

## Scenario 198

### IS [DAESH] IN PAKISTAN [?]

#### **ISIS – IN THEORY & PRACTICE:**

See an excerpt from the '**Financial Times**' dated **14<sup>th</sup> October 2015** which once described the statistics that:

*".....the IS procures about 34,000-40,000 barrels per day [bpd] and sells it for between \$20 and \$45 a barrel, earning an average of \$1.5m a day. At the al-Jibssa field in Hassakeh province of Syria, IS produces 2,500-3,000 bpd, about 30-40 big trucks a day, each with 75 barrels of capacity."*

The key-heads and founders of the ISIS had not voiced out their outline of the Islamic Caliphate till they had minutely worked out their strategy of taking control of the oil wells first. The IS *Shura* had identified it as a basic and essential step for launching their insurgency plans. Much earlier, they had spread in the oil-rich areas of Iraq, holding their positions in silence, since the group emerged on the scene in 2013 in Syria's oil rich areas in the eastern region.

The ISIS organisation had been successfully controlling sizable patches of Syrian and Iraqi territory. Oil is the main sources of income for the IS to run its war machine and to sponsor its factions all over the world. **Jihadis' oil operation** often forced even their local enemies to trade with them.

The attacks on the IS oilfields had been pouring from all sides, about 200 attacks pointed on oil reserves during one year, mid 2014-15, but their business continued as usual and that remained the most disturbing factor for the world power players.

ISIS entered Iraq through its northern borders, took over **Mosul** in 2014, and then quickly moved forward to seize the oilfields of **Ajil** and **Allas** in the north-eastern Iraq. Their strategic planning was so perfect that the said oil wells did not stop production for even a single day – and the extracted crude oil was also shipped out to the nearby local markets the same day for

onwards trade. Since then the production has been un-interrupted under the IS management beyond years.

It clearly demonstrated that the IS had much earlier engaged the oil engineers & technicians, doctors, Security managers and transportation racket of those oil fields that was why their take over went so smooth. From this point the ISIS went on expanding and strengthening their contingents. The Iraqi army succeeded to take back those oilfields back only in April 2015 but till then the ISIS had siphoned out about \$600millions in a year of their control.

The available record proved that the ISIS had run those oil wells in very professional way offering high salary structure for engineers and other employees, monitoring production and taking care of the operations in a skilled manner.

The ISIS way of governance across the territories it seized remained exceedingly decentralised – mostly it relied on regional governors — but as per guidelines time to time decided by the Shura along with revenue allocations and conveyed to them [the governors] for strict implementation. However, the central Shura, the top commanders of the ISIS, kept the military operations, media organs and the oil accounts with themselves.

The oilfields were guarded and controlled by the ISIS' Secret Police, which was also responsible for revenues collection on behalf of the Central Shura. They patrolled the whole area of pumping, storage and loading outs, while the transport affiliated people, drivers or traders, were carefully checked before entry to the cordoned oilfields. At an oil well of **al-Omar** there used to be 6km queue often; the process was slow but the buyers had learnt to wait. Drivers had to present a document with their licence plate number and tanker capacity to ISIS officials to be entered them into database and token number assigned.

The Russian intervention, Western allies bombing and low oil prices could put pressure on the ISIS' income; the depletion of Syria's ageing oilfields could be another factor. However, there was no shortage of demand; *"...everyone here needs diesel: for water, for farming, for hospitals, for offices. If diesel is cut off, there is no life here,"* a businessman from Aleppo, a Syrian town, once quoted.

ISIS knew the potential of oil bargains to seek approval for their organization and the theory of Caliphate they were apparently striving for.

In Pakistan, the ruling PML[N] regime was either deceiving the poor nation or being misled by its advisors when it publicly used to denounce the presence of IS in the country. Taliban, or for that matter the youth of the whole tribal region, had no employment, no source of income, no business opportunity, no industry, no agriculture and no commercial activity – then what could they do for livelihood.

They had once joined Taliban for financial gains. Later, the Pak-Army operations pushed the TTP away, they were no longer able to recruit and feed that youth – so they were bound to welcome the IS because it was rich in oil and could afford funds to further their cause in Pakistan.

### **KILLINGS IN PARIS:**

Much about the IS group suggested a mystifying terrorist setup that aspired to strike everywhere, including America and Europe. Reporting on IS had gone much conflicting in those peak days of ending 2015, its leadership had not surfaced with acceptable introduction and their existence was being widely discussed in print and internet media without any cogent reference to its true managing body or administration. However, its propaganda was touching all heights.

**On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015;** a series of coordinated attacks by suicide bombers and gunmen in Paris selected six different sites killing at least 128 people at a concert hall, restaurants and the national sports stadium. The Paris reeled that Friday night from shooting rampage, explosions and mass hostage-taking in an unprecedented fanatic assault on France.

Around 100 people were killed at a concert site where hostages had been held during a two-hour standoff with the police, and dozens of others were killed in apparently coordinated attacks outside the country's main sports stadium and four other popular locations in the city.

French President sharply increased border controls and heightened police powers as it mobilised the military in a national emergency. Initial reports told that five assailants were there: three at the concert hall as the police assaulted the building, and two near the sports stadium. At a popular music hall, The **Bataclan**, where the American band **Eagles of Death Metal** was among those playing, seat to seat filled with 1,500 people, was a massacre; gunmen with automatic weapons shot bursts of bullets into the crowd. An explosive grenade was also tossed in the hall.

The casualties eclipsed the deaths and mayhem in Paris during an earlier massacre at the **Charlie Hebdo** newspaper and related assaults around Paris by Islamic militant extremists less than a year ago. Those attacks had traumatised France and other European countries, which grappled with fears of religious extremism and violent militants, radicalised by the conflicts in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

An explosion near the sports stadium, the **Stade de France**, was an apparent suicide bombing, occurred as Germany and France were playing a soccer match, forcing a hasty evacuation of President Hollande who was also viewing the match. As the scope of the assaults quickly became clear, he convened an emergency cabinet meeting and announced that France was placing severe restrictions on its border crossings.

