

Pakistan, US Drones, Talibans, Human Rights an Peace Process: which principal stand?

Wednesday 20 November 2013, by [KHAN Shahbaz](#), [NAWEED Baseer](#), [SHEHRBANO ZIA Afiya](#), [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 10 November 2013).

Many exchanges occurred on the Socialist Pakistan Network (SPN) mailing list after Hakim Ullah Masood, the Emir of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), had been killed in a drone strike on 1 November 2013. We reproduce below some of them.

Peace-keepers and Talibans

Dear Shahbaz sahb,

Afiya Zia

One of the problems with the understanding and analysis of overseas Pakistanis, no matter how adept and well-informed, is that they presume that local analysts and activists are unable to understand domestic issues and are either dupes or pawns or ignorant and therefore 'miss the point'. A neo-colonialist perspective indeed. Apparently, the only wise and knowledgeable anti-imperialist Pakistanis are those who live in America and Europe.

This is truly ironic when we consider that you represent an overseas Pakistani perspective and certainly not a domestic one. And yes, for all our political correctness about no-one being 'truly' representative, the fact is location does matter with regard to political analysis, if not in terms of political representation.

The point you make that the death of a Taliban leader is not mourned is inaccurate. It IS being mourned in Pakistan by PTI allies and by several official and government representatives. The narrative of previous resistance to anti-state actors and defense against their attacks on the state and citizens has, under this conservative government, converted them to 'stakeholders'. Much of this turn in thinking is due to the overseas sympathies with the 'victims' of US imperialism which are considered to be the Taliban and only incidentally then, the citizens or state of Pakistan. The sympathies and exoneration of the Lal Masjid event is key evidence of how terrorism is accommodated and condoned and even rewarded by conservatives.

Concessions are being made at the expense of the citizens of KPK and their future. Second, the point you support that it is the derailment of peace talks that is being mourned. Why is it that derailment is only when a Taliban leader is killed or captured but not when Pakistani soldiers, citizens, university professors, NGO workers, church attenders or school girls are routinely attacked and killed for the past 9 years? Is that not a commitment of non-peaceful intentions and agendas? At that

time too the mourning is about how the murder is not really a murder but a plot or conspiracy to incriminate the innocent Taliban and derail the talks that they so desperately want to have with Pakistan and therefore, it is not considered even a crime in itself! The criminal is by-passed and the perpetrator is America!

Why is there no mourning when a militant is released by the judiciary and abetted by the agencies? Is that the preferred and just way to achieve peace? Every time an activist demands accountability for crimes committed by militants they are accused of being pro-imperialist and pro-drones! By this logic those who support dialogue and insist that the Pakistani state should seize all military action (as in previous peace talks) should be called anti-Pakistan and pro-Taliban? How is it that the Taliban are taken for their honourable word but the state is considered a liar in this relationship? It is this bias that worries those commentators especially because it is held by the majority of volunteer interlocutors like the PTI. Whom will you represent if this is your perspective?

Why is it assumed that only those who want 'dialogue' or a settlement with the Taliban are peace-keepers but not those who propose that the Taliban must be held accountable for their crimes not considered peace-keepers? To demand conditions of decommissioning is anti-peace talks? To insist that the militants recognise and respect the Constitution is to be unreasonable? Is the definition of peace, appeasing the anti-State militants or, defending the unarmed Pakistani citizen? The argument seems to be that peace is the definition of some kind of settlement that will exonerate the crimes against the state and Pakistani citizens - in the same way that jirgas settle disputes by-passing the constitution and laws of Pakistan. This 'peace' or settlement or 'justice' is always at the cost of the lesser powerful in the community. What qualifies as successful peace results in this case? Why should the state have to earn the trust of the militants and not the other way around?

