

## Scenario 144

### TALIBANIZATION OF KARACHI

#### TALIBAN SADDLED IN THE CITY:

During the PPP regime of 2008-11, there have been fears that the Taliban were gaining ground in Pakistan's port city of Karachi; in later months; the militants' influence in the city had hit alarming new levels.

The latest players in Karachi's land grab — for long the domain of those with close links to the major political parties — were TTP elements who had been putting down their roots in various parts of the city during the past many years.

FAHIM ZAMAN & NAZIHA SYED ALI, in their joint research paper, successfully traced out the history of TTP's arrival and settlement in Karachi and held:

*"The military operations in Swat and South Waziristan in 2009 triggered the latest wave of migration of Pakhtuns, compelling tens of thousands of residents to flee the fighting. Embedded within the exodus of these desperate Internally Displaced People [IDPs] were a number of Taliban fighters.*

*Although Karachi had been a refuge for the latter even earlier, the untenable situation in their native areas prompted many of them to adopt a more permanent abode here."*

Natives of Swat moved into places like Pathan Colony in the west and Landhi in the city's south-east, an influx of Waziris and Mehsuds from Waziristan etc moved into Sohrab Goth, parts of Manghopir, areas along the Northern Bypass and RCD Highway. These trends ultimately determined which TTP faction — usually either Hakimullah Mehsud or Mullah Fazlullah as mentioned before — held sway in that particular area. About 7,000 fresh Mehsuds were [already] settled in Sultanabad locality adjacent to the PIDC Bridge.

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*[Afghan intelligence kept it on their record that former Taliban leader Mullah Omar had also made, his home in these Pashtun slums of Karachi.]*

The TTP militants had soon established [for instance] one *Masjid-e-Tayyaba* near Qasba Road, now known Ghausia Road. About 100 metres east of that mosque was a building that housed the TTP office which operated by the name of "*Anti Crime Control Committee*". Nearby was another *Masjid-e-Ibrahim* where members of *jihadi* organisations used to gather every Thursday night.

Further down Ghausia Road was the *dera* (compound) of the transporter Haji Rohtas Khan that was attacked with grenades last year, allegedly by the TTP for not paying extortion money in time.

Swinging towards Manghopir Road one could see *Masjid e Aqsa* and another office – euphemistically named *Ittehad e Qabail* [Tribal Alliance] – of the TTP. Less than half a kilometre from here was situated *Masjid e Safa* at Quarry Colony. Further down were Pakhtunabad and Gulzarabad - the TTP strongholds in Manghopir neighbourhood.

*[In 2012, when the government released several Taliban prisoners as goodwill gesture towards the Karzai government, there were wild celebrations in this area just north of Kati Pahari. These included a procession of vehicles, including four pickups packed with young men firing persistently into the air.]*

The social order in those settlements had gradually reshaped itself to allow the TTP to set up courts for residents looking for a quick resolution to their problems in places like Quarry Colony, Gulshan-e-Buner [Landhi] and Sohrab Goth. Here, the Qazi used to preside a *jirga*, to pronounce judgment in the light of their tribal traditions and the *Shariah* – a mix approach for quick justice.

Khyber Mohalla, near the *Tayyaba Masjid*, is populated mostly by Afghan refugees. Many claimed that the area's *Allahu Akbar Masjid* and its adjoining *madrassa* served as a rest house for Afghan Taliban visiting the city. According to local PPP and ANP, the known extortionists Bhalo Kamran aka Kami launch their activities while settled there – often claiming affiliation with a sectarian group.

Further north, members of the *Harkatul Mujahideen* were settled in Sultanaabad. They were led by Maulvi Haroon until he was killed [later in 2012] over a land dispute.

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*Lashkar e Jhangvi [LeJ] and Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [former Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan - SSP] elements as well as other Pakistani Taliban and their militant cohorts established their presence in mosques and *madrassas* dotted all over the city, including Hijrat Colony behind Clifton Centre, on Korangi Industrial Area Road, Shah Faisal Colony, Gulistan e Johar, Gulshan Iqbal Block-2, Sohrab Goth and Nagan Chowrangi.*

It was easy for the Taliban cohorts to find refuge in such slums where a sizable chunk of population comprises of refugees from Afghanistan and tribal areas [FATA].

*[There is no registration and no statistical information though tribal elders say that there are around 250,000 Afghans living in Karachi. The number can be as high as 500,000 given the geographical spread of the city and the springing up of new slums.]*

'Daily Times' dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 is referred.

