

**THE COUNTER INSURGENCY STRATEGY OF THE PAKISTAN
ARMY IN FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS (FATA)**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled **“THE COUNTER INSURGENCY STRATEGY OF THE PAKISTAN ARMY IN FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS (FATA)”** submitted by me for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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DEDICATED TO

MY MOTHER

AND

THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
COIN	Counterinsurgency
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FC	Frontier Corps
FCNA	Force Command Northern Areas
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulations
GWOT	Global War on Terror
Hel	Hizb-e-Islami
HOR	House of Representatives
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
JeM	Jaish-e-Mohammad
Jl	Jamaat-i-Islami
JUI-F	Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam (Fazlur Rehman)
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
MMA	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PA	Political Agent
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
PATA	Provincially Administered Tribal Areas

PPP	Pakistan People's Party
RAF	Royal Air Force
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SSG	Special Services Group
TTP	Tehreek-I-Taliban Pakistan

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PREFACE

The following research study is an attempt at analyzing the counterinsurgency strategy of the Pakistan army in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA, based on the consideration of several factors. Some of these include actual events, a numbers of actins by various actors like the US, the Pakistan government, the army, militants and others, besides also the reasons for the state of affairs as they existed prior to and at the time of writing. The aim is to present an analysis premised on historical events and their chronology, rather than merely mentioning the latter two.

The approach is therefore to employ both the varied happenings and their chronological occurrence in a manner conducive to the conducting of as indepth an analysis as possible, based on the research hypotheses formulated, and to arrive at a suitable and relevant conclusion.

The framework adopted centres around the context created by the existence and prevalence of insurgency in the past and present, and the subsequent need to carry out counterinsurgency in appropriate ways. The characteristics of the insurgency predominant at the time of writing, notably its global nature and linkages with Al Qaeda, are accorded importance, as is correspondingly, the American War on Terror stated in an overall counterinsurgency paradigm. The resultant scenario is adopted as the pretext for the conduct of counterinsurgency in Pakistan, and alongwith the latter, forms the basis for the formulation of the hypotheses and the focus of this study.

Facets of insurgency and counterinsurgency, and their varied aspects, including those pertaining specifically to FATA, are incorporated in the study to define the a context and to enable a conceptual understanding. Both the above are regarded as instrumental to the determining of the conception and implementation of the counterinsurgency strategy as suited to the particular FATA context. The ambit of such factors is taken to cover a range spanning the political situation, administrative structures, social (in the case tribal Pashtun) peculiarities, issues of military relevance like terrain, style of warfare, tactics logistics specific problems faced by combatants like morale, ethnicity, religious affiliations and others, and on the whole preparedness for this kind of conflict on part of the army. Elaborations, explanations and elucidations are provided

wherever warranted. Backgrounds to many of the above are also discussed whenever they are deemed to be of relevance. The conclusion to the study is drawn from the data presented. It also acts as the summary of the study.

This study is divided into five chapters, each dealing with aspects relevant to the theme of the research, as according to their categorisation under various chapter headings. The first and the last chapters serve as the Introduction and the conclusion, respectively.

Chapter one provides a general overview of the theory and practice of both insurgency and counterinsurgency. The focus is on a global, trans-national and an Al Qaeda linked insurgency, besides its occurrence within a state. The case of Pakistan is highlighted in this context, with an emphasis on the role of the US pertaining to the same. The part played by strategy in war per se and in counterinsurgency in achieving their success, is elaborated, outlining the challenges. The two research hypotheses are also stated. A theoretical framework for an understanding of strategic success is highlighted as well.

Chapter Two examines the beginning, causes for the rise and growth of the insurgency in FATA and its implications in detail. Factors that aided it, including political, administrative, and policy choices of the Pakistan government and army are elucidated. The role played by peculiarities of this area, such as the tribal Pashtun society, the presence and the extent of state control, and the importance of this borderland to happenings in Afghanistan and to the US are emphasized. The reactions of the Pakistan government and the reasons for taking up of the counterinsurgency are also explained. The involvement of the Pakistan army in this exercise is dealt with as an overview, the main points of reference being military actions and conclusion of peace deals.

Chapter Three explains two aspects of the insurgency in FATA, deemed as crucial from the point of reference of strategy. One of these is stated as the composition of the insurgents, with emphasis on the local militants or the Pakistani Taliban, besides the non-Pakistani elements. A detailed examination of the second aspect of tactics covers the militants' style of warfare, underscoring the adoption of guerilla war and terrorism, pronounced by acts such as ambushes, hit-and-run strikes for the former and suicide bombings, abductions and killing of security personnel for the latter. Reference is also

made to Mujahiddeen tactics against the Soviets in Afghanistan, to highlights similarities with insurgent tactics in FATA. The impact of these two aspects on the army and its strategy is pointed out, as well as the responsive attempts by the army, and also its strategic orientations.

