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The Pakistani surge

The way forward for counter-insurgency in Pakistan

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This Special Report *examines the recent progress in, and challenges to, Pakistan's counter-insurgency strategy and advances four main recommendations on how to make international support to Pakistan effective and worthwhile. First, the United States and its international partners must encourage the successful surge strategy but consistently monitor and recommend improvements as necessary. Second, foreign aid and support should go in tandem with persuading Islamabad to expand its operations against most insurgents and terrorists, and its efforts to stabilise the country post-conflict. Third, the United States and its partners must help Pakistan in a way that is both visible and politically sensitive. Finally, lessons learned from the Pakistani surge must be assimilated by the Pakistani military and shared with international partners, especially the US military.*

Introduction

The war in Afghanistan is now America's longest war, surpassing the period in which US combat forces were deployed in the Vietnam conflict. But many have argued with good reason that the real war against violent extremists is in Pakistan. It is from there the al-Qaeda syndicate has its best chance to obtain a nuclear device and carry out international acts of terror. The attempted car bombing in New York's Times Square by Pakistani–American, Faisal Shazad, in early May 2010 is a clear reminder that the 'long war' is far from over. Until last year the lack of international focus and resources, and an unacceptable divergence of US and Pakistani threat perceptions, permitted al-Qaeda and associates like the Afghan Taliban and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP or Pakistani Taliban), and the Haqqani network to consistently terrorise Pakistan and the region where the United States and its allies have their interests engaged.

While Islamabad and Washington collectively targeted al-Qaeda operatives from 2002 to 2008, they virtually ignored the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban.

Islamabad afforded sanctuary to Afghan Taliban and largely discounted the threat posed by the Pakistani Taliban. In Pakistan's northern badlands—the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa[1] and Balochistan the 'twin' Talibans trained, recruited and raised funds.

Between 2002 and early 2009 Islamabad preferred reconciliation over comprehensive military and political action against the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. Moreover, the Pakistani Government included a consortium of pro-Taliban religious parties that turned a blind eye to—or worse abetted—their

Table 1: Diverging threat perceptions

American 2002–2008	Pakistani 2002–2008	American 2009–present	Pakistani 2009–present
al-Qaeda is enemy no. 1	al-Qaeda is internal enemy no. 1	al-Qaeda is enemy no. 1	al-Qaeda is internal enemy no. 1
Afghan Taliban, Haqqani network must be weakened	Afghan Taliban leadership must be protected	Some Afghan Taliban foot soldiers and leaders are reconcilable	Certain Afghan Taliban leaders must be captured
Pakistani Taliban are Pakistan's problem	Pakistani Taliban are largely reconcilable	Some Pakistani Taliban must be killed	Pakistani Taliban must be largely interdicted

activities in Balochistan and along the northern frontier. Consequently, both Taliban groupings expanded their control, taking advantage of flawed peace deals in Pakistan and ineffective governance in Afghanistan.

The insurgency became systemic after the 2007 military crackdown against Islamabad's extremist Red Mosque. This action, combined with dramatic collateral damage from US drone strikes and state failure, catalysed a full-blown insurgency that promised speedy justice and social equity, and attracted thousands of recruits and millions of supporters.

Pakistan's security problems are not restricted to its northern frontier. An equally vicious, albeit different and presently abated, insurgency threatens its southwestern province—Balochistan—that shares a 1,200 km border with Afghanistan and hosts the Afghan Taliban leadership (Quetta Shura). Balochistan's insurgents, however, are secular secessionists who are hesitant to join forces with the extremist Islamist Taliban. From 2004 to 2007, the Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps used excessive force to suppress the Baloch insurgency. Three years later, the insurgency remains dormant amid federal promises to grant the province political and economic autonomy.

In early 2009, the Pakistani Taliban had de facto control of 80% of the country's north, and were less than 100 km from Islamabad. In May 2009, after extensive deliberation and amid strong public support for the armed forces, authorities launched a string of successful operations to oust the insurgents from the north. Close to doubling the troop strength committed in these counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, including an unprecedented shifting of troops away from the Indian border, Pakistan began its largest troop surge since the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence that bifurcated the country. Despite concerns about how Pakistan will (or can) stabilise areas cleared of insurgents, the success from the surge remains a remarkable, although tenuous, victory.

In late 2009, the US, along with 28 NATO countries and 18 other countries belonging to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) coalition, launched a similar surge of troops and resources in Afghanistan, with plans to begin transferring responsibility for security to the Afghan Government by mid-2011. The hope is that the 'twin surges' in the next two years will considerably weaken the insurgents, creating political space to promote local and regional stability, and facilitate the exit of international troops.