Pakistan's law enforcement agencies [LEAs] were able to break into the secretive world of Karachi's slums but they always remained hesitant to conduct a massive cleanup operation there. This reluctance had been seeped in the political clouting; thus operations, if ever conducted, were but just a sham exercise to silence the rising media voices.

*Very wrong to assume that all Pashtuns in the city are TTP supporters; not at all, the case of TTP vs ANP is quite clear. Yes – most of the residents are forced by their tribal linkages to provide space to the militants. More than anything else, the latter established their writ through barrels of the gun. In some areas, their numbers were extremely small, but those heavily armed militants wielded a disproportionate amount of influence here.*

*[Over 60 IDPs were killed by the militants soon after their arrival in Karachi because they had been on the wrong side of the TTP back home.]*

Criminal undertakings such as bank robberies, kidnappings and extortion were their favoured means for raising funds for the battle in the city and in the tribal areas, too; LEAs remained well aware of their modus operandi. One common reason for their limited success remained that the law enforcers hardly ever agreed to timely sharing of information with others in the same trade.

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In May 2011, arrests of high profile Al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders from Karachi had sounded alarms in quarters that were concerned about the security of the largest metropolis of Pakistan, Karachi; the most volatile city and its ethnic and political diversity had failed to bond into a coherent and stable urban atmosphere. The arrests were made in the Pashtun slums of the city where normally no rule of law exists and tribal culture reigns supreme.

Often, the ethnic and political violence used to spill into the streets calling the city to a standstill — [*a virtual standstill for consecutive four days, from 20-24<sup>th</sup> May 2011 is referred*]. Such atmosphere was conducive to many anti-state elements; ethnic tensions and their political implications provided the Taliban with a safe heaven in Karachi. Embedded in the increased influx of *Mehsud* tribesmen coming to Karachi were militants attempting to blend in unnoticed.

Corruption always remained rampant in police and judiciary but more in influential politicians of Karachi; an open secret it is that they receive extortion money from criminals, gangsters and drug dealers. Such notions provided excellent opportunities for Taliban and similar foreign terrorists to install themselves into slum areas of Karachi and carry out their nefarious plans with the approval [sometimes connivance] of the influential politicians and religious scholarly notables.

The Taliban operatives made good use of Karachi's hotchpotch Pashtun slums, but the same very strategy could have turned the tables against them; a surgical operation and serious political will were the only pre-requisites. However, the chances were extremely dim.

Allegations were also there that, apart from the ethno-political repercussions, there were certain elements of the Taliban that got support from the Pakistan's intelligence. Mullah Baradar's arrest was cited as example which was made in 2011 but, perhaps, his whereabouts were known since months, if not years.

MQM did initially raise its voice against the rampant militarization of Taliban in Karachi but kept mum on the practical side. There were some mild civil society protests but they failed to gather any ground.

Karachi remained the heaven of Taliban for long [and still it continues to be]; they maintained a low-key presence in Karachi and had not been involved in any major acts of terrorism during initial settlement years. They, however, participated actively in armed robberies and kidnappings to generate funding for their activities in Karachi and mostly for their survival and

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attacks in the tribal areas belt. Taliban were there to stay in Karachi as long as they needed income and funds for their plans.

Large swathes of Pakhtun neighbourhoods in all the five districts of Karachi including Malir were under the influence of the TTP since long and still are. While all the 30 of its factions had shown their presence in the city, the most influence was wielded by the Hakimullah Mehsud and Mullah Fazlullah factions. The TTP entrenched themselves in those areas after having terrorised the local Pakhtun population into submission, and driven out the ANP from most of its traditional strongholds – quite a strange phenomenon for many non-pashtuns but it has been a reality.

TALIBAN's GRIP DURING 2011-13:

After the ANP won two provincial seats in 2008's general elections it [ANP] acquired real political clout in Karachi; the ANP and MQM frequently clashed in a deadly turf war. Both accused each other of killing its workers.

During years 2010 and 2011, the MQM had started voicing loud that the Taliban were acquiring presence in the city, the ANP accused it of trying to use that claim as a pretext to ethnically cleanse Karachi of Pakhtuns.