Presumably the PTI and overseas activists are interested in all of Pakistan - not just the KPK. Why then has there not been a single word of concern or activism, let alone mourning, over the 'murders' of dozens of criminals in the state operations in Lyari and Karachi over the past 4 months and prior to that for years? Why aren't we grieving over how the Ladlas and Baluchs and Goldens have been murdered extra-judicially and that this will derail peace in Karachi for the future? This is the acceptable way to achieve peace for Karachi but not for other parts of the country? Was there any demand for peace talks and settlements here? Let's not even get into Baluchistan. For all the empty talks about supporting the principle of dialogue with every insurgent and militant the fact is this is dishonest and a rhetoric so hollow that everyone knows it.

So you can mourn how peace possibilities died with Hakimullah but it is also highly possible that holding terrorists and militants accountable for their crimes can also lead to peace. Neither is a pleasant alternative but which is effective and who it benefits are important considerations. There is no reconciliation without truth and no peace without accountability. We demand this of our state consistently - are you willing to demand this of the militants?

Afiya Zia

10 November 2013

Derailment of a talks process

your are missing the whole point - leaders are not mourning death of mass murderer but criticising derailment of a talks process to establish peace which every single Pakistan has a desire for.

Kind Regards,

Shahbaz Khan

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9 November 2013

Thank you Farooq Tariq, nice to see the principal stand of AWP.

Baseer Naweed

9 November 2013

Drones: no thanks; we oppose the both barbarians

Farooq Tariq

Dear Basir Naveed,

I read your views on the issue expressed in detail. I do not agree with most of it.

You first criticism is that those opposing drones and religious fundamentalists are not women and men from streets but from drawing rooms and are totally isolated from the masses particularly those who are directly effected by religious fanatics terrorists attacks.

I do not agree with this notion either. Those opposing both are not in the category you mentioned.

However, lets discuss the merits and demerits of opposing positions.

I am one of those who oppose the both. Our party Awami Workers Party has also the same position. AWP is very much in thick and thin of the battle field. I am now travelling to Peshawar to attend a memorial meeting of comrade Sarfraz Mehmood, a left wing activists. AWP main base is in KPK.

We contested general elections 2013 in 30 seats within KPK from areas dominated by religious fanatics but with our red flags. Our chairman Fanoos Gujjar was able to fetch over 10,000 voted for his bid for national assembly seat from Boner despite the most difficult objective conditions. We also contested also from Swat, Chetral, Shangla and Mardan.

This is just to describe our credentials.

We have taken a position. We are totally oppose to religious fundamentalism. They are mass murderers and there is no sympathy for them. We have all the sympathy with those who are victims of terrorism carried out by fanatics. We opposed their method of destruction of girls school and are with Malala for her struggle for girls right to education. They are neo fascists.

However, we are not with US imperialism either. While opposing religious fundamentalism, we do not agree with the political and practice strategies of US imperialism. They have also carried out mass murders in many countries just for the “sin” of democratic or Socialist fight and struggles.

Their strategies to destroy religious fundamentalism with physical force is false. It has not worked earlier, it will not work now. American imperialism is the most barbarians of the world. Their history is full of barbarian acts of war and occupations.

This is our position. We do not like Bush doctrine, If you are not with us, you are with our enemies. It is not a matter of “you are with us or on other side”.

This is not a vague position or not taking a position as you mention. It is different position than yours. We are against both ad we have another alternative position.

Some of our transitional positions and demands can be summed up like this

- 1- state must be separated from religion
- 2- no state subsidy for religious educational institutions
- 3- delinking of all state institutions from religious fanatics
- 4- nationalisation of all big madrassahs under public control
- 5- at least 10% of total budget on education
- 6- free education till university and with hostel facilities
- 7- free lunch and milk and boarding for all children going to schools
- 8- no talks with religious fanatics
- 9- those involved in criminal activities be dealt according to the law
- 10- those killing police, military and public through bomb blasts, suicidal attacks, target killings must be punished with what ever means possible
- 11- no to extra judicial killings
- 12- no to US imperialists policies of neo liberalism and privatisation.

