

Our viewpoint on US droning of Pakistan

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Issue 27 of *Viewpoint online* contains a dossier on US drones attacks in Pakistan FATA provinces. Opposite and various political positions are expressed in this dossier, which divides the Left. In the article below, Viewpoint Team presents its own stand.

First things first. The USA has no right to stay in Afghanistan let alone drone Pakistan. It is the US military aggression and presence in the region that has fuelled unrest and complicated the matters. The very Taliban and al-Qaida that Washington is busy fighting-negotiating-fighting, were fathered by the USA itself. Of course, the ISI of Pakistan played the midwife to ease the birth of confessional Jihadis wreaking havoc all over Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir and beyond. All this is well known as well as well documented.

While hardly anybody denies that Taliban were a result of CIA-ISI symbiosis, there is, however, a difference of opinion among left-liberal circles in Pakistan viz-a-viz US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Many liberals, hardly represented by any political formation, legitimately believe that Taliban will not lay down their arms even if Washington pulls out. They correctly point out that Taliban have a globalist agenda and are part of an international Jihadist freemasonry. A US defeat, these liberals, thinks will bolster the Taliban morale the way Soviet-withdrawal encouraged al-Qaida to globalise their activities. They, therefore, not merely lend support to US occupation of Pakistan. As a corollary to their support for US occupation, they lend support to drone attacks in FATA.

There is another, perhaps, most important factor. The Pashtoon nationalists and intellectuals are lending support to droning of Pakistan. Their plea is: military establishment has connived with Taliban to convert FATA into a Taliban-base. In the process, any tribal resistance was brutally crushed by Taliban-Khaki joint forces. They claim that Taliban have perpetrated unspeakable human rights violations in Tribal Areas. No doubt. "In a 2010 report, entitled 'As If Hell Fell On Me,' Amnesty International pulls back the curtain on human rights violations committed by the Taliban in Pakistan in 2009, including the destruction of 170 schools and closure of another 4,000 in the Swat Valley, the firebombing of barber shops and the assassinations of hundreds of tribal elders and members of the secular Awaji National Party. According to Amnesty's report (which predates this past summer's devastating floods), over the past year, more than 8,500 people were killed in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and more than 2 million Pakistani Pashtuns displaced by Taliban violence" writes Melissa Roddy (in *The Huffington Post*).

There is a dominant far-right trend that wants Taliban reaching back Kabul, hence, opposes US occupation of Afghanistan as well as drone attacks. However, Pakistan's miniscule organised left has also been vocal against the US occupation as well as drone attacks. This left, however, has been unable to differentiate itself from the rightist opposition of US occupation and drone attacks. One may appreciate the principled left position. However, this position is tantamount to preaching the already converts. It instead should translate into a tangible plan of action. Left also needs to sharpen

and enrich its arguments. Most importantly, it should oppose Taliban-military nexus while opposing US occupation of Pakistan. It is important but a safe bet to demonstrate against a drone attack. But it takes lot of political and physical courage to stage a rally against Taliban atrocities.

We think the drone attacks will neither serve neither the liberal nor the nationalist cause. These attacks can be compared with military rules in Pakistan. When a military dictator takes over, law and order or corruption apparently begin to slide downwards. However, at the end of every dictatorship the Pakistan ends up even miserably. The US occupation of Afghanistan offers the ideal objective situation that helps fundamentalists grow. Similarly, the strategic depth that Pakistan military establishment is busy pursuing through Taliban will ultimately lead to a strategic death. This binary problematising of the situation offers a way forward. The left needs to appreciate concerns expressed by the Pashtoon nationalists and liberals with giving up its principled position.

by Viewpoint Team

P.S.

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<http://www.viewpointonline.net/our-viewpoint-on-us-droning-of-pakistan.html>