males and females). It was little tough for the researcher to question the females’ segments but help was taken from political agents and tribal leaders.

4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Sr. No.	Matric	Intermediate	Graduation	Total
Males	24	56	14	94
Females	26	10	4	40
Total	50	66	18	134

The results regarding demographic character indicated that 24 persons out of selected 94 males were matric, 56 were intermediate and 14 were graduates as mentioned in Table 1. In 40 female’s participants, 26 were Matric, 10 were intermediate and only four females were graduated. It is worth mentioning that these peoples were selected after interviewing 200 participants and that shows the level of education in these affected areas. Amongst 90 females questioned, only 20 (22%) were educational status equivalent to matriculation or above.

Response of the respondents about drone attacks

Table 2: Views of the respondents for Drone strikes are an act of national self-defense by the US

Response	Male	Females	Total
Agree	7(7.45%)	6(15.00%)	13(9.70%)
Disagree	22(23.40%)	8(20.00%)	30(22.39%)
Mildly Agree	3(3.19%)	1(2.50%)	4(2.99%)
Mildly Disagree	2(2.13%)	1(2.50%)	3(2.24%)
Neutral	3(3.19%)	0(0.00%)	3(2.24%)
Strongly Agree	11(11.70%)	10(25.00%)	21(15.67%)
Strongly Disagree	46(48.94%)	14(35.00%)	60(44.78%)
No Response	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Total	94	40	134

The participants were asked various questions about drone attacks. In response to first question “Drone strikes are an act of national self-defense by the US”, majority of the respondents were disagreed about the policies of US as drone attacks as their self-defense strategy. Moreover, some of the respondents with ratio of total 9.70% and 15.75% were agree and strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 3: Views of the respondents for “US has been using drones to target suspected terrorists in Pakistan”

Response	Male	Females	Total
Agree	10(10.64%)	3(7.50%)	13(9.70%)
Disagree	26(27.66%)	9(22.50%)	35(26.12%)
Mildly Agree	7(7.45%)	3(7.50%)	10(7.46%)
Mildly Disagree	27(28.72%)	1(2.50%)	28(20.90%)
Neutral	4(4.26%)	1(2.50%)	5(3.73%)
Strongly Agree	7(7.45%)	14(35.00%)	21(15.67%)
Strongly Disagree	13(13.83%)	9(22.50%)	22(16.42%)
No Response	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Total	94	40	134

The respondents replied in similar way to the second question “US has been using drones to target suspected terrorists in Pakistan”. Around 9.70% respondents were agreed to the statements, while 26.12% respondents disagreed to the statements. Around 15.67% respondents were strongly agreed, while only 3.73% respondents remained neutral on this statement.

Table 4: Views of the respondents for “No loss of US soldiers on ground by the policy of drone strikes”

Response	Male	Females	Total
Agree	54(57.45%)	15(37.50%)	69(51.49%)
Disagree	9(9.57%)	1(2.50%)	10(7.46%)
Mildly Agree	9(9.57%)	7(17.50%)	16(11.94%)
Mildly Disagree	3(3.19%)	0(0.00%)	3(2.24%)
Neutral	7(7.45%)	2(5.00%)	9(6.72%)
Strongly Agree	11(11.70%)	12(30.00%)	23(17.16%)
Strongly Disagree	1(1.06%)	3(7.50%)	4(2.99%)
No Response	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Total	94	40	134

In response to third question “No loss of US soldiers on ground by the policy of drone strikes”, 51.49% respondents were agreed, while 11.94 and 17.16% respondents were mildly agreed and strongly agreed with the statements, respectively. This point of view clearly depicts that majority of the respondents believe that such drone attacks are not causing any causality to US soldiers.

Table 5: Views of the respondents for Drone strikes have affected the education and health of the people of FATA

Response	Male	Females	Total
Agree	10(10.64%)	10(25.00%)	20(14.93%)
Disagree	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Mildly Agree	9(9.57%)	2(5.00%)	11(8.21%)
Mildly Disagree	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Neutral	2(2.13%)	0(0.00%)	2(1.49%)
Strongly Agree	71(75.53%)	28(70.00%)	100(74.63%)
Strongly Disagree	1(1.06%)	0(0.00%)	1(0.75%)
No Response	1(1.06%)	0(0.00%)	0(0.00%)
Total	94	40	134

This table deals with the statement that drone strikes have affected the education and health of the people of FATA. The respondents given aggressive response that drone attacks affected the education and health facilities for the peoples living in FATA region.

5. CONCLUSION

After a detailed study of the impacts of drone strategy on the FATA areas, we have concluded that this policy has negatively affected not only the people living over there but also the law and order situation of Pakistan. A wave of terrorism arises from the drone affected areas and spread throughout Pakistan. Furthermore, to uproot the roots of terrorism in Pakistan and to enhance the peace and prosperity in the affected areas it is recommended that government of Pakistan should negotiate with the US to ban the drone attacks and to adopt some alternate policy with minimum loss. If the US still insist to continue than it must be continued with the counseling of the Pakistan military intelligence ensuring the confirmation of the target. In this way, we can avoid civilian casualties and infrastructure. Pakistan army should take action against the criminals in the FATA, need to watch over the Pak-Afghan border to hinder the entrance of terrorists from across the border. Peoples of the affected areas deserve more education, health facilities and better living standards.

6. REFERENCES

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