President Obama came to the White House briefing room to express solidarity and offer aid and condolences. He said:

*"Once again, we've seen an outrageous attempt to terrorise innocent civilians. This is an attack not just on Paris, it's an attack not just on the people of France, but this is an attack on all of humanity and the universal values that we share.*

*We're going to do whatever it takes to work with the French people and with nations around the world to bring these terrorists to justice and to go after terrorist networks that go after our people."*

Immediately after, the Twitter erupted with celebratory messages by members and sympathisers of the '**Islamic State in Iraq & Syria**' **[ISIS]**; also known as '**Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant**' **[ISIL]** The Levant is a geographical term that refers to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean -- Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan. Some times called as **DAESH** or **DAIISH**; this is a term the militant groups hate.

French President François Hollande used the said term since the attack-one on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015. It was first used it in September 2014 - it's an Arabic acronym for "**al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham**." In short it is called as **Islamic State [IS]**.

German Interior Minister, Thomas de Maizière, said: "*I am in close contact with my French colleague and have offered assistance through German Special Forces.*"

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American and European counter-terrorism officials reviewed wiretaps and other electronic surveillance records; a senior US security official said there was no immediate indication that there had been suspicious chatter or other warning signs before the attack. Unlike the attacks against **Charlie Hebdo** and a kosher supermarket in January [2015], the attacks on the targets had no apparent rationale. One officer told:

*"It's a Friday night, and there's a lot of people out, a lot of tourists out. If you want maximum exposure, you do it like this, in the dark, when it's scarier and more difficult for police to act."*

Same day, Pakistani government strongly condemned the multiple terror attacks in Paris saying that *"Pakistan stands firmly behind the people and Government of France in this hour and extends its support to bring the perpetrators to justice."*

The known celebrity writer Thomas Piketty writes in his book '**Capital in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**' that the Middle East's political and social system has been made fragile by the high concentration of oil wealth into few countries with relatively little population. If you look at the region between Egypt and Iran — which includes Syria — you find several oil monarchies controlling between 60 and 70 percent of wealth, while housing just a bit more than 10 percent of the 300 million people living in that area. This concentration of so much wealth in countries with so small a share of the population, he says, makes the region *"the most unequal on the planet."*

Thus a large chunk of inhabitants — including women and refugees — used to be kept in a state of **semi-slavery**; those economic conditions became justifications for *ihadists*.

*[These are the **regimes that are militarily and politically supported by Western powers**, all too happy to get some crumbs to fund their [soccer] clubs or sell some weapons. No wonder our lessons in social justice and democracy find little welcome among Middle Eastern youth.*

*Under plausible assumptions, the top 10% income share (for the Middle East) could be well over 60%, and the top 1% share might exceed 25% (vs. 20% in the United States, 11% in Western Europe, and 17% in South Africa).]*

Terrorism that is rooted in inequality, Piketty continues to justify, is best combated economically.

It also remained a fact that **Muslims all over the world condemned terrorism and expressed solidarity with French mourners.** French President Francois Hollande blamed the Islamic State [IS] for those attacks, calling them an **"act of war"**. The identity of the attackers remained unconfirmed; however, the people around heard rounds of automatic rifle fire amidst shouts of **Allahu Akbar!** However, Muslims across the globe had out to denounce the unprecedented attacks.

The head of Islam's leading seat of learning Cairo's **Al-Azhar**, on the same day, condemned **hateful** attacks and urged global unity against extremism while saying:

**"We denounce this hateful incident,"** Ahmed al-Tayyeb told a conference in comments broadcast by Egyptian state television.  
**"The time has come for the world to unite to confront this monster."**

Many approached twitter and facebook to express their support for the French and denounce terrorism.

**TO REACT 'ISIS' EXPANSIONISM:** Throughout the year 2014-15, reporting on IS went much conflicting; its leadership remained unknown. No one could find an acceptable introduction of the IS and no cogent reference to its true managing body or administration could be addressed. However, its presence was being felt constantly – without their exact demand-list or knowledge about their true objectives; President Obama mostly adhered to his policy of **containment**.

The US apparently tried to contain IS group's expansion; was to be contained in Syria and Iraq first; then their elimination through precise air strikes and extending more support to regional western allies. The opposite philosophies were also discussed in the West and America, meaning thereby:

- Firstly; that **Local Forces** should be encouraged with better arsenal to counter the IS activities.
- Secondly; the **US and NATO's Special Force** up to 20,000 troops at least, be placed there in Syria and Iraq to combat that menace.

The decision makers were to differentiate that what the exact nature of the IS was being portrayed as enemy; a well-resourced terrorist group that was in control of substantial territory, or an up-coming nation-state that was sponsoring terrorist attacks.

Taking light from the magazine **Politico Friday of 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015**; if the IS is considered as resourceful terrorist group, then containment could be an unusual and funny strategy, but the second option of the nation-state considered, then it had to die its own death. IS, even during its peak days, was not able to fight a three-front war—Iraq to the East, the Kurds to the North and Syrian insurgents to the West; ***the US avoided to put itself in picture [–because it is sponsored by them].***

IS didn't publish statistics or talked ever to the media in detail but it was definitely a professional bureaucratic set-up established at unknown location [think Pentagon?]. The group had developed its pre-war economic activity in oil production suggesting that group's governance practices were controlled by experts of highest order – that's where the ***'US-hand was being named at its back'***.

As per details available in **Hensen Lewis's** essay titled '**Understanding the Daesh Economy**' published in *Vol 9, No 4 (2015) of Terrorism Research Institute USA*, the media roared a lot about its cash flows, which were surely large for a terrorist group, but tiny for a ***'sponsored state'***.

Then comes its oil revenues; the then estimates explicitly indicated it at \$500 million per year from one province the IS kept control of. Oil production was dropping because the group lacked engineers and its infrastructure was being bombed by various powers; sanctions and physical constraints on transporting the product to world markets remained another cogent issue for the IS as a [terrorist] group.

