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Title PROSPECTS OF ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION IN ATTAINING PEACE AND ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

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**PROSPECTS OF ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER
TERRORISM COALITION IN ATTAINING PEACE AND
ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD**

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Abstract

Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is the first ever contribution from the Islamic states in the modern world for attaining a long lasting peace; by fighting the non-state actors who spread terrorism around the globe in the name of religion, Islam. This alliance provides an opportunity to the Muslims ruled nations to unite under one platform and put in their share of pie to fight unitedly against terrorism and by doing so also restore their lost image in the world. The study focus on the pros and cons of the alliance and its counter terrorism strategy vis a vis prospects of economic stability through peace and development in the Muslim world. The data was collected from experts, and included journalists , military personals, religious scholars and bureaucrats /ambassadors. The study unveils that creation of IMCTC was much needed step taken by Muslim leaders to bring peace, prosperity and economic stability in the Muslim World. The alliance will provide trade opportunity for Muslim world through which achievement of economic stability looks easier, besides they can also accomplish allied goals which cannot be achieve independently. The role of IMCTC in central Asian states especially in Afghanistan can be quite proactive after departure of NATO and US military force. The study predicted that IMCTC can play a very positive role in peace building in Muslim world especially countries like Afghanistan being a military force from Muslim countries; as compared to NATO and other military alliances and integrate with the people of same religion to address a range of mandates provided by the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on terrorism.

Keywords: : *IMCTC, NATO, Military Alliance, Economic, Stability, Terrorism, ISIS, US, Forces*

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Introduction

The world now a days is facing critical situation due to the cold war between different states of the region, which led to the emerging of new forces that otherwise has no common interest except causing destruction and insecurity in various parts of the world¹. These unknown culprits are commonly known as terrorist. These terrorist groups invariably work under one umbrella, but use different names for different region. Their motive is spreading violence, incurring mass destruction, insecurity and insurgency. In the contemporary world these militant groups are so empowered that they can easily affect the peaceful environment which is an alarming development for the whole world. The developed and developing states of the world are standing on their toes to resolve the issue on emergency bases. However, to eliminate such huge and strong groups consistent and right efforts are required on individual as well as the state level. As a collective wisdom states join hands to fight against strong groups of militant, country and form alliances. Military Alliance is the collective agreement among the states for attaining national, regional and global security². The most commonly used meaning of the word alliance is the open agreement among different states for national security in which the partners assure mutual support to each other such as resources sharing³. An alliance also refers to cooperation between states to work for common internal and external threat. Worldwide the concept of alliances is used broadly for achieving military, political and economic goals. Whereas cooperation occurs after the nations realize their common objectives and benefits in bonding with the allying states. In the spirit of all these actors, different nations after realizing benefit join hands to form common institutions⁴.

The main motive of any military alliance is to achieve effective ending to security, economic and any other visible and invisible threats. The history of alliances is very old. It dates back to the biblical times then to Hellenic period, such as “Crusades Wars” and Treaty of Windsor between Portugal and England and then to the very 20th century in which world experienced massive powerful alliances between both in the First and Second World Wars. Historically, the purpose of alliances between nations were bonding together for protecting and retaining their lands, people and unique ideas such as religion and culture. However, with the passage of time, the nature of alliances have changed. Now alliances are also formed not only on the basis of religious ideology but economic and political interests in order to achieve joint strategic gains, deescalate uncertainty and risk; while forming new trade agreements with other nations for leverage against another nation against terrorism⁵.

According to different theories of international relations about alliances, nations face both external and internal threats. The external threats include extremist groups and countries against other nations, while internal threats include all extremist groups present in the country. The internal factors which are involved in the insurgencies of states are in the form of political instability, cold war against different political and non-political groups involve in mismanagement in the states own institutions⁶.

