# GUN RUNNING AS THREAT TO PEACE IN PAKISTAN

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## ABSTRACT:

Weapons in any society of the world are not be considered as the symbol of peace but as a threat to peace especially when these weapons/arms are in the hands of unauthorized persons/criminals. If we see the Pakistani society, there are countless illegal/unauthorized weapons/arms available in every part of the country. These weapons are not only smuggled from outside the country but are also manufactured in the tribal areas of Pakistan and are illegally supplied to the criminals, terrorists and other persons who desire to get it for their illegal targets. It is the main cause that there is a continuous threat to peace in the society and people are being killed by terrorists and criminals. Not only this but these weapons are also used in tribal disputes in various parts of the country and there is no end to their use. Sectarian and ethnic groups obviously have their reach to these weapons which is another threat to peace in the country. In this connection an effort has been made to highlight the facts regarding this problem in Pakistan. Mostly secondary data has been used which is qualitative as well as quantitative.

Gun running is known as arms trafficking, (smuggling) contraband weapons and ammunition[1]. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has remained a very big problem for peace in world because of its illegal trafficking and its use in criminal activities. SALW could be differentiated as under:

## Small Arms:

Revolvers and self-loading pistols; rifles and carbines; sub-machine guns; assault rifles; light machine- guns[2].

## Light Weapons:

Heavy Machine-guns, Mounted Grenade Launchers; Portable Anti Air-craft guns; portable anti- tank guns, recoilless rifles; portable launchers of anti -tank missile and

[1] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gunrunning-19k.
[2] Report of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on small arms quoted in by http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/IssueBrief3 ArmsTram cking.html.

rocket systems; portable launchers of anti- aircraft missile systems; mortars of calibers of less than 100mm[3].

Once acquired by traffickers, these weapons/arms are smuggled across national borders in every conceivable way all over the world. In Pakistan SALW are smuggled from Afghanistan in to the Provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP/FATA and from there they are supplied all over the country[4].

These arms are not only the weapons of choice in majority of today's regional conflicts but also for many terrorists and terrorist groups operating around the world[5]. According to a UN estimate, nearly 60 percent of the weaponry flowing into Afghanistan enters the country by illicit means[6]. There are several advantages to small arms, as compared to heavy conventional weapons. They are cheap, widely available, lethal, simple to use, durable, portable, concealable, and have legitimate military, police, and civilian uses, making them easy to cross borders, legally and illicitly[7]. The legal global small arms market is estimated at $4 billion a year, and the illegal small arms trade is estimated at close to $1 billion[8]. An estimated 300,000 people are killed each year with small arms and light weapons (SALW) in armed conflicts. Most of the victims are civilians, among them many women and children. A further 200,000 people die through SALW in homicides and suicides[9].

## Situation In Pakistan:

Though the arms illegal movement is world wide but this problem has increased to such a severe level in Pakistan that it has become a constant threat to peace in the society. It is not merely terrorist or suicide bomb attacks that have made life difficult in the country but has made dangerous situation of the law and order in the country. Due to the presence of illicit weapons especially with criminals, crime has become so common that Police seems helpless to control it. There are daily reports of killings, kidnappings, robberies and armed conflicts which have become a norm of daily life and people are extremely disappointed. Whether they are militants or Taliban or their supporters in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) or Wazir or Mashud tribes in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) or people engaged in sectarian conflicts or the Baluchistan problem, waging war against rivals civilians or against the government has become possible when they have been supplied SALW. It is not only Baluchistan or NWFP/FATA bordering Afghanistan where SALW are commonly found, the entire country is facing the same