Another known source of funding of the IS was the looting of antiquities, since it controlled territory in an area profoundly important to world heritage; but supply of looted treasures was very limited in the world market – buyers were so few.

The last main funding source was extortion from the population under its control as had been frequently reported from Taliban territories in Afghanistan and Karachi in Pakistan. This was standard practice for rebel groups, showing up with guns at big businesses and demanding payments for ransom – here the IS's stakes as group were very high. It hired services of Taliban there in Karachi; the later did a lot in IS name but sent very meagre amounts back.

Every one was waiting for next day's dawn if it brings better news for the common human beings.

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In Pakistan, it was claimed by the Pak-army that prior to their action in July 2007 to flush out the Red Mosque and its adjoining seminary in Islamabad, that place had become a centre for Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists. The time proved that as fact; it had large caches of weapons too.

Maulana Abdul Aziz and his brother Abdul Rashid Ghazi had openly announced in Friday sermons that they would unleash hundreds of suicide bombers. Once again the same mosque became a rallying point for extremists; the girl students of Lal Masjid seminary had posted their allegiance to the IS leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.

The Islamabad police, on the instructions of their Interior Minister Ch Nisar, always abstained from arresting Maulana Abdul Aziz even after registering cases against him. Maulana Aziz had always been on the offensive while the government and all its law-enforcement agencies used to retreat instead of countering Maulana's narrative of hatred. Instead, the state had been giving space to the cleric – perhaps were waiting for another massacre like of the APS Peshawar of December 2014.

The whole nation wanted the government to take action against all those centres of activity which openly or discreetly encouraged their followers to take arms against Pakistan. It remained a fact that a number of seminaries in Islamabad used to get closed down for a week or so prior to military parades or foreign dignitary's visit. If the said *jihadis* were dangerous for a week, how come they were not dangerous for the rest of the year?

#### **HAD US SPONSORED ISIS?**

Referring to the '**Washington Post**' dated **2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015**; on front lines of the battle against the Islamic State [IS], suspicion of the United States runs deep. Iraqi fighters say that:

*'.....they [the Iraqis] have all seen the videos allegedly showing US helicopters airdropping weapons to the militants, and many claim they have friends and relatives who have witnessed similar instances of collusion.'*

Ordinary people also viewed the videos, heard the stories and reached the same conclusion believing that the US has been supporting the IS for asserting [more] American control over Iraq, and, most probably, its oil. The Shiite community and especially the Shiite militias held firm opinion because they had seen helicopters delivering bottled water to Islamic State

positions near the oil fields of **Baiji** in Northern Iraq. That community thinks that had the US stopped supporting IS, they could have defeated them in much earlier days.

US military officials termed the proposition as 'ridiculous'. Col Steve Warren, the US military's Baghdad-based spokesman said that:

*"There's clearly no one in the West who buys this idea, but unfortunately, this is something that a segment of the Iraqi population believes."*

The above perception amongst Iraqis went widespread across the country's Sunni-Shiite sectarian divide, and it divulged the troubling legacy of mistrust that had clouded US-Iraq relationship since the 2003 invasion and the subsequent withdrawal eight years later. In an arena of recent IS attacks in Paris, the phenomenon raised the level of suspicion with which the US was being viewed in Iraq – and an alarming note for the Obama administration, too.

What could be done to repair such suspicion; the US seemed worried. Iraqi PM Haidar al-Abadi pushed back swiftly a recent announcement by the US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter that special contingent of US force would be dispatched to Iraq to conduct raids, free hostages and capture IS heads. Iraq's tribal Kurdistan supported the US strength there; it would welcome more US troops but PM Abadi flatly refused any such deployment. The US had to respect the Iraqi sovereignty.

The allegations of US collusion with the IS were aired regularly in Iraqi parliament by Shiite politicians and promoted it in postings on social media. In one typical video that appeared on the Facebook page of a Shiite militia - **Badr Organization**, waves US military's MREs [meals ready to eat] — chicken and dumplings — being proof of US support, allegedly found at an IS base in **Baiji**. The American high ups termed it Iranian propaganda saying that the Iran backed Shiite militias were pushing that propaganda that **'the US supports IS'**.

Iraqi government officially didn't believe the charges; and PM Abadi constantly pushed back against them but PM's own position went weakened while battling for his own political survival against powerful Shiite militia leaders. Iraq's Ministry of Defence told the media that the Americans should have been done much more than they claimed; **'as the US goes slow so most people believe they are supporting IS'**. US Air Command routinely failed to respond the Iraqi MOD's requests to strike the [indicated] IS strongholds and their camps.

The US once claimed that they conducted about 3,768 strikes in Iraq till 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 but the fighters on ground insisted there had been no strikes by the Americans at all. ***Iraq's Special Forces in Baiji keep the opinion that they were better off without the US aid.*** The only air support had come from the Iraqi air force and that the troop wished their government would have asked the Russians for help instead of the US.

***'The America is colluding with the IS - holds a certain logic'***; Mustafa Alani, Director of the Gulf Research Centre also held; adding that most Arabs now believed it as a hard fact.

Most media gurus of the Middle East also considered it correct for the reason that the Americans weren't doing the job people expect from them. ***Mosul*** was lost - US did nothing; Syria was lost - the Americans did nothing; Paris was attacked - the US guns went silent; thus people believe it as US's deliberate policy – a **US conspiracy**. In Baghdad, most Iraqis offer another explanation that:

***".....the US was damaged here, so they created IS to punish Iraqis and restore their image. ....most people believe that it's not based on reason. It's based on racism — because Iraqis don't like Americans in the first place."***

**On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015**, the British Parliament voted to launch bombing raids against the IS in Syria, supporting PM David Cameron's case that the country needed help to destroy militants ***"who are plotting to kill us"***. After more than 10 hours of tense debate, MPs voted in favour of air strikes, by 397 to 223. British Tornado GR4 bombers were in the air from their Cyprus base within hours to launch the country's latest military action in the Middle East. PM Cameron urged MPs not to turn their back on allies such as France in their time of need.