IMCTC was established by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to form a united Islamic platform against terrorism. The coalition consolidate the tie of collaboration and integration within the alliances for the operational commencement of the IMCTC efforts, which was joined by 41 Islamic states to cooperate and united for the efforts in fighting against extremism, in addition with other international efforts required to promote Islamic values⁷. The announcement of the creation of IMCTC was first initiated by the then defence minister of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Bin Salman, on 15 December 2015. The current leader of this alliance is the former Army Chief of Pakistan, General (R) Raheel Sharif. The alliance has a joint centre of operation in the capital of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh. The Alliance was not welcomed by countries like Iran and others. The unique picture of this alliance portrays that all the members belong to Sunni sect and not even a single Shia dominated country is part of it⁸. The primary purpose of IMCTC is to safeguard all member Muslim countries from every kind of terrorist group and organization, regardless of their name and sect⁹. This alliance intends to assure that it would not operate beyond the boundaries of United Nations (UN) and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) provisions regarding terrorism. The then defence minister of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad Bin Salman made it very clear that the alliance would help in the determinations to fight against terrorism in Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Afghanistan. He further say that, there will be world-wide coordination with major powers and international organisations in terms of different kinds of actions in Iraq and Syria. The alliance will fight terrorism with the help of four point's strategy Communications, Ideology, Counter-terrorist Financing, as well as, the military.

The study explore overall review of member nations and their intentions to join the Muslim alliances with impact of war on terror and the importance of IMCTC in terms of regional influence and economic stability in the post US forces military forces withdrawal from Afghanistan as focus area. The study analysed all the aspects of the alliance, there future prospects towards peace and prosperity in the region.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The nature of threats changes region wise in the world. Every state wants to keep on balance peace and prosperity within the state and outside. The core aim of state is to have a peaceful land on glob that is economically and strategically viable. However, there are continuous threat to every state from inside and outside of the country. Cold war among the nation is the core menaces to the state sovereignty. In such circumstances every nation need to form a military alliances for their defense of power and territory¹⁰. The Balance of Power theory stated that every state wants to join alliances for a reason to avoid dominancy of internal and external threats vis a vis competing for power. The balance of power theory further states that concept of threat among the nations are the reason to join any alliances in the way to safeguard their territory, if they saw some sort of security threats from internal groups and other states. Alliance is the key tool of maintaining power among the states¹¹. The interest of states always join alliances because of capturing some opportunities from other states or they join the threat states in order to minimize the cost of loses i.e. monetary terms and in case of resources. The theory depict that every state try to overcome all those challenges

which they faces in the smooth running of state¹². As matter of fact, states join hands with other states to prevent internal and external security threats. Military alliances are the key signs of minimizing security threats among the states who faces any kind of internal and external threats. Alliances among the states reduce enemies, and other non-states actors who are involved in creating emergency inside. Similarly, the threat of continuous increase in terrorism are of high concern for Gulf States. Especially, the new emerging groups of terrorist ISIS is the main internal threats for all the Gulf countries. For this reason Saudi Arabia come forward to defeat all type of terrorist group present in gulf nations. The main reason of establishment Islamic military Alliances was work in collaboration with Gulf nations and other Muslim countries of the world to fight together against a common threats¹³.

Research Methodology of the study

The study was carryout in Pakistan. The basic tool used for the collection of information was primary source. However, the primary information was collected through different types of sources, such as using multiple interviews schedules with experts. Beside this detailed questionnaire was also designed through which information were collected from all the experts. The targeted population includes journalists, religious scholars, retired and serving military personals and bureaucrats/ambassadors. Therefore, data was collected from different parts of Pakistan from selected population. The sample of 110 respondents were nominated from the current population. The sensitivity of the study was one of the main reason in collection of data. Therefore, sample size was further divided into different sub groups. Out of 110 sample size, 35 journalist, 32 religious scholars, 23 military personals and 20 bureaucrats/ambassadors were interviewed through a detail questionnaire. The sample size were nominated by using stratified random sampling technique. Furthermore, the selection of sample size of the respondents in each targeted sample was collected by using tool of random sampling technique. However, the designated sample size was almost homogenous in nature. The software used for the analysis was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The secondary information was collected from previous literature, interviews, television talk shows, reports, newspapers, magazines, seminars and conferences.

Results and Discussions

The current study was to investigate the plan of action set by IMCTC for the fulfilment of peace in the region. The policy design by the IMCTC was to show their presence to the world as one unit. The role of IMCTC in intelligence sharing among the member nations and also building their capacity. Furthermore, to study mechanism of cooperation among the member states and to enhance their human capacity as well as financial resource capabilities of all the member states. The role of IMCTC in creating impact in Islamic world to promote peace and economic stability, along with that to study overall impact on world as the first Muslim alliance.

It was observed during the study that majority of expert opinion was that creation of IMCTC was a necessary step towards peace and prosperity in the Muslim countries.