With ISAF and Afghan forces preparing to expand their southern operations to Kandahar under the new leadership of General David H. Petraeus, and the Pakistani military about to launch a full-scale operation in North Waziristan, the continuing success of the Pakistani surge and its relevance to COIN in Afghanistan is crucial for a long-term regional stabilisation strategy.

The insurgent's threat to Pakistan cannot be overstated, and its government is acutely aware of it. In 2007, the tribal area of Bajaur, former hub of al-Qaeda, became a veritable independent state run by the Pakistani Taliban. By Spring 2009, they controlled most of the north, and by the northern summer of 2010 more than 7,000 Pakistani citizens had fallen victim to car bombs and suicide bomb attacks. Since the beginning of the war, around 3,000 Pakistani Army, Frontier Corps, Police, Rangers and intelligence officers have also been killed.

Today the Pakistani Taliban have further strengthened their presence in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan, even as they lose territory in the north. The complex but close linkages between the twin Talibans in Afghanistan and Pakistan and affiliates like the Haqqani network further threaten regional stability. If the Pakistani COIN effort does not build on its significant but tenuous success, and

further reorient its threat assessment to include Sunni extremist groups within Pakistan, the chances of success against the al-Qaeda syndicate are nil. Pakistan must also synchronise its efforts with ISAF. However, many in the Pakistani military, civilian and religious leadership continue to question the ISAF mission, and Indian regional ambitions. Recent reports about the nexus between Pakistani intelligence and the Taliban point to the existence of a relationship that hurts the ISAF mission.[2] And it is true that not all of Pakistan's historical proxies that fought the Soviets in the 1980s and the Indians in the 1990s are considered enemies by Islamabad, or can be attacked without risking troop stretch. Some proxy forces such as the Haqqani network are being persuaded by the Pakistanis to change sides—as they have done in the past—to bring about an Afghan political dispensation amenable to Pakistan.[3] General Ashfaq Kayani, Chief of Army Staff, and General Shuja Pasha, head of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate, have made significant efforts to change Pakistan's threat assessment, military culture and training, and have disciplined pro-militant elements within their ranks. Finally, contact with militants, if controlled, will help regional reconciliation efforts as insurgents are weakened over time. Thus, the ISI–Taliban relationship must purposefully reorient and not just be pressured to achieve regional stability.

Pakistan's counter-insurgency strategy: purpose and process

Pakistan's COIN strategy is a subset of its national security strategy, which centres on a strong national economy and defence against all internal and external threats. Preferred modes of government—vacillating between military and civilian rule—economic and foreign policies, and manufactured religio-political fluctuations and ethno-sectarian relations, are all means to the end: national coherence and territorial integrity.

However, since independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, Pakistanis have struggled to meet this goal. Episodic socioeconomic and political uncertainty has exacerbated the country's inherent multi-ethnic and sectarian disharmony. For decades Pakistani leaders have struggled to create a common purpose, unsuccessfully using variations of Islam to bind together a paradoxical nation variously supporting democracy and autocracy.

External and internal threats have taken different shapes. Pakistan has fought four wars with India and eleven separatist movements at home. Internal dissent was quelled swiftly and brutally. For example, during the civil war of 1971 West Pakistani forces suppressed Bengali insurgents through a campaign of unfettered armed force.

On balance, and with few exceptions, the overriding approach to COIN was based on coercion. Large military forces battled insurgents rather than protecting civilians. Moreover, there was a lack of linguistic and cultural understanding of the diverse Pashtun population. The process is best characterised as low intensity conflict (LIC) sprinkled with best practices from classic COIN, such as victory through successful political engagement. This was the approach to most operations (collectively known as *Al-Mizan* operations) against selective insurgents from 2002 to 2008.

2002 to 2008: countering terrorists but courting insurgents

Following the September 11 al-Qaeda terrorist attacks against the United States, and subsequent pressure from the Bush Administration, Pakistan joined the

international effort to defeat al-Qaeda and its supporters in Afghanistan. This was done with the hope that after al-Qaeda was destroyed, international forces would leave Afghanistan allowing the return of the Afghan Taliban, Pakistan's proxy and counterweight to arch-rival India's support for the Northern Alliance-dominated government in Kabul. That did not happen. Instead the American and international effort remained consistent, but nevertheless, under-resourced.