The British warplanes attacked the IS-controlled oil industry, a determined source of revenue, but avoided to hit IS's stronghold in ***Raqqa***, Syria, where the IS members were almost indistinguishable from the local civilian population.

PM Cameron had suffered a humiliating parliamentary defeat in 2013 over plans to bomb President Assad's forces. In September 2014 polls, 48 percent of respondents had supported the strikes on Syrian IS while 31 percent were against the idea. Those opposed to air strikes recalled the events of 2003 when Britain helped the US to invade Iraq; later turned out - that Saddam Hussein was not in possession of weapons of mass destruction [WMD].

Many British voters were wary of being dragged into another war in the Middle East. Some viewed Western intervention in Iraq and Libya as failure that sowed chaos across the region. The Parliamentary approval was met by howls of disgust by dozens of anti-war protesters demonstrating outside parliament's building. PM Cameron held that about four years' Syrian civil war could not be resolved by military action alone. Cameron told a packed House of Commons that:

***"...these terrorists [IS] are plotting to kill us and to radicalise our children right now. They attack us because of who we are, not because of what we do."***

During the same days, a particular section of the British media highlighted the defective strategy of Western block to cope with the IS menace. ***They were not against the idea of curbing or crushing the IS – but indirectly pointed out that certain forces or countries amongst them were not actually sincere.***

Some also raised a voice against the British government's urge to attack the IS in Syria describing '**Ten reasons UK is [again] bound to lose IS war**'. Various essays written under that maxim cogently reiterated that the West hasn't learnt any lesson from Iraq; perhaps the move would doom the UK once more. Their contention had the merit and substance both; the points were as under:

**The West miss-interpreted its values:** Recall the War on Terror [WOT] in Afghanistan and Pakistan; it was a clash of values - *Islam's alleged intolerant and fundamentalism vs. West's liberty, democracy and rule of law*. The most appropriate response to a terrorist attack could be to strengthen and defend the freedom of Western citizens. It could be a slap on the face of fundamentalism and would have also dispelled fear and submission from the liberal society world over.

**Bad ideas can't be buried in one go:** Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Lebanon were all bombed by the US since 9/11, with the apparent objective of destroying Islamist terrorism. Yet whether it remained there in the form of Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Jundullah, Al-Qaeda, or ISIS; the ideology continued to persist. No matter how many bombs the US dropped, 57,000 people were killed in Pakistan alone, Islamism continued to exist because there was justification with the people who had no alternative choice except to pick up weapons.

Bombing during the American war in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos killed 2.5 million people, with millions more deaths after the war as a result of

American chemical warfare. That genocide was done against the ideology of communism. However, 40 years after that decade-long conflict, Vietnam is now a country more peaceful than the US; still living with one-party communism. After having 7 million tons of bombing, the communist Vietnam still survived and defeated the US Army – rather made it sign of shame, disgrace and humiliation for all generations to come.

**West itself spread terror through DRONE STRIKES:** US Military drones flew all around and often targeted civilian populations; unimaginable for someone who doesn't live fearing that invisible flying robots might kill them and their family. The legality and intelligence behind so-called 'signature strikes' was equally terrifying.

The US allowed its CIA to commit extrajudicial executions of foreign suspects, though successful in Pak-Afghan border region [though never justified]. However, elsewhere for the IS for instance, it was all considered failure – strengthening the popular understanding that ***IS is basically a sponsored armed hand of America.*** Why the US has never ordered the killing of certain terrorists in America.

***The fear and innocent deaths caused by drone strikes don't stop terrorism. It is itself terrorism.***

During the CIA's first targeted drone strike in Afghanistan, three civilians collecting scrap metal were killed because one man was thought to be Osama Bin Laden – he was not. The US still can't be sure of the true scale of civilian deaths because the CIA counts all military-aged males in strike zones as ***'militants'***.

**UNDUE CLASHES create more radicals:** In most poor countries of Asia and Africa, the radicalisation brings more bloodshed because of injustice and poverty; they have been left with nothing to lose; especially as revenge against those who took their home and family – the foreign military becomes the first target. Destroying poor people through drones or otherwise could never defeat Islamism – ***ask CIA if they had ever killed a rich person in any part of the world.***

The mayhem and destruction caused by warfare left a political and social vacuum in poor countries in which fundamentalism flourished. It also created a generation of young people raised in an environment of constant warfare; where blood remained cheap and the enemy was obvious; and Islamist militancy was the appropriate viable solution for them.

Western nations intervened on the most deceptive premise that '**by eliminating Taliban or ISIS we make our populations safe**' but in fact western powers made their citizens less safe by doing so. The Paris and Brussels attackers shouted "**This is for Syria**" before killing 140 people, in a suspected revenge attack for the killing of Mohammed Emwazi.

**Who would define 'barbarism' for the West:** The barbarism of ISIS is often depicted by the Western media as a justification for military intervention. In the first six months of 2015, ISIS beheaded 66 people but Saudi Arabia publicly executed 102 people, though of course, for varying reasons. For different communities, the barbarism carry different meanings – all have certain cause and explanation in their minds.

Killing civilian people through air bombing, chemical warfare and missiles by the Western countries are also the acts of barbarism – and so are the serial killing and suicidal attacks. Both types of action result in the loss of humanity in the end – but the Western are the educated and re-sourceful communities so should be able to think in a better way.

**About arming radicals and tyrants:** What do Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gadaffi, ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, and The Taliban all had in common? **They were all armed at some point by America.** The UK also helped Saddam Hussein and Bashar al-Assad create chemical weapons – the same weapons were later used as justification for military intervention. Still the wealthy arms trade between the West and Middle Eastern tyrants has been flourishing and would continue for decades - it is believed by most Western think-tanks.