However, they were of the opinion that the achievement of their goals and objectives totally depends upon the mechanism they adopt for the fulfilment of the set goals for this first ever military alliance of the modern world. They underlined that cooperation among the member states will play a pivotal role in the durability of the alliance. They opined that through cooperation the gap among the member states can also reduce. IMCTC as a military alliance will provide fruitful results in Afghanistan, through peace and economic stability. However, there are some allied goals which can also be accomplished with the help of IMCTC. Like the alliance indirectly will provide new and easily accessible markets to the developed member states. The basic aim of the alliance was to fight against the terrorism in all parts of Muslim world. Therefore, the role of IMCTC in peace building process can be attained only through proper information sharing among the member states so that alliances forces should work hard in the eradication of all threats in any form. During the study majority of the experts agreed that intelligence sharing among the member states will enhance the capacity of alliance in fighting against any threat whether internal or external in Afghanistan after US and NATO forces withdrawal.

Accuracy in intelligence sharing will be the primary and key component to fight against terrorist groups. The mechanism adopted for the alliances was latest in nature and it will meet all the challenges of the modern world. Therefore, IMCTC will provide all those equipment require for the development of member nations. It will provide training and development of alliance forces in the region. The financial side of the alliance was highly dependent upon the economically developed states like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Whereas majority of the other developed states can provide financing and related resources to the alliance from different aspects. The same will be used for recruitment of troops, arms, training and development of alliance capabilities in fighting against war and terror in the region.

As a matter of fact states whose financing share is high will have more power in decision making as compared to those states with less or no financial contribution in the alliances affairs. However, the voting power of any decision in alliances is on equality basis. This clearly means that member nations can vote in favour or against regarding any resolution. The voting facility of the member nations show the level of equality in the alliance. The alliances will reduce the distances between the member states. The conflict among the member states will minimize. There are some Muslim nations who has not yet joined or not offered to join the alliance i.e. Iran, Iraq, and Syria etc. This shows a fear that the alliance may promote a divide in the Muslim world.

IMCTC can play the role of peace keeping in Afghanistan after withdrawal of US and NATO force provided it is empowered to do so and the alliance has representation of all the Muslim countries. The IMCTC can also focus on fighting against ISIS & other terrorist groups in Afghanistan as provided in its mandate and thereby revamp the economic position of the war affected country.

The alliance currently focus on Muslim states with some non-majority Muslim states as its member as well. However, in future the shia dominated countries like Iran etc as

well as non-Muslim states must be considered as its part to reduce the gap between Muslim (whether shia or sunni dominated) and Non-Muslim states. In short the alliance will improve peace and stability in Muslim world as well as it will help the Muslim states to develop positive image in the world only if all the Muslim states join it practically and the military cooperation works in line with the provisions of United Nations (UN) and Organization of Islamic Cooperation on terrorism.

CONCLUSION:

The years of cold war of the shia dominated states like Iran versus Saudi Arabia is an open secret and history reveals that the two countries have been involved in waging proxies in Iraq, Syria and Yemen in the past few decades. Seeing this past rivalry of the two states the non-participation of Iran in the Saudi led alliance or for that matter Saudi Arabia non- invitation to Iran and other Shia dominated states to join the coalition in itself doubles their threat perception towards the creation of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition. The member states in IMCTC should focus more on curbing terrorism in the whole of the Muslim world rather than siding with Saudi Arabia or Iran in their long history of confrontation on the sectarian lines. The Muslim world therefore by and large shall be mindful of the fact that a division amongst them on the sectarian lines shall be tantamount to undermining the credibility of this military alliance which itself has been established on the basis of religion and will ultimately be counterproductive leading to disrupting the geo political balance of the Middle East and other regional giants. Beside that IMCTC need to focus on their vision as compare to the accomplishment of mission. The alliance must intervene in peace building process of Afghanistan after withdrawal of NATO, for the eradication of small groups of militants groups. Every member states may give equal right in decision making of the alliance without any hurdle. The responsibilities of alliance may be distributed among the member's nations according to their capabilities. Alliance may bring flexibility in policy for other Muslim states which have not yet join the alliance. However, it is also suggested that the alliance may not be restricted to Muslim states only for long life of alliance member nations need to consider non-Muslim countries in alliance, if they wants to join it in future. Moreover, the alliance shall work under the purview of the United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation if it wants to achieve its desired goals and may not wind up its functioning even if the immediate threat of ISIS or ISIL from Afghanistan and other Muslims majority states gets averted.

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