Referring to Declan Walsh - "Taliban Spread Terror in Karachi as the New Gang in Town" in the 'New York Times' dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013:

*"The TTP militants had increasingly moved to Karachi to escape Pakistani military operations and US drone strikes. Although the TTP's movement to Karachi had been visible since at least 2009, the group began to escalate violent activities in June 2012, threatening to destabilize the city. Evidence suggested for the past decade that Afghan and Pakistani Taliban factions both had used Karachi for fundraising purposes.*

*After Pakistan's military operations in the Swat Valley in 2009—as well as operations in South Waziristan and Mohmand Agencies, TTP militants expanded operations in Karachi. The scale of their operations increased dramatically beginning in June 2012."*

On 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2012; the TTP itself affirmed its presence in Karachi for the first time when the organization claimed responsibility for an attack on *The*

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*Business Recorder* / *Aaj TV* offices as a warning to rest of the media houses in Karachi.

On 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012; an attack in Frontier Colony killed local ANP office bearer and former UC Nazim, Amir Sardar, and two party workers, but the ANP did not accuse the MQM. Since then, numerous ANP offices were shut down, scores of its workers killed and many driven out of Pakhtun dominated areas. Qadir Khan, an ANP spokesman who later joined the MQM, said: *“no political party or group can stand up to these militants”*.

On 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012; Karachi witnessed twin blasts at Imam-Bargah Haider e Karrar in the Orangi Town neighbourhood. The *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan [TTP] had claimed responsibility for two bomb attacks targeting Shias in Karachi and Rawalpindi, which killed 25 people. In Karachi, two lives were lost, given that there was no congregation at the Imam-Bargah at the time of both blasts.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012; the Abdullah Shah Ghazi shrine was closed for all visitors due to security concerns; security measures were put into effect because of terrorism threats in the city. Earlier that day, bomb disposal personnel had defused a remote-controlled bomb, containing 8kg of explosives, planted near an imam-bargah in the Qasba Colony area of Karachi. It had a cell-phone placed inside which was going to be used to detonate it.

Till January 2013; the militant Taliban and their mobile courts had started administering lashes publicly; an alleged thief after recovering stolen goods from him was punished like that. The goods were returned to the owner who had reported the theft.

Till then the picture had gone much complicated.

There was a tussle under way between two land grabbing mafia groups in Karachi. This included the Taliban, for all their willingness to arbitrate in these disputes. Clearly they wanted to tighten their grip in Pakistan's commercial hub. And they appeared to have great influence in those suburbs dominated by the Pashtun ethnic community. Contrarily there were also demonstrations, mainly from politico-religious parties, protesting against crackdowns on the Taliban spread all around till then.

Districts East and West in Karachi, with shops and street stalls selling *chapli* kebabs, fruit, sweets and clothes, had a very traditional Pashtun feel. Many people used to earn their livelihood as day labourers with a daily wage; also working in construction and in factories with their income levels from

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Rs:7,000 per month (£48) to Rs:20,000 per month. They were from slum areas with poor infrastructure, amenities and low literacy rates in Karachi

While spontaneous Taliban courts were increasingly settling small disputes over property, financial theft, robberies and feuds in Karachi, their major issues were decided in their tribal areas [*FATA in the north of Pakistan*] - where Taliban had regular strongholds.

And when their authority was being encroached upon, no matter they were in Karachi, they reacted with deadly force: *The MQM lawmaker Syed Manzar Imam was killed by Taliban gunmen in January 2013* in Orangi town - bordering a Pashtun area.

[On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013; unidentified gunmen had shot dead four people, including the MQM's MPA Manzar Imam in Karachi's Orangi Town area; two motorcycles intercepted his car in Orangi neighbourhood and shot them with automatic weapons.

In a telephone call to the media offices from an undisclosed location, spokesman for the TTP, Ehsanullah Ehsan, claimed responsibility for the killing, saying it was the second targeted attack in Karachi that they had carried out on the political party.

The MPA Manzar Imam, along with his police guards, was passing by Orangi town's Hyderi Chowk area when four gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on the vehicle. MPA Imam and one of his guards lost their lives on the spot, while the other two injured died while being treated for their wounds in the hospital.

Imam was elected from the PS-95 Karachi VII seat, and served as member on the Sindh Assembly's Standing Committee on Cooperation, Standing Committee on Environment and Alternate Energy and the Standing Committee on Prisons.

It was the second shooting of an MQM provincial lawmaker in about two years in Karachi; the death of MQM's lawmaker Raza Haider in an ambush in August 2010 had sparked a fierce wave of ethnic and politically linked violence that killed scores of people.