Comradely,

Farooq Tariq
General Secretary
Awami Workers Party

Drones as saviors

Dear Iqbal Alvi sahib,

The people who are arguing that Hakeemullah Mehsood's death is not a matter for jubilation are, intentionally or unintentionally appeasing the terrorists. It is perhaps that they have no concept of the intensity of the terrorism the people are faced with or that they are scared of making a clear stand. One possible reason for this may be that the violence perpetrated by the TTP and other terrorist groups has yet not reached their doors. Indeed it is easy to sit safely in house/drawing rooms where one can talk about whatever subject comes to hand and remain neutral when such things are happening elsewhere. It is only when the violence arrives at their doorstep that they suddenly have to make a decision and leave the comfort of a mindset that does not want to recognise the evils befalling the country. What were the reactions of these people when they heard the news of the brutal slaughter of the men, women and children that were killed by Mehsood and the TTP? Were these hapless victims not entitled to live full, uninterrupted lives?

If these people in their warm comfortable homes entered into academic conversation with the grieving family members, the parents, the husbands, wives and children of the murdered people they might be placed in an uncomfortable situation where they would be forced to take sides. On the other hand, the grieving family members might reveal their feelings quite clearly; that they are relieved that Mehsood or a mass killer is dead. That Mehsood was killed by an American drone is significant because the Pakistani law enforcement agencies and authorities completely failed to take any action against him, have given them a free hand.

In Urdu phrase it is said that 'Athani Khari Kerna' means not taking any side, it further means that not to take side with innocent, but appeasing the cruel—as both are right.

From a moral point of view it can certainly be said that we should not be jubilant at the death of even an enemy. However, in a perfect world, enemies attack in a direct confrontation and with a degree of honour; they do not attack in the night, murdering, slaughtering innocent people, women and children in their beds. Mehsood was such a murderer, a beast that attacked places of worship where his victims were accompanied by their children. What was the sin of the children? What sin did the women and children who went shopping for a forthcoming wedding commit? Can the people criticising Mehsood's death in the guise of "extra judicial killing" answer this question and justify the deaths of 18 members of a single family? What was the sin of the 109 Christians who were killed in Peshawar? What sins did the Shias commit when they were taken off their buses and executed on the road side, attacks on their houses and Imam Bargahs? What was the sin of Ahmadis when their places of worships were attacked by deadly arms and killing more than 100 persons including children?

Until these questions can be answered it would be better not to make broad statements criticising Mehsood's death.

Had these people ever visited the bereaved families and experienced their sentiments or anger when their loved one slaughtered like animals and their videos were released? What would have been their feelings—just feel it, Allah muafi day aisa kisi kay saath ho. A video clip of killing of Colonial Imam

was released where Mehsood staging his killing;

<http://newsorigin.com/hakimullah-mehsud-killing-colonel-imam-full-video/>

The videos of slaughtering of persons from arm forces and ordinary people are easily found on Google and youtube. No one watch it for more than 1/2 minute, then please just feel the pain of the bereaved families.

Terrorists do not go away when people hide their heads in the sand. They do not stop shooting at people just because the people do not shoot back. There has long been the attitude that if you shoot at people who are shooting at you it will make them angry and more determined to kill you. While it can be said that violence is never the answer what must be understood is that not shooting back is no guarantee of peace. If maintaining a middle of the road approach was the answer then the terrorism will perpetuate at the lowest level.

I have always been against the drone attacks and it was the Asian Human Rights Commission that stated in 2008 in its annual report that drone attacks were nothing more than extrajudicial killings. I think before this the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan also termed the attacks as extrajudicial killings and finally, in 2010, the United Nations followed suit. But our point of view against drones has not got space in those days. However, when religious parties and particularly Imran Khan started a campaign against drone therefore such people who want to remain neutral also came out against drone attacks.

The jubilation of Mehsood's death should not be confused with the campaign against the death sentence. The 'killing of a cold blooded killer' in a combat situation can never be compared with taking a human life in a purposeful, calculated manner. The death penalty is unacceptable at the best of times but it is even more so when the state carrying out the execution cannot guarantee a fair trial due to a poor criminal justice system, the absence of witness protection, confessional statements under severe torture and a corrupt judiciary. While Mehsood's death, as indeed, the death of any living person is regrettable, so are the deaths of the innocent people the TTP and terrorists were responsible for. And these people will not stop shooting because people do not find friends against the brutal form of terrorism who does not even spare innocent children. On the other hand victims of terrorism find that 'friends' are involved in academic and principal based discussion when they have to take a clear cut stand—which amounts to taking side with cruelty.

