

## Maulvi Nazir

**EDITORIAL** (January 07, 2013) : The killing of Maulvi Nazir in a drone attack on Wednesday may be a major win for the United States, but in Pakistan this tends to spotlight their perceptual mismatch that tends to undermine their joint endeavour to rid the region of terrorism. Admitted, he was a prime target for the CIA - the Pentagon described him "someone who has great deal of blood on his hands" - and all previous attempts to kill him had failed. He was perceived in Washington to be directly involved in planning and executing cross-border attacks on coalition forces in Afghanistan. And he branded to be the principal host of al Qaeda fighters in South Waziristan, a position identical to the Haqqani network. But that doesn't necessarily mean the fighters of Hakimullah Mehsud are being spared; the same day TTP chief's five close associates were also killed in another drone attack in North Waziristan. However, that's not how the Pakistani security managers see it. Maulvi Nazir was the one of those militant leaders who had signed a peace deal with the Pakistan Army, in 2009, and stood by it firmly. It was his cooperation that had helped the army clear South Waziristan of foreign militants. Maulvi Nazir was therefore known as a "good Taliban". Earlier, in 2007, he had pushed the Uzbek militants operating under Tahir Yuldashev of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan out of South Waziristan - a factor that helped Pakistani security forces to restore normality in that Agency. The Uzbek militant's participation in the attack on Peshawar airport and their failed attempt on the life of Maulvi Nazir sometime back are therefore believed to be part of TTP's plan to take back South Waziristan. No wonder then a 'conflict of interest' between Pakistan and the United States has come to obtain. Seeing through their Afghanistan lens the Americans see elimination of Maulvi Nazir as a huge success. But from the Pakistani perspective his disappearance is a blow to its multifaceted strategy to control militancy in the tribal areas with active participation of militant leaders. It's not that Pakistan has favourites and is soft on a particular brand of militants; its strategy is that while it conducts military operations it also assiduously works to cultivate pro-peace tribal leaders as a viable option. No doubt drone is a highly efficient killer and Obama administration considers it a weapon of choice. But it strikes targets that are spotted by others. So, the identification of targets for drone attacks is part of the on-ground human-intelligence that just cannot be unbiased given the tribal rivalries and conflicting political interests and loyalties. Obviously, the killing of pro-Pakistan Maulvi Nazir is seen here as the direct consequence of anti-Pakistan forces inside and outside Pakistan. In 2004, Nek Muhammad, another pro-Pakistan powerful commander in South Waziristan, was killed in a drone attack as he too had joined the pro-Pakistan forces working to restore normalcy in Pakistan's border regions. Now there are some early signs of peace talks with the tribal militants, in which Maulvi Nazir could be a major player, his elimination can be rightly attributed to those that are against such talks. If wiping out al Qaeda and its foreign affiliates from the Pakistan's border region were in the coalition's interest then killing Maulvi Nazir is certainly a self-defeating exercise, as it tends to undermine Pakistan's fight against militancy.

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