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[3] Ibid.
[4] The Herald, March 2007.
[5] http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=2996.
[6] htt//www.basicint.org/pubs/Research/1998combatingillicit.htm
[7] Jeffery Boutwell and Michael Klare,"SpecialReport: A Scourge of Small Arms", Scientific American, June 2000, pp. 30-35.
[8] Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the Human Cost (Geneva: Graduate Institute of International Studies, Oxford University Press 2002) p. 109.
[9] Small Arms Survey (2001) Annuaire Surles 2001 Arms Legers 2001 small arms survey (Institute Universities de hautes etudes internationals, 2001: Geneve), p.215 quoted in by Holger Anders: Brief Paper NO.28 June 2003, International Security Information Service, and Brussels, Belgium.

situation. Sindh which is called the land of peace loving people has turned into a province of disputes and dacoities because of SALW. Criminals or tribes are engaged in their feuds in upper Sindh having such sophisticated and latest weapons that even the Police avoids going there. In the past few years hundreds of people have been killed and the whole society in upper Sindh depends on the wishes of criminals because of the power of illicit weapons in their possession. There is no history of weaponization in Pakistan except of NWFP and Baluchistan's tribal areas where weapon keeping is a cultural trait. Now there are no limits on weapons to spread all over the country even in Islamabad the capital city of Pakistan. In 2007 when Lal Masjid was raided it was the weapons which had challenged the authorities to launch an army operation in the center of the city consequently resulting in great loss of lives. The history of current situation goes back to Russian invasion of Afghanistan when 03 million Afghan refugees entered Pakistan and there was no ban on their movement travelling within the country. They were not only refugees but many of them had arms and Heroin, which they sold to criminals and gunrunners to commit crimes. This situation created a new trend in arms' trafficking. The supply of arms since then has become a lucrative business. It is not difficult to supply Kalashinkovs (Ak- 47) at your door steps if you are paying[10]. Even more lethal and heavy weapons are available after payment.

The civil society which was peaceful upto now has become an armed civil society. From Karachi in the south to Peshawar in the north every where weapons are available, crime is constantly increasing, people feel insecure and even the presence of a large police force does not matter. People believe that Police cannot provide them safety from the criminals because criminals have far more sophisticated weapons than them. If we see the crime against persons as well as against property during the last 5 years in Pakistan as shown in the following table the increasing crime rate is evident:

**CRIME AGAINST PERSONS AND PROPERTY IN PAKISTAN (2004-2008)**

| Office | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Crime Against Person** | 70187 | 70587 | 75088 | 75375 | 86134 | 377371 |
| **Crime Against Property** | 70733 | 77397 | 93481 | 92288 | 111979 | 445878 |
| **Total** | 140920 | 147984 | 168569 | 167663 | 198113 | 823249 |

**Source:** *National Police Bureau Islamabad, July 2009*

[10] Awami Awaz, December 12, 1994.

## Arms Manufacturing:

Arms manufacturing industry was already there in NWFP especially in Darra Adam Khel which is almost 110 years old[11]. The Town of Darra Adam Khel which is situated at a distance of about 40 kilometers south of Peshawar city and has one street that runs through the town and almost every shop sells weapons. Here a large proportion of the town population is involved in arms manufacturing[12]. Some 400 -700 guns are churned out in Darra daily[13]. The copies that the skilled Gun-makers of Darra produce are clever replicas of famous Western Guns and Pistols. They look like weapons made in Spain and Italy but prices are much less and quality is inferior. When Afghan Mujahidin were fighting with Russian troops with the help of USA, they had introduced their weapons to Darra manufacturers and had also sold them for business purpose. These weapons were supplied to the rest of the country directly from NWFP as well as through Balochistan. Darra is not only the arms producing place but Bajaur Agency, Sakhakat in Malakand Agency are also famous for arms production[14]. It is said that there is a large number of gun and shell factories of cottage industries size in the north western parts of Pakistan, which cater to the demands of terrorists. Criminals in Pakistan and Afghanistan and their movement is free and unchecked because they are helped in trafficking by government personnel[15]. It is not necessary that weapons can only be bought directly from the manufacturers but there is also an underground net work of suppliers, who manage to supply these weapons at the door steps after payment of extra amount. It is the involvement of money that law enforcement agencies' and police personnel have become a part of arms supply in the country. According to a local news paper, in 1990's, a truck full with drugs and illicit weapons was captured by one of the law enforcement agencies but was left free after getting Rs. 4000000/- as a bribe[16].