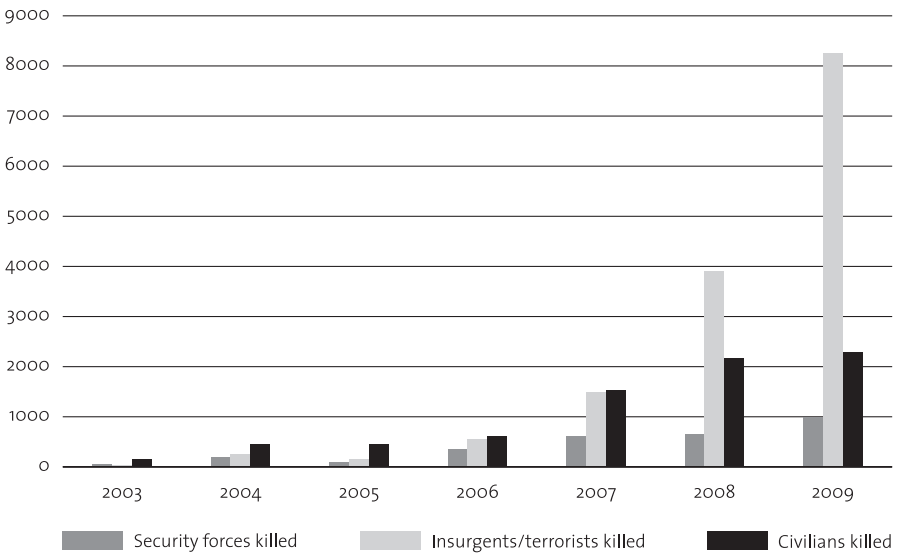
Until recently, American neglect in Afghanistan strengthened the Afghan Taliban and partners like the Haqqani network. Pakistani reluctance to go after anybody but al-Qaeda strengthened terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, and led to the creation and expansion of the Pakistani Taliban.

In late 2001, al-Qaeda moved into Pakistan's FATA. There it created new training camps, conducted recruitment activities and fund-raising campaigns, and began planning attacks in Kabul, Islamabad, New Delhi, London, Madrid and New York. The Afghan Taliban leadership was given refuge in Pakistan's Balochistan province. While launching an insurgency in Afghanistan's eastern and southern provinces, the Quetta Shura helped in the creation of the Pakistani Taliban.

For its part, al-Qaeda always wanted Pakistan's nuclear weapons. And as Washington cajoled, and New Delhi pressured Islamabad to go after the terrorists, al-Qaeda capitalised on state weakness and anti-Americanism by partnering with local insurgents and terrorist groups. US drone attacks on al-Qaeda, coupled with Pakistan's failure to explain or sell the war to its people, led to the emergence of a full-scale insurgency. Additionally, governments in the provinces were Islamist-friendly and Pakistani troops were reluctant—and not ordered—to stabilise areas after holding them.

Although the Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps attacked forerunners to the Pakistani Taliban on several occasions—for example, it assaulted them with 80,000 troops

Figure 2: Security forces, insurgents and civilians killed, Bajaur and Swat operations, 2003–2009



Source: Commuted using statistics from field research conducted in Pakistan in November 2009 and South Asia Terrorism Portal; and Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, 'Pakistan Security Report', October 2008 (and subsequent monthly reports).

in 2005—most engagements lacked a stabilisation plan, and ended with flawed peace deals that allowed insurgents to regroup and attack again with more deadly force. Such accommodation also led to more cross-border attacks on American and ISAF forces in Afghanistan.

Even while Pakistani security forces half-heartedly battled the Pakistani Taliban they had another determined enemy at hand—the Baloch insurgency (2004–2007). Although Balochi separatists never formally joined forces with the mostly ethnic Pashtun Pakistani Taliban, and are against Pashtun expansion in Balochistan, they diverted political attention and tied up considerable military resources.

Counter-terrorism (CT) operations against first- and second-tier al-Qaeda operatives were largely successful as US and Pakistani Special Forces snatched them from safe houses around the country. Since 2002 more than 600 al-Qaeda terrorists have been killed and 750 captured. However, Pakistan's hope that this effort would suffice and would remain secret from the public backfired, and the Pakistani Taliban's approval rating soared as Islamabad's credibility plunged.

2009: the Pakistani surge

After years of failing to conclusively target and weaken al-Qaeda's partners in the northern frontier, the Pakistani Army was compelled to change course. Understanding how and why the military changed its strategy is crucial to comprehending the recent progress and the difficult challenges ahead for Pakistani and international political and military efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In late 2007, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani took command of the Pakistani Armed Forces. In Pakistan, the military, while partner of the current civilian government, monopolises foreign and security policy. General Kayani inherited a military from his predecessor President Pervez Musharraf that was more

Table 2: Pakistani military in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA versus al-Qaeda syndicate

Pakistani security forces*	**2002–2008**	**2009–present**
Army	80,000	147,000
Frontier Corps	20,000	34,000
Special Services Group	4,000	10,000
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police	40,000	45,000
Special Branch	5,000	5,000
Lashkars	20,000	80,000
Total	169,000	321,000
al-Qaeda, Taliban and syndicate forces (currently engaged)*	**2002–2008**	**2009–present**
Pakistani Taliban	50,000	20,000
Afghan Taliban	5,000	4,000
al- Qaeda	2,000	300
Haqqani network	8,000	7,000
Lashkar-e-Taiba	6,000	8,000
Sipeh-e-Sahaba	4,000	4,000
Total	75,000	43,300

*Figures commuted in the course of field research in Pakistan (Oct–Nov 2009) and Pakistani military and intelligence briefings in February, March, April and May 2010.

suited to governing than fighting a war, and one that was losing the war without knowing why. After multiple operations in the tribal areas, in the Swat Valley and elsewhere in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, troop morale was low, the intelligence network was broken, public opinion was at an all-time low, and the enemy was within 100 km of the national capital.