Earlier, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013; four people were killed and at least 42 others had been injured in a blast in Karachi's Federal B Area; near Aisha Manzil for which the TTP had claimed responsibility.

*The details of the event are given in another chapter of this book.*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016; Karachi Police announced the arrest of a serial killer allegedly involved in the murder of MQM's law-maker Manzar Imam; the suspect, identified as Ashfaq alias Chief, was captured in a raid in the Peerabad area of Orangi Town with his Kalashnikov weapon. The suspect admitted to murdering MPA Imam at the behest of one Asfar Hussain.

The suspected hit man admitted he gunned down nine people in 2013; including abducting and killing two members of the Pakhtun community in the Star Ground of Orangi Town in 2011. During the same year, he allegedly shot dead a member of his own unit, Sadaqat Hussain Jafri, in Iqbal Market on the order of Afsar Hussain. A year before that, Ashfaq said he killed the driver and a conductor of a minibus.]

Awami National Party [ANP] - a party of the ethnic *Pashtun* nationalists - had left Karachi because more than 25 of ANP party offices had been forced to close because of threats from the Taliban; local police were more upset because Taliban were swiftly extending their influence. Senior police officers were asking for a strategy to stem the Taliban's rise; the city was losing other important and central parts to them.

**PARVEEN RAHMAN KILLED:**

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013; Director Orangi Pilot Project Parween Rahman was shot and killed by masked men half a kilometre from her office just off Manghopir Road in Karachi; fingers were pointed at the *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan [TTP] militants in Karachi but they were not.

Next day, in police encounter TTP's Qari Bilal was killed who police claimed was a leader of the TTP and the mastermind behind Ms Rahman's murder. *Many in the development sector, however, believed she was targeted because she had fallen foul of the city's land grabbing mafia because she was placing their activities on record. See the full details:*

Parveen Rehman was born in Dhaka in 1957 and had migrated to Karachi after the fall of Dhaka. She received a bachelor's of engineering in architecture from Karachi's Dawood College of Engineering and Technology in 1981 and joined a private architect's firm. A few months later, she left the

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job and joined the Orangi Pilot Project initiated by Akhtar Hameed Khan to bring healthy changes to the lives of impoverished residents of Orangi.

*"She was a courageous and brave lady; a media-shy social worker who devoted her life to the development of the impoverished neighbourhoods across the country, she was 56.*

*She had been receiving threats on her life for a long time - she always smiled, waved her hand and said what will they [the land grabbing mafia] do, I have to work a lot and that too in the middle of the people."*

Ms Rehman was an ardent compiler of the record of precious lands, which were on the fringes of the city in shape of villages but were speedily vanishing into its vastness because of ever-increasing demand by thousands of families who were shifting to Karachi every year from across the country.

She said on record that around 1,500 *goths* [villages] had been merged into the city since 15 years. Land-grabbers subdivided them into plots and earned billions by their sale. She documented everything about the lands that had been grabbed. Another sin of her was to help those whose lands were being grabbed. Yet, she never hesitated to go to the area where her life was constantly under threat. The poor residents cried:

*"Many people certainly have lost their elder sister.*

*She involved communities in development work and her cautious endeavour was to empower people and lessen their sense of deprivation. Her motto was way forward. She saw it as a defeat to terrorists by not changing her routine to help people."*

Three years later:

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016; with the next hearing in the Parveen Rehman murder case [*a social worker who was killed on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 in Orangi Town Karachi*] was set for 16<sup>th</sup> March in the Supreme Court, advocate in the case Faisal Siddiqi said *"criminal negligence of the Sindh government in the case is the reason for moving the case to the superior judiciary."*

He was speaking at a meeting organised at the Pakistan Medical Association [PMA] House to observe the third death anniversary of Orangi Pilot

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Project Director Parveen Rehman; the meeting was moderated by chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan [HRCP] Zohra Yusuf.

Advocate Siddiqi said it was interesting how the city's top police official appeared on the television the very next day of the murder to announce that the murderer had been caught and killed. The case was closed soon after that. It was believed that the upper cadre of the police was involved in damaging the case and that was why the Supreme Court was moved.