In one of the researches conducted during the period 1984 to 1994, the arms supplied to the dacoits of Sindh who kidnapped more than 11000 persons from the province and killed hundreds of innocent people, 47% of the main source of arms supply was the law enforcement agencies[17].

## Types Of Weapons:

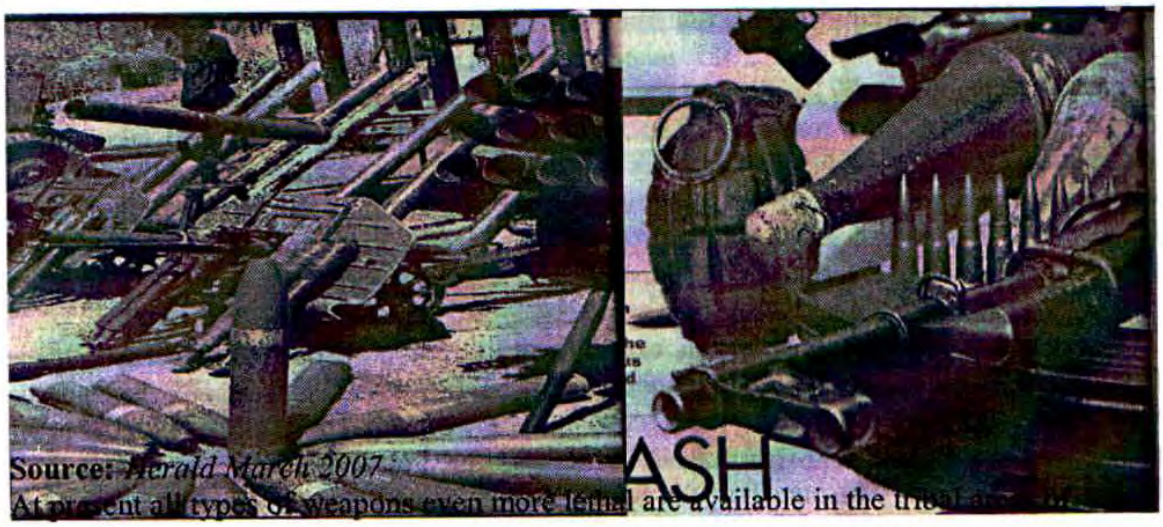
There are various types of weapons supplied to the criminals, including Grenades, Anti-tank missiles, Mines, Pistols, Missiles, Surface to air-missiles and Rockets etc but the main attractive weapon is Kalashni Kov. This weapon has a symbol of status and pride in the society. Kalashnikov or AK-47 model 1947, Soviet assault rifle is one of the most widely used shoulder weapon in the world. The name of this weapon is kept after its designer, Michail Timotevyevich Kalashni Kov (b.1919). It has both semi automatic and automatic capabilities, and fired intermediate power 7.62 millimeter ammunition, a long

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[11] The News on Sunday, January 21, 2007.
[12] http://www.worldpress.org/asia/2942.cfm, Nov.l0, 2007.
[13] Ibid.
[14] The News on Sunday, op cit.
[15] Economic Review vol. xxvi No. 11 (November 1995) pp.12-13
[16] Hilal Pakistan, December 8, 1994.
[17] Imdad Hussain Sahito: Decade of the Dacoits, (Karachi: Oxford University Press 1995) p.43.

box magazine that holds 30 rounds and cyclic firing rate of 600 rounds per minute. It is manufactured in many countries[18].