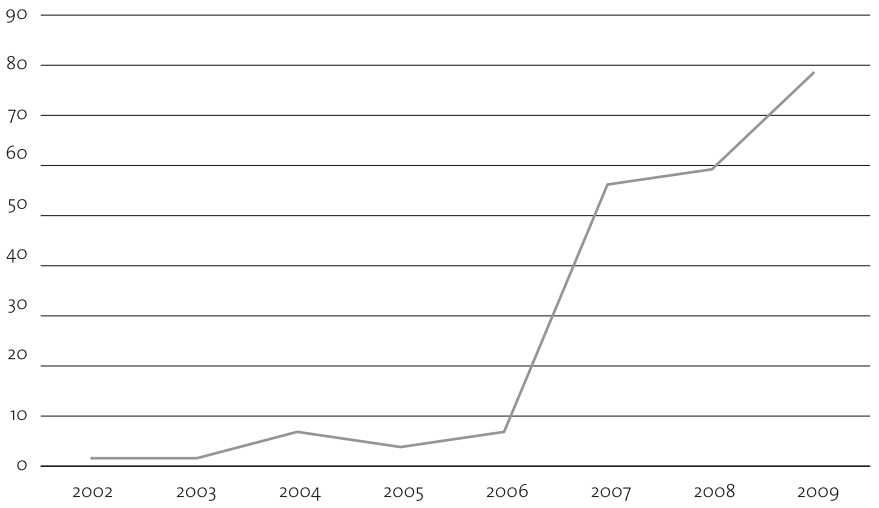
Weeks after taking charge, General Kayani recalled all military commanders from civilian institutions and sanctioned a top-secret holistic review of all CT and COIN operations. Publicly he called the plan 'year of the soldier'—it was time to change course or face a possible breakdown in military discipline.

Heeding the advice from the review, he began by buttressing the Directorate of Military Operations (the Pakistan Army's strategy think tank) and reforming the intelligence agencies. This top-down approach, however, was slow and cumbersome. Furthermore, the largely ceremonial Defence Ministry, turf-conscious Interior Ministry, and ineffective Defence and National Security Parliamentary and Senatorial committees were mostly at loggerheads with the General Headquarters (GHQ). There was clearly a need for a whole-of-government effort despite systemic weaknesses and scarce resources and expertise.

From the review came a new strategy in late 2008 when the commander of the northern Frontier Corps, General Tariq Khan, in concert with junior officers, altered tactics and strategy for Operation Shirdil (Lion Heart) in Bajaur, the tribal area bordering Afghanistan and the former al-Qaeda hub in the FATA. When relying on the coercion model failed, he made serious efforts to shift to population-centric COIN. This was done through precision targeting; patrolling; supporting tribal lashkars (militias) and jirgas (tribal councils) to identify Taliban militants; encouraging camaraderie between mostly Punjabi officers and their Pashtun soldiers; and, most importantly, building human intelligence and troop morale.

While junior officers incorporated on-the-job creativity, the military high command realised that building morale shrank performance

Figure 3: Suicide attacks in Pakistan, 2002–2009



Source: Commuted using statistics from field research conducted in Pakistan in November 2009 and South Asia Terrorism Portal; and Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, 'Pakistan Security Report', October 2008 (and subsequent monthly reports).

gaps, despite organisational lags. This new approach improved over time as civil–military cooperation extended to collaboration with the United States and ISAF (specifically, US Central Command and ISAF Regional Command East).

Pakistan's insurgency assumed its most alarming dimensions in April 2009 when the Taliban gained control of the Swat Valley again after failed military operations over the previous two years. From the valley and its environs (Dir, Buner and Shangla districts) the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TSNM—a Taliban-affiliated Islamist militia) declared the Pakistani constitution un-Islamic and invited Osama bin Laden to join them. The military did not react instantly. Instead, it waited for the government to build political consensus under a Taliban onslaught and mounting international pressure.

Public opinion began to shift as terrorist acts spread to major cities like Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. For several years the Pakistani Taliban had been thought of as 'Robin Hoods' fighting against an American puppet government determined to kill innocents through drone attacks and rob Muslims of their way of life. By 2009, that image was difficult to sustain.

