

Darra Adam Khel a Supermarket of Illicit Arms : A Security Concern

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Abstract

Illicit arms availability in neighbourhoods are always a threat to external and internal security. Due to the geopolitics of Afghanistan, superpowers and non-state actors were active in that region for decades. Consequently, the FATA area of Pakistan and Adam Khel in particular became an oasis for arms Producers and traders as well as terrorists and drug traffickers. America and the former Soviet Union poured Afghanistan with the latest weapons from 1979 to 1989. A major part of that stockpile came to the gray market of Darra Adam khel . Same thing happened when America and Nato arrived in Afghanistan after 9/11. Pakistan army and ISI a major and decisive player in this illicit arms trade which poses a big security concern for Indian policy makers.

Keywords: Afghanistan, America, Darra Adamkhel, gray market, illicit arms trade, pakistan.

Pakistan used to steal a large part of the weapons sent by the US through Pakistan in the context of Afghanistan. From 1979 to 1993, he did this work with great gusto. He has also mastered the copying of these stolen weapons. As a result, the M-16 assault rifle is easily available there in the gray market. One arms seller Orakzai says that there is no such weapon which they cannot imitate. He can copy anything from Turkish Zigana pistols, American Beretta handguns, to Chinese 30-caliber weapons. They guarantee their copies to be as good as the original.(khan, 2017) This is just one example of Pakistan's arms thief market. According to Pakistani newspaper Dawn, Pakistan imports small arms worth 134 million dollars annually. But this does not include illegal imports, the plethora of weapons rom the porous Afghan border, where dozens of arms traffickers operate.(Hammad,2012) \$200 million worth of small arms enter Pakistan illegally every year.A country that has only 0.7 doctors for a population of 170 million and only 0.6 hospital beds per 1000 people, where less than 7 percent of the people are in college There, 4 out of 100 people have licensed weapons, and for every valid weapon there are 9 illegal weapons.(Hammad, 2012) The M-16 rifle and Beretta pistol is a status symbol in Pakistan. The extent is that weapons are also available on rent here. (Hammad, 2012)This happens in the world probably only in Pakistan. The large quantities of light and small arms America gave to the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 were supplied through Pakistan. Half of these weapons and sometimes even more were stolen by the Pakistan Army. Since then, the Khyber Pakhtoon Darra Adamkhel has remained the biggest arms market of illicit arms in the world. "Quality US and Nato military assault rifles and handguns are finding their way into the illegal arms markets of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), M-16 assault rifles and Berettas—standard issue weapons for the US army—are selling like hot cakes, despite their high prices...M-16 assault rifles and Beretta 9mm military pistols—stolen from the US army and other Nato allies in Afghanistan—are in demand and have become quite the status symbol among the country's upper class...A Beretta 9mm is available for Rs1.5 lakh a piece; the M-16 rifles are sold for Rs5 lakh... People only buy an M-16 if it is guaranteed it is a military gun taken from the US Army with a 'property of the US government' stamp. Beretta handguns are manufactured in Italy but used by the US army as sidearms." (Alam and Ahamad 2014) Therefore the Afghan problem is always a fortune for illicit arms traders and manufacturers of Darra Adamkhel undoubtedly under the aegis of pak army and ISI.

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Darra Adam Khel: Illicit Weapon's Cottage Industry

Darra Adamkhel is a small town located in Khyber Pakhtoon, Pakistan. It is administered within the FATA Federal Administrative Tribal Area. That is, it is directly administered under the central government of Pakistan. But it is not famous for its tribal culture. It is famous as the biggest supermarket and factory of illegal arms. All the famous weapons of the world are found here in both their original and copy versions. Colt and Beber Handguns, Lee enField Rifles, Italian Beretta, German Walcher Machine Guns, Anti Aircraft Guns, Land Mines, RPG - RocketLaunchers, etc., are easily found here. In fact, the arms trade and arms manufacturing are like cottage industries – the work of which is done from house to house.

The total population of Darra Adamkhel according to the 1998 census was 88456, which is now probably one lakh. But in 2001 it was 2600 arms manufacturing and repair factories or units employing more than 30,000 workers, including 8000 trained personnel. Not only this, in 2001 itself there were more than 5000 shops selling arms. Any light weapon in the world can be found there .(Malik,2016) The situation has gotten worse since then. More than 10000 families are directly linked to the local arms industry. 40000 people are directly or indirectly connected. Almost the entire population is involved in the illegal business of arms (Malik,2016) According to the Small Arms Survey 2003, the Darra Adamkhel produces 20,000 weapons per year. But this number is much higher than this. Only AK-47 every year. Over 40,000 Capacity to make 100 AK-47 rifles per day is in Darra Adamkhel that too at a cost of less than 153 dollars. 36000 AK-47 production per year at the rate of 100 per day that too in a small town like village. The threat to regional security can only be imagined. 30 mm pistols are made in numbers of 6000 per month and 37000 per year (Malik,2016) In this way, the total number of weapons is produced in millions, that too illegal.

As per Pakistani law, there is no license to own or sell an AK-47. But in Darra Adamkhel it is openly being made and sold.