Baseer Naweed

7 November 2013

We do not mourn death of mass murder nor joyful

Farooq Tariq

One mass murderer is gone; his predecessor is being elected by Shoora. The death of Hakim Ullah Massod will result more deaths and more upsurge of right wing forces. Killing of Osama was hailed; however the religious fundamentalism continued to grow.

The philosophy of killings will never lay down any peace. Religious fanatics are killing, Americans are killing; losers are ordinary people and society moving more towards the right.

We do not mourn the death of a mass murderer responsible for thousands of killing like Choudry Nisar, nor we support Imran Khan strategy to please religious fanatics. However there is no joy either. This will not result in lowering the growing feelings of religious fundamentalism.

The American strategy of using drones for eliminating religious fundamentalist leaders is false. They first promoted fanatics and now in business of killing them. This is resulting in opposite directions.

One of the immediate negative effect of this present incident is that Hakim Ullah death has united the right and extreme right wing political forces of Pakistan. Imran Khan and Choudry Nisar are using same language and share explanation of Hakim's death as conspiracy to derail peace talk. His death has not detailed peace process, there can never be peace in presence of religious fanatics and surging American imperialism.

You can not bring peace by talking to neo fascists. Fascists has to be eliminated by a political and physical fight. However, present government politics is linked to promotion of right wing ideas and also linked to implement neo liberal economic agenda. One side, they want to have a peaceful relationship with fanatics and also do not want to spoil their relationship with US imperialism, IMF and World Bank. This is a false strategy.

PMLN can not please the both. Now death of HM has brought PMLN in opting for more difficult choices. It seems they want to keep their domestic politics of pleasing fanatics than keeping normal relationship with US.

Imran Khan went to another extreme. To keep his relationship with fundamentalism, he offered to loose KPK government at his 2nd November press conference. question of stopping NATO supplies has not that much weight. It has not worked earlier, it will not work now. It is a political gimmick.

Some of our friends are pleased and thanking drones for doing their job. This is not very welcoming political development. Drones will do jobs for war industry and not for us. Drones has promoted fundamentalism and will do so in future after this death.

Fighting religious fundamentalism in a society deeply rooted in religious domination is very difficult. But we have no other choice. As long Pakistani state is linked with religion, the advancement of religious fundamentalism will go on.

One of the main task had to be separate religion from the state. However, PPP in its five years time was not able to further this direction by an inch.

By introducing 18 amendments, they were very careful not to touch any clause of constitution that is linked to domination of religion. Even wiseman Mian Raza Rabbani of PPP made that absolute clear with pride that we touché that aspect.

We need a political force that is absolutely committed to bring long lasting constitutional amendments or introducing a new constitution by delinking religion from state.

We need to stop state patronage of madrases and religious political parties. They are not stake holders but are in process of making Pakistan a base for international domination of religious fundamentalism. They want Pakistan a real "Islamic state" more comparable to Afghanistan under Taliban from 96 to 2001.

Fighting religious fundamentalism It is a political fight, a fight for death and life of progressive forces. We have to build a class base movement as one strategy to fight fanatics. We have to adopt several strategies. Uniting progressive forces on a common programme of democracy, peace,

tolerance, defence of religious minorities and defence of the working class.

We do not mourn the death of mass murderer Hakim Ullah Masood nor we are joyful of a successful drone attack to kill a mass murderer. US imperialism can not do our job, we have to do it ourself. Let us continue our fight by opposing the both.

Farooq Tariq

General Secretary

Awami Workers Party

3 November 2013

Drones have become the saviors of Pakistanis

Baseer Naweed

Congratulations to all Pakistanis on the killing of Hakim Ullah Mehsood the beast, the killer of thousands of innocent women children and men. The next target of Drones must be Hafiz Saeed and Malik Ishaq. After Allah, Drones have become the saviors of Pakistanis.

1 November 2013