The religious parties were voted out in the 2008 national assembly and provincial elections, and replaced by the secular but initially passive Awami National Party. Taking advantage of negotiating peace from a position of strength, the Pakistani Taliban endeavoured to out-administer the state. As insurgents began to act like statesmen and police, patrolling streets and running courts, they became vulnerable and more interested in gaining control. Pakistanis soon realised that the militants' puritanical Islamic image was only a means to obtain political power. Pakistani counter-insurgents took full advantage of the Taliban's visibility.

Moreover, the Pakistani Taliban's new-found confidence led to counterproductive tactics like the indiscriminate bombings of mosques and deaths of many times more civilians than had been killed by US drone attacks. As the carnage spread to Punjab, the recruitment hub for the army, the military geared up for a massive counterattack. The war was no longer limited to the northern frontier.

As before, clearing the areas of insurgents appeared relatively straightforward for the military. However, it required the combined efforts of tactical commanders, who developed successful approaches employing a mix of special forces, intelligence operations, psychological operations, infantry patrols, close air support, and precise artillery targeting utilising Pakistani surveillance drones.

Numerous captains, majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels acted as agents of change, pushing for a new military culture that placed population security above enemy interdiction to sustain troop morale. Their

Table 3: Pakistan's changing counter-insurgency, military operations

	2002–2008	2009–Present
Approach	Coercion school of thought without sound intelligence	Promoting troop morale and earning people's support with improved intelligence
Strategy	Search and destroy; raiding, selective counter-terrorism	Enemy- and population-centric hybrid
Operations	Blow up; patch up; blow up ...	Surround, squeeze, squash
Tactics	Excessive artillery, tanks, fighter jets, helicopters; sporadic Special Service Group raids	Cautious and precise use of artillery, tanks, and air support; frequent special operations

voices did not change doctrine, but their in-the-field lessons-learned went up from battalion to divisional commands and were quickly disseminated among fighting units.

Officers and enlisted men were equally tired of applying counterproductive brute force after six years. Bolstered by new-found popular support for the war, they identified the Pakistani Taliban as a grave threat from within. India would remain as the top external threat, but the Taliban was now the clear and present danger.

Using the precedent of the Bajaur experiment, junior officers asked to become part of decision making—especially Frontier Corps officers, previously considered incompetent and compromised because of their ethnic links to a predominantly Pashtun Taliban. In a country rent by religious, nationalist, and ethnic fissures, chauvinism was the last thing the Pakistani Army needed. Consequently, Punjabi officers began reaching out to Pashtun soldiers.

The process of sharing field experience and lessons learned led to the significantly improved performance of the Frontier Corps in Dir and Buner. This was a direct result of a small but effective US and international counter-insurgency training program. Courses on dealing with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and counter-ambush training have been ongoing since late 2007.

About 400 trainers also provide tactical instruction and inter-agency coordination training to synchronise Pakistani military, intelligence and civilian initiatives and Pakistani and international efforts in Afghanistan.

While the Pakistan Armed Forces still lack a dedicated COIN school and there is limited exchange of lessons learned with international forces in Afghanistan, the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies have introduced courses and modules on COIN in various institutes. For example, the Command and Staff College's Peace Keeping School, School of Infantry and Tactics, and divisional and battalion headquarters all have dedicated programs on COIN (known as LIC modules).

Drawing on advances in COIN military operations in Swat and environs and in South Waziristan, the Pakistani military applied a 'surround, squeeze and squash' methodology. And unlike in the past, this time it blocked enemy escape routes. Army–Air Force joint operations interdicted the Taliban's high-altitude hideouts, forcing them down to hide in mosques, houses, and schools, and behind 'human shields', thus enraging the local population. This resulted in better human intelligence and continued political support for the military operation. This information was also shared with US intelligence agencies, leading to more precise drone attacks against the Pakistani Taliban leadership in the FATA.

For the first time since 2001, the military executed a presence-oriented approach. It cleared areas and established small bases inside populated areas—instead of going back to large forward operating bases—and enforced curfews and aided a fledgling local government.

While distinguishing between mainstream Taliban and the local population was nearly impossible, junior officers realised that trained snipers and explosive experts were primarily Uzbeks, Chechens, or Arabs and that local Pashtun leaders were almost always with them.

In circumstances of changing public opinion, plunging troop morale and military coherence, international pressure and the spread of insurgency, the Pakistani military captured enemy strongholds in Bajaur, Swat and South Waziristan. Clearing was always easy; holding was always a problem. The

2009 military success would not have lasted without a coherent plan to stabilise the northern frontier.

Pakistan's emerging stabilisation plan: a critical look

The key elements of the 2010–2012 stabilisation plan centre on temporary resettlement, reconstruction teams, and Taliban reintegration; all crucial for success against regional violent extremists.

From 2002 to 2008, authorities had lacked popular support and mission clarity to effectively clear areas, let alone hold them. The 2009 Pakistani surge aimed to seize the initiative and reverse the slide.