The Kalashnikov retained its place of pride even though bigger and more lethal weapons such as the Russian-made Dachaka and Zikoyak machine guns subsequently reached the arms markets in Pakistani tribal areas. The 32 bore T-T Pistols and advanced versions of the Kalashnikov and Karan Kov also debuted in the tribal border lands gradually became available in settled areas of NWFP and beyond. The RPG -7 rockets and rocket launchers of different descriptions too were sold and bought by the resourceful and disconcerned sellers and buyers[19]. There were also reports that during the war with Russians in 1980's the shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles including the US-made Stinger and the low quality British manufactured Blowpipe were up for sale in FATA for the right price[20].



**Source:** *Herald March 2007*

At present all types of weapons even more lethal are available in the tribal

NWFP/FATA and are used and sold to criminals and terrorists. It is the power of the weapons that civil and armed forces of Pakistan are facing an insurgency in these areas and in Balochistan. In both provinces Pakistani forces have been using gunship helicopters and long range artillery and other weapons but in response they are also facing the attacks by weapons like missiles land mines, rockets etc. Suicide bombers have such access that they can attack any place where they like and this was proved by the past incidents where former Prime Minster Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2008 at Rawalpindi and even General Musharraf the President of the country was not spared. There are incidents in tribal areas when more then 200 soldiers of the Pakistan Army alongwith their officers were made hostage by militants because of weapon power.

Due to availability of illegal arms in Pakistan there is a constant threat to peace in the society. If we calculate some figures/incidents of violence during the last few years it is a serious matter. In 2004 official discloser of casualty figures provided by Peshawar Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Safdar Hussain that 171 soldiers had killed, while the death toll of

[18] EncyclopediaBritannica vol. led. 1987,p.184.
[19] The News on Sunday op.cit.
[20] Ibid.

the militants was put at 246 ,including 100 foreigners[21]. In the year 2007, 1442 terrorist attacks, incidents of political violence and border clashes took place in Pakistan, 3448 people were killed and 5353 injured in these incident[22]. It is said that when hostilities resumed in early 2007 after a short ceasefire, pro government tribesmen were reported in March to have recovered 18000 hand grenades, 175 rocket-propelled grenades, 188 Kalashnikovs allegedly from a private jail run by Uzbek militants based in the area[23]. It is estimated that from over 20 million small arms more than half of them are illegally owned in Pakistan[24]. According to Police, NWFP, recorded 3478 cases of crime involving fire arms in 2005, 3996 in 2006 and 2700 in the first seven months of 2007 alone[25]. If the security situation during 2007 is further examined, it is understandable that it has not been satisfactory. There were 1306 terrorist attacks done by the local Taliban, Jihadists, sectarian groups and Baloch nationalist insurgents while 113 incidents of political violence were also reported[26]. The casualties were recorded as 3448 persons killed and 5353 injured in 2007, remained 128% and 491.7% higher as compared to the last two years in 2006 and 2005 respectively[27]. During 2007, 232 army men, 163 paramilitary troops and 71 policemen were killed in terrorist attacks and they also faced 41 suicide attacks[28]. As many as 12 incidents of political clashes had also taken place during 2007 which took 64 lives besides injuring 222 others. Maximum number of such clashes was reported from Karachi while one incident each was reported from Rawalpindi, Hyderabad and Nasirabad (Balochistan). The most violent political clashes ignited on May 12 in Karachi left 45 persons dead and195 injured[29].

The incident of two suicide blasts shocked the world on October 19 when former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was leading a procession in Karachi, 142 people were killed and more than 500 others were injured. She was killed along with 20 other people on December 27, 2007 in Rawalpindi in another suicide attack: Some time later in Rawalpindi. General Mushtaq Beg the Surgeon General of Pakistan Arıny was killed in an attack. This law and order situation shows that it is a very big threat to the peace in the society. This is because of the free movement of weapons in the country. If this situation is not being considered on priority basis it would become worse.

In the year 1995 this author visited Usta Mohammad town in eastern Balochistan to buy small arms for self defense under official license issued by the government. When official documents were shown to concerned Arms Dealer he said why have you bothered to get these documents. We have sources to produce these documents (fake) for payment of Rs. 1000/- and have already supplied countless licences to many clients. It means that many persons having arms licenses can also be fake.