*A petition to open the Parveen Rehman murder case was filed in the SC in July 2013; Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, the then Chief Justice of Pakistan, eventually accepted the petition for hearing in January 2014. The country's top judges had never met Ms Rehman but took keen interest in seeing her case through.*

The petitioners and family of Perveen Rehman, the late OPP director, were constantly receiving threats. Mr Siddiqi narrated that when the SC called the Inspector General of Police Sindh to update the court on the investigation, the police in Karachi 'advised' the OPP office-bearers to withdraw the case, which Mr Siddiqi smilingly rejected.

The SC eventually ordered a one-member judicial commission whose proceedings were held under immense pressure. The judge conducting the inquiry was also threatened and was 'briefed' not to visit the site of the murder or the OPP Director's office. However:

*"The judge holding the inquiry wrote very clear-cut report, which states that the Qari Bilal encounter was a lie and so was the statement that he killed Parveen Rehman.*

*The inquiry judge recommended that the investigation of the case was broadened by including areas such as Baldia, Bin Qasim, Gadap and Keamari rather than focusing on Orangi and Manghopir alone.*

*The judge suggested that the case be handled by an efficient, independent and honest police officer."*

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014; the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered the authorities to conduct a fresh probe into the murder after the above judicial inquiry revealed that certain police officers had manipulated the investigation.

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The case was then moved to the Anti-Terrorism Court on the directives of the Supreme Court. Then, in June 2014, the SC ordered formation of a Joint Investigation Team [JIT], who met the members of the OPP and discussed with them the documentation of land and maps Parveen Rehman was working on.

A senior officer associated with the JIT later told that he was under immense pressure and was being followed. His phones were being tapped and attempts were being made to subvert his investigation. During this time, the police requested an in-camera hearing. The SC asked them to submit their report in a sealed envelope.

The police then came up saying that a man killed in an encounter near Kati Pahari, named Bhalu, was the killer. The statement was rejected by the SC and the investigation team members were asked to come up with solid evidence.

An important turn came in the case in March 2015 when a man named Pappu Kashmiri arrested in Mansehra was produced before the ATC. The police were given his remand till June; during interrogation Pappu Kashmiri, inter alia, admitted knowing about Ms Rehman's murder; gave names of two people — Zakaria and Raheem Swati adding that Raheem Swati was the key person in the whole awful game.

Mr Siddiqi advocate explained that there could be two motives: one fact which could not be ruled out was that Raheem Swati had conflict with the OPP in the past. Second, the police were covering up the murder case, which could involve high vested interests, might be of key politicians of Karachi.

This was the case of the Sindh government's criminal negligence or wilful connivance. Had the real culprits got arrested earlier, the case would not have been pending for three years - could be a case with no direct involvement of the state or a political party, rather a small group of greedy men.

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016; the prime suspect in that murder, Raheem Swati, was arrested by Karachi police from Manghopir area of the metropolis.

Following the Supreme Court of Pakistan's directives, a special police team was formed under the supervision of SSP West and SP Orangi who nabbed Swati. Swati had eight cell phone SIM cards registered under his name but all were non-operational; also possessed a 9mm pistol and a hand grenade.

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He was booked under Section 353, 324 and 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code [PPC] and also under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act [ATA].

The police report of the last year had stated that Rahim was associated with terrorists and the Taliban and during the past insurgency, he along with his family moved to some unknown place, while his house was demolished by the security forces.

The other prime suspect in the case, Ahmed Khan alias Pappu Kashmiri had already been arrested from Mansehra in March 2015 and was then on judicial remand.

In the Rehman case, the next SC hearing was a hope which the late OPP Director's family and friends were looking forward to – but in Pakistan justice cannot be availed by the citizen; it is the domain of the ruling elite at all times.

*TALIBAN – TERROR FOR RENT:*

On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013; more than 20 people were gathered outside a broken down house in a suburb of Karachi – urging that the plot of land, which was the property of a local businessman, was forcibly occupied by a local mafia in September 2012. The difference - and a source of much alarm to those who were in-charge of the state affairs in Karachi - was that the group of Karachi *residents were choosing to bring their complaint to the Taliban.*

After a two-hour session, the Taliban judge adjourned the hearing to another date and venue which he said would be disclosed shortly before the hearing. It appeared as if certain sectionn of the Karachiites had welcomed the Taliban in Karachi. That mobile Taliban court did not limit its interests to one shanty town – they had been arbitrating disputes across many suburbs in the metropolis.