While it was difficult enough to secure the support of the rural population and raise troop morale, backed by US trainers and weapons, it was much more difficult to fight insurgents in cities. The Bajaur battle alone led to 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), and Islamabad had no relief plan. Next was the Swat Valley where 10,000 Taliban were located in an urban population of four million. Military planners needed a plan to protect the people, isolate the insurgents and sustain popular support and troop morale.

Placing the internally displaced

After deliberations at GHQ, the answer was found in population resettlement, an old COIN tactic that was closely examined, and then applied piecemeal. Resettlement was the first initiative of the holding plan but remained active prior to, during and after military operations.

After examining historical case studies, Pakistani authorities were determined to avoid three major pitfalls related to resettlement—foreign troops, forceful transfers, and inept and under-resourced management.

Figure 4: Pakistani collaborative teams

Source: Created by the author, incorporating several Pakistani military briefings in November 2009 and in February and March 2010.

First, while the Pakistani Army was not a foreign occupying force, many Pashtuns considered it to be one because of its predominantly Punjabi officer corps. Furthermore, most officers can't speak Pashtu. Consequently, more Pashtun officers took charge and the mostly Pashtun Frontier Corps paramilitary forces executed population transfers.

Second, successful resettlement must be reasonably voluntary and temporary. Also resettlement cannot be allowed to result in depopulation. As a result, Pakistan encouraged interim population transfers.

Moreover, a promise of a better post-conflict life—minimum loss to life and treasure—in return for cooperation against the insurgents was made, and mostly kept. But even if Pashtuns were not keen to return to their homes, many in the Punjab and Sindh provinces didn't want them to move in due to historical ethnic discord and fear of Taliban infiltration. Therefore, most IDPs were concentrated in the north and those that chose to move to cities like Karachi—the largest Pashtun city in the world—were forced to register. Most moved before the military went in, and returned during the stabilisation phase.

Third, resettlement must be sufficiently funded and effectively managed. As international support matched swelling refugee numbers, an exceptional manager was picked to square the circle of isolating the insurgents and rehabilitating the people. Lieutenant General Nadeem Ahmad, awarded for his 2005 Azad Jammu and Kashmir earthquake relief efforts, was selected to lead a Special Support Group to move, feed and shelter IDPs that numbered over two million by the summer of 2009. Acting as a bridge between in-conflict and post-conflict operations, Ahmad synchronised civil–military initiatives and answered to the Prime Minister and the Army Chief.

He also collaborated with international relief organisations like the United Nations, the International Red Cross and USAID, and set up relief camps, makeshift hospitals, schools, and vocational training centres. While only 15% of the displaced stayed in camps, most received allowances. Management and delivery of services were inconsistent and slow, but in four months 1.8 million IDPs returned, finding most of their houses and livelihoods intact.

Resettlement also paid dividends on the battlefield. Only about 20% of the population remained in the conflict zone, and most of those turned out to be hardcore Taliban supporters, giving the 30,000 troops an artificial space to troop ratio advantage. Although some top Taliban leaders escaped, many others were killed or captured due to an increase in actionable intelligence.

In August 2009, the military expanded their resettlement approach to South Waziristan. By mid-2010, 15% of the 500,000 people displaced from South and North Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, and Khyber agencies were living in government camps. However, it is too early to predict if operations in South Waziristan can replicate the success of the Swat model.

Stabilisation teams

A second initiative of the stabilisation plan is post-conflict stabilisation teams. Different security and development programs are underway in Bajaur, Swat and South Waziristan run jointly by the military, government and national and international non-government organisations through what Pakistanis call 'collaborative teams' at the national, provincial and district levels.

Security forces are linked with reconstruction experts, creating Pakistani versions of the versatile US provincial and district reconstruction teams in Iraq and Afghanistan. The chief secretaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA and the Provincial Relief, Reconstruction and Settlement Authority (PRRSA) are leading the provincial teams, while the district coordinators (such as the one in Swat) oversee district teams with substantial support from USAID and United Nations bodies.

In late 2009, USAID announced a $90 million package for electric grids, roads, wells and schools in Swat and South Waziristan.

The local and provincial stabilisation teams are protected by six infantry divisions and about 38 battalions of Frontier Corps that are also facilitating the creation of special counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency police units, and arming local pro-government lashkars numbering some 80,000 members.

The Army's 11th Corps oversees security and intelligence operations in conjunction with Military Intelligence (MI) Command. The civilian Federal Investigative Agency is working closely with the ISI and MI to train a new police intelligence branch for the Swat Valley. In Bajaur and South Waziristan, however, the ISI and MI will remain in charge of counter-terrorism till 2012. Several rapid response teams, backed by the Army's Aviation Command and Special Services Group (Pakistani Special Forces), are also available to support development and administrative teams.