Even more disastrous step was the arming of fundamentalist rebel groups in attempts to overthrow governments that America didn't like. The delivery of weapons into the hands of violent, disorganised and internally conflicting groups resulted in those being used against Western interests when needed by them. Western nations also supplied arms to terrorists indirectly by leaving surplus military equipment around after they left war-zones.

**ISIS, during the same period under discussion, had acquired \$1billion worth of US armoured vehicles left behind in Iraq – of course, with the US connivance and approval.**

**Arms business exclusive:** Available record indicated that in 2013, \$1.75 trillion was spent on the military equipments worldwide; with the top 100 arms companies selling \$402 billion in weapons. The CEOs of these huge multi-national corporations were tasked with increasing profit year-on-year, and forever. The main clients of arms companies remained the national

governments spending taxpayers' money; companies made profits; but indirectly poor people on targeted side got their homes destroyed, their families killed and one developed nation makes his population prosperous on the cost of other nations' human being.

The War on Terror [WOT] was a dream come true for weapon companies; the US Vice President Dick Cheney was the advisor and decision maker in President Bush's team – but he was the most benefited person of that WoT being the **CEO of Haliburton**; the most expanded military industrial complex of America.

**Huge Military Spending Bills:** The truth remains that it costs £3.2 million spent on a two-plane, six-hour bombing mission; and the hundreds of billions spent on nuclear weapons - an awful lot of taxpayers' money spared to kill other human beings. Then hundreds of thousands of refugees are seen fleeing the misery inflicted by the same weapons the West helped to create – another un-explained spending thus burden on tax payers.

A Watchmaker drone, operational for two hours, [in 2015] raised for the UK taxpayer expenditure worth £1.2 billion [*the annual cost of benefit fraud in UK*]. The renewal of the Trident nuclear submarines cost a total of £167 billion whereas the police were left to face a 25% budget cut.

**West needed cohesion, not division:** Islamist terror groups like ISIS were seen saying that '*... The Western forces entering Northern Syria will bring about a final war in which God will grant Islam victory against Western crusaders*'. The ISIS used this narrative to groom maligned and marginalised European Muslims.

The British media used Nazi-like propaganda comparing refugees to cockroaches and rats; ISIS used their magazine [*Dabiq*] to scare refugees intending to quit Syria. They successfully portrayed Europe as intolerant and dangerous for Muslims and convinced them not to leave their country. When those refugees came to Europe – the EU discouraged them.

In fact, with such odd policies of 2015, the Western countries did terrorists a great service – through resentment and *Islamophobia* remarks.

**Violence doesn't bring peace:** Various studies revealed that people are attracted to join terrorist groups through religious fundamentalism, endemic corruption, political instability, social alienation, or economic desperation etc as an individual factor or collectively; yet, these factors had invariably aggravated by foreign military interventions. The Western governments bombing in poor African and Asian countries like Afghanistan

and Pakistan only created more refugees, conflict, division, instability, poverty, destruction, and terrorism. The same is true in the Middle East countries where the IS is using the same theory as tool.

The US & EU foreign policies failed to bring about lasting peace in Iraq and Syria. The war in Iraq contributed to the death of half a million human beings, and ended up costing the US \$6 trillion. Yet the entire West, since Nine Eleven 2001 at least, employed the same strategy, in the same place, against the same ideology and against the same group; either Taliban or IS. How to bring the lasting peace? The 2015's surge once more resulted in the same devastated and disturbed Syria – taking the whole world to another major defeat.

Peace can only be achieved through a long-term foreign policy based on providing human rights, self-determination and liberty for the citizens of tyrannical and corrupt governments. However, in the on-going scenario, the West did not respect international law and did not negotiate sincerely with the governments involved in conflict. Instead of selling weapons to all parties in war-zone, they could look at providing education, healthcare, and sustainable development to give hope and sun-shine for those poor people all around in their target countries.

BUT how could they afford to think like that - given the hegemony of an ever-expanding military industrial complex, the governments they funded, and the barbarous regimes they patronized - it is unlikely that one would ever see an end to the so-called **'War On Terror'**.

**On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015**, Germany's parliament was also expected to vote against the IS but only to provide military support for air strikes; neither their troops nor planes would participate practically. Even the British air strikes were unlikely to change the military balance, given the US warplanes were already there. UK's high-precision, laser-guided Brimstone missiles could make a difference by hitting the IS capital of **Raqqa** and its oil sites – but the status-quo, however, prevailed.

**On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015**; NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg told a Swiss newspaper **'Tages-Anzeiger'** that:

***'NATO has ruled out sending ground troops to fight against ISIS in Syria - stressing the need to bolster local forces in the conflict.'***

*That is not on the agenda of the coalition and the NATO allies. The United States has a limited number of Special Forces. In the*

*foreground, however, is strengthening local forces. This is not easy, but it's the only option.'*

And what else could be known as 'double-game'.

### **PRESENCE OF IS IN PAKISTAN:**

Since the late 1970s, the Pakistan and its populace are at war; this asymmetrical warfare has seen many actors. First, it was the backlash on Pakistan's policies in Afghanistan and bombs frequently blew in trains and buses killing people. This trend converted into the high pitched battles that two sects in Pakistan fought apparently with ideological and financial assistance from '**friendly foreign countries**'. The sectarianism was seen shooting into the sky.

Al-Qaeda, created in Pentagon then launched in Afghanistan, but operated simultaneously from Kandahar and Peshawar [...*those were different days and terrorists of today were holy warriors then*] with equal passion and vigour. Locally and internationally financed, a mix of sectarian and Al-Qaeda militancy later provided crucial support to the emergence of Taliban on both sides of the Pak-Afghan borders.

The emergence of Taliban on both sides were because of the popular support of the local populations - as if this was the re-emergence of their [Islamic] faith, but cold facts surfaced on world horizon very late – it was all about global oil-politics.

Prior to the Iraqi and Syrian wars, the non-state violence was less organised and lethal, but the convergence of the hyper-radicals in these countries not only created organised militants, but also brought new ideas of the brutal violence these people perpetrated against combatants and non-combatants alike.