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[21] htt//www. worldpress.org. op cit.
[22] htt//alaiwah.worldpress.com/2008/01I17/security-situation-of-pakistan-in-2007/.JanuaryI7, 2008.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

Sindh has a great history as the land of peace and mystics but now the situation has changed and daily people are being killed and kidnapped and tribal feuds are common because of illicit weapons in the society. During the period of 1984to 1994, 11436 people were kidnapped for ransom in this province by dacoits due to their weapon power. Situation became so bad that law enforcement agencies failed to control them and the government launched an Army 'cleanup' operation titled **"Operation Blue Fox"** between 1992 and 1994 to create peace in the province. But still there is no peace because of illicit weapons in the society which are mostly smuggled from Balochistan. In upper Sindh many tribes settle their feuds with latest illicit weapons and hundreds of people, including ladies and children have been killed, their economy, education and social setup has been severely affected. Thousands of weapons have been recovered by Sindh Police but this is of no use. There is continuous increase in arms buildup. In 1984 to 1994 illicit weapons recovered by police in Sindh are given in the following table:

**ARMS RECOVERED BY POLICE (1984-1994)**

| K.Kov | Rifle | Shot Gun | Revolver | Pistol | Sten Gun | LMG | Rocket Launcher | Grenade | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1570 | 2519 | 9688 | 6599 | 18689 | 157 | 07 | 34 | 125 | 39388 |

**Source:** *Data supplied by District Superintendents of Sindh Police, Daily Muslim, January 5, 1992, quoted in by Imdad Hussain Sahito, Decade of the Dacoits Ph.D thesis, 2000, pp.454-55.*

During the same period Sindh Police recovered 180330 bullets and 241569 cartridges.

The price list of small illicit weapons in province of Sindh is given in the following table:

**PRICE OF VARIOUS ILLICIT WEAPONS IN SINDH**

| Name of Weapon | Price in Rupees |
|---|---|
| Rocket Launcher | 80,000-90000 |
| Rougher | 50,000 |
| Semi Automatic Rifle | 5000-10000 |
| 2-2 Rifle | 12000-15000 |
| G3 Rifle | 40,000 |
| Repeater (Gun) | 15000-70000 |
| Kalashni Kov | 15000-25000 |
| Dhachko (new weapon) | 200,000-500,000 |

**Source:** *Daily Kawish, February7 ,2007.*

The role of high government officials has set a trend of arms show in the society by granting licenses of prohibited bore to resourceful and rich persons. This was being done all over the country, when there was law and order situation in the country was not critical. This trend also prompted others to gain similar privileges by offering bribes to those who matter. Now the situation has changed and all types of weapons are common.

What so ever the sources of SALW supply in the country it is a very big and a constant threat to peace in the society.

There are various causes for gun running in the country including, **i)** Political instability and military rule, **ii.** Absence of the rule of law, **iii.** Illiteracy, **iv.** Lack of planning and its implementation, **v.** Afghanistan problem and Pakistan's involvement.

Many people feel insecure and believe that government is not capable to protect them from any criminal threat that is why they get weapons/arms through legal or illegal means. Criminals and terrorists have their own network to buy and sell weapons and use against their targets and there is no strategy to control such gun running.

## Conclusion:

The problem of gun running in the country has created such a situation where the common man feels insecure. The flow of illegal weapons has made the society dangerous and uncomfortable as ever. It is not only the provinces of NWFP and Balochistan bordering Afghanistan which have been severely affected by gun running but other provinces including capital area are under the shadow of this crime. Weapons are available everywhere. Presently there is a democratic government in the country. Army operation Rah-e-Rast is in progress in tribal areas of FATA in North West part of the country. Dara Adam Khel has come under the army operation. It depends on proper decision-making and its implementation to clean the country from illegal arms /weapons and their smuggling in the society.