Pakistani reintegration plan

The third initiative under the stabilisation plan is the Pakistani Taliban reintegration process that it is hoped will complement analogous efforts in Afghanistan.

In 2010, the military and intelligence agencies plan to weaken the insurgency by creating internal divisions among militants, and in so doing isolate al-Qaeda. Islamabad also hopes to reintegrate favoured 'moderates' of the Quetta Shura Taliban into the Afghan political mainstream in order to offset Indian political influence in Kabul. The recent ISI–CIA joint operations to capture Afghan Taliban leaders are a direct result of increased cooperation and an effort to make reintegration open to Taliban on both sides of the Durand Line. And the Afghan Government-led June 2010 Grand Jirga's consensus statement clearly supports talking with the Taliban.

The reintegration effort will also attempt to lure pragmatic Afghan and Pakistani Taliban leaders away from the hardline elements. Interdiction of hardcore al-Qaeda operatives, however, is not negotiable. The first step is to turn a strong 'moderate' insurgent leader that Washington, Islamabad, Kabul and New Delhi agree on. The second step is to threaten and bribe the tribes that support him. The third step is to make him convert second-tier Quetta Shura Taliban away from the insurgency. The final step is to use the turncoats to broker a ceasefire with the Haqqani network—the group most responsible for attacks on ISAF troops in eastern Afghanistan and for complex terrorist attacks in Kabul.

If regional partners agree on these fundamentals, Pakistani intelligence officials say they will sideline Mullah Omar, head of the Quetta Shura Taliban and least favoured by Washington, Kabul or New Delhi. Some of this is already underway as recent media reports about negotiations with Hekmatyar and cracks in the Quetta Shura suggest.

Besides the 2010–2012 stabilisation plan for the north, Islamabad has had some success in holding the centre and the south. President Zardari has temporarily appeased the Balochi separatists by granting them an economic stimulus package and by promising them political autonomy through the passage

Australia–Pakistan relationship

The Australian Government has declared its commitment to assist Pakistan address its acute security and economic challenges through multi-lateral efforts and a growing bi-lateral relationship. Acknowledging that Pakistan's stability is vital to Australia's security interests, the government intensified its engagement with Islamabad over the past two years in the areas of security and stability, fostering economic reform and development, building capacity and improving governance. Significantly, Australia doubled its development assistance to Pakistan to $120 million over the period 2009–2011.

Through its foundation membership of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan and participation in the Afghanistan–Pakistan Support Group, Australia is working to ensure a coordinated international effort is made to support Pakistan.

The appointment of former Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Ric Smith, as Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan in April 2009, is a further demonstration of the government's commitment to more effective international assistance for Pakistan, and to better coordinate the efforts of Australian Government agencies.

Australia has also substantially increased its Defence cooperation with Pakistan—admittedly from a low base—and now ranks as the second largest provider of external military training to its armed forces after the United States. The Australian Government recently expanded the number of training places for Pakistani service personnel in Australia from 10 to 140 a year. Military training is in generalist areas, with a focus on building capacity for counter-insurgency operations.

of the 18th Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution. Karachi's mayor, Mustafa Kamal, also deserves credit for holding the city in the face of recent ethnic and religious strife.

But the positives from the Pakistani surge and the promise of the stabilisation plan may prove ephemeral if the Pakistani state fails to maintain the momentum. State and international resources must be channelled through a comprehensive strategy that envelops important second- and third-order effects: governance, development and judicial and police reforms.

The way forward

Pakistan's shift towards hybrid population-centric and enemy-centric COIN and its *volte-face* in its national security strategy to begin targeting Pakistani and Afghan Taliban is a welcome change from the past and must be sustained. Recent increases in international assistance will help usher in regional stability and ultimately ensure international security. How the international community targets, markets and monitors its aid and how Pakistan uses it will determine the path to regional and international security.

Trust but verify

It is too early to tell whether the strategy behind the Pakistani surge changed the military's culture or its willingness to replicate and sustain the change. However, there is little doubt that the surge has allowed authorities to gain the initiative against the Pakistani Taliban and diminish

the cross-border effects of the Afghan Taliban insurgency.

Still, COIN is dynamic, with blurred distinctions between conclusive victory and failure. Consequently, it is important to monitor and consistently support Pakistan's efforts to defeat the Pakistani Taliban.

But the international community's fight does not end with the destruction of the Pakistani Taliban. It should convince Pakistan to dismantle the entire al-Qaeda syndicate, including the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Asian Tigers, and Jaish-e-Mohammad. These groups, if left untouched, have the potential to wreak further havoc in nuclear-armed South Asia and export terror to Europe, North America and Australia.