This new herald of militant threat was **IS, ISIS, ISIL or Daesh**, call by what name it suits you - essentially grown in Iraqi and Syrian voids of weak political governance. **Extremism bulges out when states and societies do not counter the emergence of misdirected religious and political falsehoods;** attract particularly the youth **in the name of making change** that would get them the promised glory.

**Daesh** deployed the same tactics and addressed the Muslim youth across many nations of the world, including Pakistan. Although the political chiefs and the Pak-Army both had repeatedly rejected the reports of Daesh's presence in Pakistan, the group continuously raised its venomous head every now and then.

Since 2014, in Pakistan, there was reduction in terrorist incidents but it was equally undeniable that the threat of terrorism remained high. The Punjab government had issued a warning of possible attacks by the Islamic State [IS] through their affiliates – again the paid religious mercenaries. Intelligence agencies did not issue an explicit warning; they had no good reason like hard intelligence. Punjab remained duly alert though amongst ambiguous theories popping around.

**Came up the main question** during those days of Paris Attacks on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015: specifically, **about the presence of IS in Pakistan**. There was no clear-cut answer. Punjab's Home Department developed opinion that while Da'ish [a nomenclature increasingly used in Pakistan for IS] was **"not itself present in Pakistan, there were factions within the banned Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan [TTP] that were inspired"** - in fact hired by the IS.

Earlier on **3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**; Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif, while addressing the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies in London, said that:

***"Pakistan would not allow 'even a shadow' of Daesh, and termed the group a greater threat than al Qaeda."***

On **19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**; Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Qazi Khalilullah, during his weekly press briefing, once again categorically denied the presence of IS on its soil. He reiterated that:

***"....there is no footprint of Daesh in Pakistan. We will also not tolerate anyone affiliated with it. The country is aware of the threat posed by the militant group, adding the security forces are on full alert"***.

***Pakistan officially condemned the terrorist activity in Paris; we stand by them – and that terrorism cannot be associated with any religion."***

The attacks traumatised France and other countries in Europe, which grappled with fears of religious extremism and violent militants, radicalised by the conflicts in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

An editorial note of daily **Express Tribune of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015** said:

*"Thus the IS may not have an office in Pakistan as the TTP keeps in Doha; it may not have a direct control from Raqqa, but **it does have a 'presence'** in a non-corporeal sense. That 'presence' is as indefinable as the IS caliphate, which is essentially a state without borders or a unified central governance, a redefinition of the concept of statehood."*

The elements of the TTP that had reportedly aligned themselves with the IS were not some spin-offs of Taliban; they were trained and battle-hardened from their equipped fighting units. They were prone to factionalism and internal rifts that sometimes play amongst their groups from different origins. Though they were highly *tribalised* in their affiliations — but they were able to mount complex operations in any given situation and anywhere.

Till that moment, it was not clear that **'to what extent the IS was able to exploit the Pakistan's weak judicial process and the poverty of masses to implement its extremist designs.'**

**[Terrorism everywhere, no matter the country or culture, requires a supportive infrastructure to operate successfully. It needs sympathisers, media speakers and religious clerics. People, who will store arms and arsenal for them, build bomb vests, hide fugitives, fabricate false documents and manage to frighten the illegal rich for launching their terrorist attacks. **Pakistan always remained a fertile ground to hold such menaces.**]**

In Pakistan, despite the Pak-Army and Foreign Office denouncements, the fact remained that the IS was already recruiting mercenaries indirectly through franchisees and some covered **madrassahs**. Its leaflets and propaganda material had been found across the country, including in Punjab to which the new alerts were caused. The hand-written and locally published material was not having a postal address, but the involved people knew all other modes of mutual communication.

Pakistan has suffered for too long around the semantics of terrorism **due to its weak laws and judicial setup**, neglecting meanwhile to construct any counter narrative. Once more it was decided to fully

activate the National Counter Terrorism Authority [NACTA] but what remained its results since its foundation in 2009. NACTA was not going to be effective in the given legal perspectives in Pakistan because no government allotted it required funds.

The IS was bound to enhance its traction and presence as the situation suit them; one could analyse that 57,000 people, including 5700 security personnel, had been slain in terrorist activities during a decade **but the civil courts could not bring a single person to the gallows. Blame game always remained high in Pakistan.**

As the IS was re-branding ideas of statehood, Pakistan's political elite remained busy in grabbing the pieces of state-lands to fill in their own coffers. New legislation has never been a priority for Pakistani legislatures – they remained concerned with **'development funds'**.

The latest: On the media site of **'Institute of the Study of War'** [ISW], Harleen Gambhir's report dated **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015** held that:

*'The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)'s affiliate in the Afghanistan - Pakistan region is effective, operational, and positioned to expand. The affiliate, Wilayat Khorasan, controls populated areas in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar Province and has launched attacks on Jalalabad and Kabul.'*

### **IS BUSTED IN 2016 & AFTER:**

As per media reports dated **29<sup>th</sup> December 2015**; Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department [CTD] claimed to had busted a cell of the militant IS group operating in Sialkot, arrested nine suspects and seized weapons, explosives and laptops, as well as a large number of compact discs containing publicity material. It was revealed that the suspects had taken an oath on the words / manifesto:

***"...to overthrow democracy and introduce Khilafat in Pakistan through armed struggle – as they hate Police and the Pakistan Army."***

The suspects belonged to different districts of Punjab, but Sialkot served as the base of their operations; had established infrastructure there to carry out operations across the country. Three of the suspects had formally

received "**militant training**", from the Syrian Camp and were in the process to extend their network through recruitment.

**[Here one could understand the hidden agenda of Pakistan's enemy forces. For changing the system of government from 'Democracy' to 'the Islamic Caliphate', why they were indoctrinated to hate and attack the police and the Pak-Army; WHY NOT THE MNAs, MPAs, MINISTERS OR OPPOSITION POLITICIANS who were running the 'Democracy Show' in the country.]**

Six of their members had already reached the Syrian Camp successfully through illegal means via Iran and Turkey. A week earlier to that, the Turkish government had also arrested three ISIS suspects out of whom two were from Pakistani origin.