The Taliban largely emerged in poor areas on the fringes of the city, run-down places with little or no infrastructure for health, education and civic amenities. Their mobile courts had been hearing complaints for quite some time - they also started administering punishments - a sign of their growing clout.

Referring to the BBC dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013:

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*"Muhammad Usman is a 26-year-old Taliban commander from the Swat valley; he came to Karachi after the Pakistani army started an operation in Swat in 2009. He was first part of a group of Swati Taliban in the city and was offered shelter and safety by them.*

*After some time, he gradually got involved in "eliminating rivals" in the city.*

*When questioned about extortion and kidnappings done in the name of the Taliban, he said there were several criminal gangs involved and that the Taliban were trying to put them out of business."*

A Pashtun businessman told that '*....the police are scared of the Taliban and are therefore reluctant to take action against them; They have created discontent amongst Pashtuns also.*'

The fact remained that every Pashtun trader was threatened with extortion by the Taliban and whoever refused to pay was killed. A 25-year-old Taliban foot soldier described his mission in Karachi:

*"First, my task was to work with groups that sought to eliminate members of the ANP party and people who spied for the police. I am now in a group that is fighting the MQM activists."*

The MQM, the dominant political party in the city, was one of the first groups to voice concern over the growing Taliban presence in Karachi.

But Karachi's ethnic and political landscape is complex. In recent years the Pashtun community in the city has grown, and they are seen as competitors for land and jobs with the Urdu-speaking community. The MQM has long argued that there has been a link between the growth of the Pashtun community and the "*Talibanisation*" of the city.

But in the past, there were separate battles over turf between the city's Baloch community in Lyari - the original inhabitants of the city - and the MQM. That violence also made itself felt politically and there was profound antagonism between the local chapters of three political parties: the PPP, the ANP and the MQM.

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Rangers finally found that there was one Taliban chief for Karachi, and heads of groups operating in different areas were answerable to him. The intelligentsia held:

*"Though the government has expressed its resolve to eradicate militancy, other state institutions are not co-operating. The security forces are losing morale when it comes to the battle against the militant groups; this is not improved when rebels find it easy to get released on bail by the courts.*

*If the government fails to recognise the threat, the city will descend into chaos."*

Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon once affirmed that the government was planning an operation to clamp down on the Taliban; adding that the government had already arrested a large number of militants – but then he himself disappeared or lost. The fear prevailed that the Taliban were drawing their strength from the continuing silence of the government and a lack of focus by the security forces.

Before the Rangers' Karachi operation started in September 2013, the business community, especially the Pashtun traders, were seen scared of phone calls starting with the code 0928 because the Taliban, by landline phone from Miramshah in Waziristan, used to call them and threaten to target their families if they failed to pay extortion money. In some cases, they even summoned them to appear in Taliban's courts in Miramshah to resolve disputes – of every sort whether monetary or family related ones.

Karachi's businessmen, particularly the Pashtun residents breathed a sigh of relief when the military started Operation Zarb e Azb in North Waziristan in June 2014 against the local and foreign Taliban militants.

The 'Express Tribune' dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2013 described:

*"The militants, including Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) members, now have an iron grip over parts of the city, including Sohrab Goth, Manghopir and Ittehad Town. Over the years, they made increasingly brazen attacks, including one on Sohrab Goth police station on January 29 this year.*

*On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013; a policeman was killed and two others were wounded in an attack on the Sohrab Goth police station. Po-*

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*lice suspected the attackers were connected to a local outfit affiliated with the TTP."*

SHO Ashfaq Baloch of the Manghopir police station admitted that it was difficult to impose writ of the state in his jurisdiction under standard operating procedures; while adding that:

*"We have to make sure our weapons are loaded. Then an entire team, headed by me, gets into a police mobile. Only when we pacify the criminals that we haven't come to apprehend them can we advance safely to retrieve the body.*

*They [Taliban] are here to recruit people and generate funds to send back to their comrades along the tribal belt. Setting the economic hot spot of Pakistan ablaze wouldn't exactly be conducive for this purpose."*

List of NO-GO areas, chalked out and circulated by the Central Police Office [CPO]; and available with that SHO, was as under:

*[Orange Coloured Spots]: Safoora Goth; Area near Micassa apartment; Area around Old Sabzi Mandi; Shireen Jinnah Colony; Shah Rasool Colony; Hijrat Colony and Sultanabad; Memon Goth; Sharifabad; Kati Pahari; Quaidabad; Bilawal Shah Noorani Goth; Pehlwan Goth; Hazara Goth; Sherpao Basti; Natha Khan Goth; Bizerta Lines; Delhi Colony; Chanesar Goth; Ilyas Goth; PIB Colony; Parts of New Karachi; Azizabad; Jamali Goth; Areas along Drigh Road; Jackson and docks; Khokrapar; Mehran Town; Parts of Landhi and Shershah.*

*[Red Coloured Spots]: Complete no-go areas because of the presence of Taliban militants or gangsters -: Pakhtunabad; Sultanabad; Ittehad Town; New Mianwali Colony; Parts of Lyari; Macchar Colony; Settlements in Sohrab Goth; Shanti Nagar & Dalmia; Qayyumabad; Afghan Basti; Kunwari Colony; Chota Plaza and Supermarket area of Sohrab Goth.*

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 2013; militant TTP's Sher Khan Mehsud was killed in Karachi along with his companion, during open fire exchange between two Taliban groups. Sher Khan was carrying three Kalashnikovs and two hand grenades with him, when his hi-roof van was ambushed in Manghopir area of Karachi.

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The Karachi-based TTP commander Khan Zaman of Waliur Rehman group was trying to assassinate Sher for the last several days and they had tried to kill him but he had escaped the attempt on his life. That day, militants belonging to Waliur Rehman group ambushed the van in which Sher Khan was travelling and riddled him with bullets.

Record tells that both groups of TTP i.e. Waliur Rehman and Hakimullah Mehsud were *'thirsty for each other's blood'* for quite some time as they had developed serious differences over money they extorted from the people in Karachi; both the groups were involved in extortion and kidnapping for ransom.

Fahim Zaman & Naziha Syed Ali's conclusions were published in daily 'DAWN' dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 titled as: *Taliban in Karachi - the real story*. See [verbatim] how the general populace reacted to their findings in the given situation:

SHAHZAD on Mar 31, 2013 04:29am blogged:

*"So, shouldn't they be dealt with the 'Italian style' or perhaps 'Indian Style during Punjab crackdown'? The fact that our intelligent Mr CJ would push back on b/c of his poor belief of 'human rights' for these rascals. Oh well, he has his own agenda and i guess we have to wait till he is gone for something to significantly change."*

REALISTSKEPTIC on Mar 31, 2013 04:59am blogged:

*"..... [when] government will have the will to ease the pain and suffering of Karachiites by dealing with all the terrorists with an iron hand. Negotiating with these animals have never worked and never will as they use it as a delay tactic to re-group and plan their next move which has proven to be the case time and time again..... is it too hard to understand."*

*.....form SWAT teams [of Rangers] like in the US whose identities would have to be kept secret and do systematic raids once the supply routes, financial support has been cut off and masterminds apprehended then have their trials in secret so as to protect lawyers, witnesses and judges from threats and influence (...go on to disagree with this suggestion in the name of 'unfair trials' and 'political victimization' 'and threat to democracy' but please keep Shahzeb murder trial [and later Kanju murder trial] case in point).*

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*It is simply a case of will to act as different parties / forces in the city and in the country have something to gain out of unrest in the city.*

*God forbid but the future looks bleaker than ever for Karachiites."*

MAAZ S on Mar 31, 2013 06:26am blogged:

*"Karachi needs a cleanup operations particularly in selected madrassa and Masjid to avoid it falling into the hands of Taliban and criminals. I have seen how scared is police; their families are not save and they are living a fearful life."*

RAM KRISHAN SHARMA on Mar 31, 2013 07:31am blogged:

*"Definitely, not a happy situation to be in. The whole atmosphere is that of fear. How one can discharge his / her normal duties, when you do not know who is sitting beside you in the next seat in the local bus or in the next row at the prayer time in the mosque."*

HIDAYAT WARIS on Mar 31, 2013 08:02am blogged:

*"ANP due to its ethnic composition failed once in Swat when it failed to see the danger and Army has to go for an operation after a futile peace deal of ANP which gave Taliban time to strongly hold the area. Now they have repeated same in Karachi just to get support against other political parties but they will bear the fallout."*

MUSTAFA on Mar 31, 2013 01:47pm blogged:

*"Taliban have a 'Terror for Rent' department. These services have been rented out to any enemy of Pakistan. They have even served abroad, in fact are serving abroad in Syria, they joined hand with the West in Libya and now fighting against the West in Mali."*