Push and provide

Pushing Pakistan without providing economic and military support or an alternative to regional power sharing is counterproductive. For example, the US and Australian COIN-focused training program should be augmented, as it is considered a success by the Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps. Training should then be complemented by materiel relevant to modern COIN such as unmanned aerial vehicles, protected mobility vehicles, fire support helicopters and anti-IED technology.

The Pakistani Army is likely to execute a major operation in North Waziristan this summer. This will require shifting of forces away from the eastern border, Swat, southern and northern FATA, and Balochistan. Most of these areas require large holding forces. Redeploying them will encourage the Taliban to return. As Pakistan steps up, US-led international forces must assist its efforts in hammer and anvil operations to further squeeze the enemy. Success depends on how fast and how well international and Pakistani forces choke enemy escape routes in eastern Afghanistan and in Pakistan's northwest.

Moreover, police reforms are crucial for long-term stability as the overstretched Pakistani Army transfers authority to civil authorities. Once again, training, equipment and financial support are crucial.

On the development side, the international community should support organic judicial reforms aimed at provision of speedy justice by providing resources and training civil administrators and local elected officials to promote inter-agency collaboration.

The lessons learned from the Pakistani surge must be assimilated by the military and shared with civilian institutions and international forces in Afghanistan. In addition to increasing intelligence sharing, augmenting training programs and expanding weapons sales, Washington must help in creating a central hub to discuss and debate future regional threats that connects COIN operators with analysts. This could come in the shape of a Pakistani-managed COIN institute that brings together military, intelligence, police and post-conflict administrators to train, debate and issue threat reports and recommend policy. Such an institute could then be linked to development and security agencies in Washington, Kabul and, eventually, New Delhi.

Declare your hand

Another lesson from the past eight and a half years is that when the international community provides development and military aid it should actively promote it using local partners. Whereas over-branding of foreign aid leads to resentment from local partners and people, under-branding creates a sense of abandonment, leading to sentiments prejudicial to ongoing international efforts.

The international community, especially the United States, should develop a roadmap to making the US–Pakistan partnership transparent and accountable. Without a balance between local political dynamics and marketing, American goodwill, Pakistani society and, by extension, the Pakistani Army will not be able to sustain operations against insurgents.

Learn and spread

Resettlement must be supported in Pakistan and replicated in Afghanistan. The Pakistani resettlement initiative under its stabilisation plan could be applied to ISAF efforts in the south and east of Afghanistan.

Last year's operations in Pakistan were largely successful because the transitional population transfers by the military, which promised minimal collateral damage, built trust between the people and the government. An organic resettlement plan must be debated in Kabul as Afghan soldiers reach operational capability in provinces bordering Pakistan—such as Kunar, Nuristan, Kandahar and Helmand—and as ISAF begins to draw down its forces.

A likely India–Pakistan crisis must be prepared for. If groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba execute another Mumbai-style outrage, Pakistani soldiers will leave holding operations along the northern frontier and head east. Islamabad should not only dismantle terrorist sanctuaries, but also increase India–Pakistan intelligence sharing as part of the recent attempts at reviving dialogue, so that cool heads can prevail in the event of a security emergency.

Finally, a regional approach must be adopted bringing all affected parties, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Russia, the Central Asian republics, the Gulf States, and ISAF to the same table—all of them have significant security and economic interests in the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Conclusion

The United States and the international community is involved in Pakistan because that's where the al-Qaeda syndicate is planning international terrorist attacks and it is determined to obtain nuclear weapons technology. But there is no quick victory against the enemy in Pakistan. This long war requires a long-term and highly adaptive strategy. The international community could make a significant dent against the enemy and could help its Pakistani partners if it implemented the following policy prescriptions:

- support what works, such as the Pakistani surge, and constantly monitor its ongoing success
- put pressure on Islamabad to expand military operations, but provide clear incentives, such as a seat at the table for a regional Taliban reintegration plan and sales of conventional weapons
- provide support in a visible manner, but in concert with local partners
- help Pakistani civil–military institutions to assimilate lessons learned from the surge and encourage Pakistanis to share these lessons with American and international stabilisation agencies.

Ultimately, success against violent extremists is contingent on an adaptive and regional approach to Pakistan.

Endnotes

1 Formerly the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following the passage through Pakistan's legislature of the Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010, on 19 April 2010.

2 See for example Matt Waldman, 'The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship Between Pakistan's ISI and Afghan Insurgents', Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, June 2010; and Seth E. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan,* RAND Corporation 2010.

3 Findings from the author's field research in Peshawar and Quetta in May/June 2010 does not deny the relationship but suggests a more nuanced linkage that is increasingly prone toward reorientation. For a detailed study of Pakistan's policy to foment insurgencies (FOIN) to pursue national security objectives see Haider A. H. Mullick, *Pakistan's Security Paradox: Countering and Fomenting Insurgencies,* 2009, JSOU Press.

About the Author

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