The arrested suspects were identified as Jawad Ahmad aka Abu Hafs, Amir Sohail, Ijaz Ahmad, Adnan Babar aka Danu Kabarrria, Saeed Ahmad aka Abuzar, Yasir Ali, Hamza Imtiaz, and Waqas Ahmad but the real names were again doubted as they originally belonged to **Jamaat ud Dawa** [JuD], but later joined the IS as mercenary killers.

The arrested suspected members of the IS had been communicating with one another through social media, **'What'sapp'** and **Skype** to avoid arrests and also used to collect funds for the group. In order to persuade other people to join their organisation, they used to show them video clips of police brutality and one in which the Rangers were seen shooting a young man in Karachi.

Another fact that the arrests from Sialkot were of the persons aged between 18-35 years, all educated up to GCSC only whereas the previous arrests made from Sohrab Goth Karachi comprised of highly educated members. They had successful contacts with their Pakistani counterparts in the Syrian Training Camps through a Pakistan national, Abu Muavia Salfi; said to be a trainer now.

Six Pakistani young girls from Sialkot district were also missing from their homes since mid 2015; their parents have ultimately preferred to approach the CTD to make efforts to locate them – they were mutual friends and were studying Islamic advanced courses from a *Madrassa*. The parents believed they must be in Syrian camps somewhere.

The CTD's briefing to media revealed that **IS Chief Abu-Bakr Baghdadi had appointed Hafiz Saeed Khan as the group's Emir in 'Khorasan'** (areas comprising Iran and some parts of Afghanistan) and proposed him

as Emir **for Pakistan too**. The suspects had certain plans ready for launching attacks against Law Enforcing Agencies [LEAs].

According to CTD investigations, the suspects were indoctrinated and recruited by two brothers — Babar Butt aka Abu Akasha and Nadeem Butt. They had sworn allegiance to *Khalifa al Baghdadi* and joined IS in Daska Tehsil of Sialkot district in June 2015. Abu Akasha had then facilitated contacts between the suspects and Abu M Salfi, who was in charge of Pakistani militants in Syria. The interrogations showed that one Waqas aka Rizwan, also a member of the IS from Sialkot, had been killed in clashes with the Syrian forces.

During last days of December 2015, just a day after Lahore-based woman had reportedly left for Syria to join ISIS along with her four children, another group of female *Daesh* affiliates was exposed in Karachi. A suspected terrorist Kamran Gujjar, who was arrested from Punjab, revealed during the investigation that his wife and sister-in-law were working in Karachi for *Daesh*. Both were experts in brainwashing and were collecting funds for the ISIS / Daesh under the cover of a welfare organisation; **"Online Indus News"** dated **4<sup>th</sup> January 2016** is referred.

Kamran also revealed that several other women had joined their group. Following the revelations, the security agencies started conducting raids in different parts of the metropolis to arrest members of the delinquent group.

In another report of the same month, December 2015, the Karachi police told that a 20-member group of female supporters of Islamic State [IS] was active in Karachi. These women were particularly expert in collection of funding for the IS – some of them had also arranged marriages for the terrorists of that group.

**On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2016**; the counter-terrorism department of Sindh Police arrested Sindh Islamic State [IS] head Umar Kathiwer for his involvement in Safoora bus carnage and other terror incidents. He was arrested upon the information provided by Safoora bus attack suspect Saad Aziz.

Meanwhile, Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah told that the security agencies were trying to reach possible recruits of IS in Pakistan. He had the opinion that:

*"Not more than a hundred Pakistanis people have gone from Pakistan to Syria and Iraq to join the terrorist organisation, Islamic State, or Daesh."*

Authorities in South Asia were concerned about the rise of the **Daesh** group in a region already beset by home-grown insurgencies fighting to topple local governments.

The Pakistani government held that Islamic State [IS] didn't have a credible presence in the country. Several smaller militant groups and factions of the Pakistani Taliban [TTP] had, however, pledged allegiance to it and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi since 2014. Contrarily, during the same period of 2013-14, the British media had authentic reports that hundreds of young women and girls were leaving their homes in Europe to join IS in Syria & Iraq, causing increasing concerns for all.

During later years, the Pak-Army has been fighting the **IS or Daesh** at places and scored certain successes but the challenge remained there. It was because the state's political bosses could not effectively refute the group's claims of ideological foothold in Pakistan. This was a war that barrels and bullets could not win alone – one could recall the APS Peshawar's massacre and then nearly zero progress of 'National Action Plan' which was debated and agreed by all politicians a month later. Hats off to *Maulanas* and *Achakzais* - Pakistan continued bleeding.

However, during the first half of year 2017, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL] started losing its charm for militants from Pakistan. After its emergence in *Khorasan* two years ago, the group made some quick inroads into the Pakistani militant space but due to Pak-Army's strategic moves the trend went clearly reversed.

*[ISIL had announced its Khorasan Province in January 2015, appointing former Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan [TTP] commander from Orakzai Agency Hafiz Saeed Khan as its provincial Wali and former Afghan Taliban commander Abdul Rauf Aliza as his deputy. They were soon joined by Shahidullah Shahid, a former TTP spokesman, and four other commanders of Kurram and Khyber tribal regions and Peshawar and Hangu districts.]*

Deputy Abdul Rauf Aliza and Commander Hafiz Saeed Khan were killed in US drone strikes in February 2015 and July 2016 respectively but the outfit continued to engage in terrorism in Pakistan, claiming attacks believed to be carried out with logistical support from Sunni sectarian outfit, the *Lashkar-e-Jhganvi* [LeJ].

**In May 2017;** the Islamic State claimed an attack on Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Deputy Chairman of Senate in Pakistan; he was a leader of the religious cum political party *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* [JUI-F], too. JUI-F has

traditionally been seen close to Sunni militant groups in Pakistan. The attack on the JUI-F leader, thus, created differences between *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* [LeJ] and Daesh. In that attack, about 25 associates of Maulana Haideri were killed – most of them were the workers and students of the JUI-F as claimed by the IS.