An M16 automatic rifle — not an American original, but a Chinese imitation — will cost a buyer 180,000 to 230,000 rupees, or \$1,800 to \$2,300. But a local replica of the Chinese knock-off — called a “Darra copy” — can be had for only 30,000 to 80,000 rupees, or between \$300 to \$800.

“A copy of the Glock is 30,000 to 35,000 rupees,” Orakzai says, referring to a version of the Austrian semi automatic pistol that can be bought for under \$350.

What about the AK-47, or Kalashnikov, the favorite of guerrilla fighters around the world?

A real one will cost 80,000 to 200,000 rupees — between \$800 and \$2,000 — Orakzai says, proudly showing a Soviet-era AK-47 from 1971, eight years before neighboring Afghanistan was invaded by the Red Army. The markings on the gun are in Russian. But a fake can be had for a mere 7,000 to 25,000 rupees, or \$70 to \$250. Just down the street, a kilo of goat kebabs that would make lunch for four people costs \$20.” (Khan, 2017)

Antiques are also available here.

“A British World War II-era Sten submachine gun, complete with U.K. markings, can be had for \$800. But you need to add another \$50 for the original leather strap bearing the ornate military coat of arms. An 1860 Enfield pistol, with markings from a Hussar cavalry regiment, is on sale for just \$950.” (Khan, 2017)

Hawala Slip

Illicit arms of Darra Adamkhel are sent to Burma and other smugglers in Southeast Asia through the arms trade silk route. It happens through hawala. Due to the illegal trade in arms, a trust relationship has developed between the arms dealers and manufacturers which is named Hawala slip. This hawala slip contains the details and amount of the weapons sent. It is often sent by couriers from Jalalabad and Toravaram via Bamiyan to Malaysia, Burma, Thailand and other countries of South East Asia, Central and West Asia. The dealers for Thailand have procured a huge amount of weapons from the Taliban. (Malik, 2016) The Pakistan Army and ISI have used this network solely for anti-India activities since 1979. America poured enormous numbers of small arms and light weapons in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. Because of this, large quantities of foreign light weapons are with the Afghan civilians, army, and tribal groups. Most of these weapons are smuggled and sold to the gray market of Dara Adamkhel. Illegal arms of Ukraine and Turkey also reach

the gray market of the Darra Adamkhel via Central Asia and then through hawala these weapons are sent to the drug traffickers of Southeast Asia. Thus a silk route has developed from Afghanistan and Darra Adamkhel to southeast Asia, the cost of weapons is so low that it is accessible to anyone. The Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles of Russian, Chinese, Turkish, and Egyptian, models are available and sold here during the Afghan war for Rs 35000.inly. During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, AK-47 rifles were supplied in bulk from both Russian and American sources. As a result, Russian soldiers, Mujahideen and Afghan soldiers all sold it in this gray market of Darra Adam Khel.consequently it was available at a very low price. According to Malik, at that time Russian and Chinese model AK-47 was available here in 15000-16000 47, which later became 20000 to-22000. The Darra Adamkhel made AK-47 was found in 12000 to 15000 48. It is noteworthy that this was the time when Pakistan was providing AK-47s in large quantities to Punjab and Kashmiri terrorists in India. (Sreedhar, 1998)

“The illegal supply spreads well beyond cottage production. Pakistan’s porous Western border provides ample trafficking opportunities, with large caches of arms being smuggled into the country. In Balochistan, these markets thrive, where otherwise thousands live under poverty yet an AK-47 is a common commodity. However, the illegal arms trade is not just limited to assault rifles.Rockets, mortars, mines, anti-aircraft guns—there is no shortage of variety “(Hammad,2012) Thus this gray weapon market of Pakistan is such a dangerous market of illegal arms. The Pakistani government has no control over it and runs under the protection of the notorious ISI. This availability of illegal weapons on the Afghanistan border and illegal weapons obtained from the Central Asian Silk Route has made it an important supply site for terrorists of India, Burma, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, China and Mozambique. (Sreedhar 1998) Thus Darra Adamkhel has emerged as the largest arms market of illegal arms on cheap rate and easy availability. This is certainly a serious threat to Indian security.

Conclusion

Geopolitics of Afghanistan in recent decades were favourable to Pakistan because Pakistan was the US ally for the entire cold war period and up to 2010. On the other hand Afghanistan is surrounded by American adversaries like China, Iran and Russian Chinese influence on central asia. So Pakistan became a key player in any American maneuvering in Afghanistan . Consequently Pakistan has exploited the situation very wisely. Khaiber pakhtoon area is a problem for Pakistan itself because of its primitive patriarchal and war loving society. Therefore the Pakistani army and ISI has used this vanguard instinct of these people against their adversaries as an instrument. They try to control the entire Afghanistan through them. Sometimes it boomeranged but most of the time they capitalised it as per their interests. Illicit arms manufacturing and trade in FATA and Darra Adam khel suits to the Pakistani interests to operate narco terrorism and to disturb the neighbor like India. Pakistan has been used illicit small arms and light weapons to promot terrorism in panjab and its being used in kashmir also. Therefore illicit arms manufacturing and trade in pakistan is a big threat to India’s external and internal security.

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