**On 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017;** Asad Mansoor, Jamaatul Ahrar [JuA] spokesman, issued a statement titled **"We do not belong to Daesh"**; JuA remained at the top of list of those outfits in the Pakistani militant space seen more close to the IS. He held that Khalid Khorasani, JuA chief, had long ago made it clear that the group was not associated with Daesh / IS.

**[The above statement had come in response to a statement made by the Army spokesperson, declaring the JuA to be an affiliate of the IS.]**

Some security experts judged it as 'clarification' by the JuA as evidence of the decline of Islamic State, which had attracted many local militant outfits initially. When Pakistani Taliban militants like Hafiz Saeed Khan had joined the Daesh's Khorasan chapter, many local militants had been lured by the monetary benefit expected to come from association with the organisation founded in the Arab region. **"Their expectations turned out to be false as the organisation didn't have as much funding for them,"** said Sami Yousufzai, a security expert in the IS affairs.

Other security experts believed that the supremacy and control of Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan was also suffering in the fields where the two outfits, one being Daesh, had moved together – but were beaten and defeated at the end.

In the aftermath of military operations in Pakistan, the militants of the TTP and other local groups were compelled to take refuge in Afghanistan. In order to enjoy the support of their Afghan counterparts, the Pakistani Taliban needed to keep a distance from the IS members, which was a competitor of Al Qaeda, an active ally of the Afghan Taliban besides the claimant of **Khalifatul Muslimeen**.

*[Former Taliban Chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour, after assuming the office of the Emir, had written a letter to ISIL Chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi asking him to stop operation inside Afghanistan.]*

The IS's downfall in Iraq was also seen as one of the reasons for its declining popularity; its sponsored terrorists suffered huge losses in Iraq and those having escaped death had moved towards **Al-Nusra Front**

[Jabhat al-Nusra], an Al Qaeda associated outfit. A Chicago-based scholar Asfandyar Mir, also an expert on counterinsurgency and armed groups in South Asia told:

*"In 2014, IS benefited from the defection of TTP and Al-Qaeda cadres abandoned by their commanders on the run from drone strikes. Since then, IS as a brand had struggled to take off in the tribal belt. Hafiz Saeed gained high stature and influenced most Mehsud Taliban leaders and struggled to consolidate. In later months, the routing of ISIS in Iraq got hurt the brand even more."*

Contrarily; it also surfaced that Daesh / IS was though declining in Khorasan but **'the JuA statement was a deceptive ploy of the IS motivated by operational reasons.** JuA wanted to maximise its survival chances in Afghanistan so its disavowal of Daesh made sense. US forces were much more likely to target Omar Khalid Khorasani and his men in Afghanistan if they were seen as a part of Daesh.

*[JuA Chief Omar Khalid Khorasani aka Abdul Wali was a skilled militant commander who had cushioned blows against his group using similar tactics in the past. In 2010, at the peak of the Frontier Corps-led Pak-military operation against the Mohmand faction of the TTP, Omar Khalid deceptively offered to surrender to the pak-Army, which bought him valuable time and allowed him to flee.]*

Thus it was on record that whenever the TTP found themselves crippled in front of the Pakistan Army, they started issuing such statements. They also issued a revised manifesto a few months back and promised no attacks on civilian targets – but then **Sehwan Sharif massacre** happened which killed more than 85 persons and left about 100 plus wounded.

The fact remains that the JuA's explosives trainers belonged to Iraq – so were their media trainers. While they claim no affiliation, they happily share the name. JuA's claim that they were not operating in ISKP-controlled areas was also false. **TTP has been hosted by NDS since 2007, when they were splintered; their groups found safe haven in Paktia, Nanghar, Khost and Kunduz provinces along the Pak-Afghan border.**

*[Since ISKP is a combination of failed and disgruntled fighters from the Taliban, TTP, and Al-Qaeda, their membership base is thinning out due to successful operations by the Pakistan Army in and around Waziristan and by the Taliban on the Afghanistan side.]*

However, not everyone agreed that JuA's disavowal of Daesh / IS was part of its survival strategy. IS in Afghanistan has also been limited to two districts; both the Kabul regime and Washington didn't want decisive action against the outfit for different reasons – and it was a big hurdle for Pakistan to take just decisions.

It became all the more awesome when, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November 2017, ***IS leadership beheaded 15 of its own fighters due to infighting in Afghanistan's eastern province of Nangarhar; Reuter's media report dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017*** is referred.

Nangarhar, on the porous border with Pakistan, became a stronghold for IS in Afghanistan. Attaullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman, said the 15 Islamic State fighters were executed after a bout of infighting in the group, which has gone notorious for its brutality. ***The killings occurred in the Surkh Ab bazaar of Achin district;*** however, there was no confirmation from Islamic State Khorasan Chapter.

The Taliban and IS frequently fought each other in Nangarhar and both had been targeted by sustained US air strikes. There were also seen isolated incidents in Afghanistan in which the fighters of both appeared to have cooperated. But the exact nature of the relationship between the two groups remained little understood – rather suspicious.

***The Afghan intelligence and security officials believed Islamic State was present in nine provinces, from Nangarhar and Kunar in the east to Jawzjan, Faryab and Badakhshan in the north and Ghor in the central west.***

Daesh, in the recent past [November 2017], successfully adopted a new strategy to gain a foothold in Peshawar Pakistan. They devised a new strategy to gain influence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [KPK] province in general and Peshawar in particular – while operating under the guise of tailors, masonry labour and street vendors.

Security agencies, during the later half of year 2017, nabbed as many as 55 members of IS from Peshawar and surrounding districts; the arrested members of the terrorist network in above professions. Security forces issued an important warning to their staff that as compared to Taliban, IS members were more trained and possess sophisticated security weapons.