Chapter Four elaborates the counterinsurgency exercise of the Pakistan army in FATA, by bringing in focus various aspects such as troop deployment, military operations, pacific measurese, challenges confronted, peculiar issues that influenced strategy and conduct, and the role the US played vis-à-vis all these. The out come of the military's actions, and the indications it provided to the strategy, are analysed on the bases of actual events (that preceded or followed the military's actions)and with references to the following the army's strategic culture, its approach towards irregular war (when waged by groups sponsored by it), its preparation for unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency, and the manner in which these factors affected the army's counterinsurgency strategy and conduct.

Chapter Five states the conclusion drawn from this study. The focal points of the study, presented in an analytical framework, are summarized. The characteristics of the Pakistan army's counterinsurgency strategy are enumerated. The two hypotheses are examined so as to state whether they are proven or not. Implications, as gleaned from the study are highlighted, incorporating the paradigm presented by the general and specific contexts of counterinsurgency, developed around the role of the military and the strategy formulated and pursued.

A list of references, including both primary and secondary sources, is given.

Two appendices follow the above. One provides reference to the aspect of troop deployment. The second deals with a factors relevant to the theme of the study, by stating and explaining the military relationship (covering various dimensions) between the Pakistan army and the Mujahiddeen and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the twin realms of insurgency and counter-insurgency by analyzing the development of both as a cause and effect. At the same time it also highlights the most contemporary form that insurgency has acquired in today's world-global insurgency spearheaded by the emergence of Al-Qaeda and related groups. Consequently responses by affected states, weathering dealing with the general type of insurgency or its latest form are discussed with a special emphasis on the role of strategy.

I. Insurgency as a recent (Post-1945) Phenomenon

The world post 9/11 witnessed the launching of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) by the United States of America which also encompassed application in asymmetric conflict scenario. This indicated the prominence acquired by asymmetric warfare in today's world. War has undergone fundamental changes in the last few years, which show up in two observable ways: a shift from conventional to unconventional war, and a shift from defining combatants by land and language to defining them by issue and event.¹ (Fowler 2005:1). Both have become the mainstay of a number of bloody internal wars, most often with transnational dimensions, which were characterised also by the fact that military forces of modern nation-states were now engaging, and opposing, non-state armed groups. Insurgents terrorists, militias and criminal organizations, regarded as the product of weak and failing states (Shultz and Dew. 2006:259) challenged state authority, and therefore, its armed forces.

One such phenomenon was that of insurgency. According to the US Army doctrine US Army Field Manual Interim(FMI3-072:2) Counterinsurgency Operations, it is defined as "an armed political movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government, or separation from it, through use of subversion and armed conflict" (Cassidy 2006: 12; Hashim 2006:xvii). It is a protracted politic- military conflict aimed at undermining government legitimacy and control by increasing insurgent control, the goal being to mobilize material and human resources to establish an effective

¹ E.g. Islamic Militancy, and September 11 events.

counterstate. Effective mobilization enables active and passive support for the insurgency's goals, programmes and operations. Loyalty is garnered through acts or abstract tenets, like establishing a government based on religious ideology. The ideology² per se influences the insurgency to such an extent that it can affect its operational and organizational methods(Cassidy 2006:12).

The insurgents today possess the forces national governments use to go to war: leadership, combat forces, intelligence and combat support(Fowler 2005:26 Beckett 2001:237). Much of these are employed in a variety of tactics and forms of warfare to achieve their aims and defeat the government. Guerilla warfare was, and remains, one widely employed form of conflict, so much so, that viewed from this point, "modern revolutionary guerilla war might be termed insurgency". (Beckett 2007:vii) Since 1945, the practice of guerilla war showed signs of a deeper comprehension of the potential of irregular modes of conflict by their practitioners. This led to its becoming revolutionary in both intent and practice socio-economic, political and psychological elements thus became grafted onto traditional irregular military tactics in order to radically alter the structure of state by force. The dissident groups, weaker than the authorities and initially in a minority, would thus attempt to seek power through a combination of subversion, propaganda and military action(Beckett 2007:vii).

Colonization and the end of those ideological conflicts that shaped the Cold War did not lead to the diminishing of insurgency. Availability of weapons has led to the insurgents rivaling firepower of government forces, with the outcome of insurgencies being determined more by the military capabilities of the insurgents than by that of the latter weakened by incompetence, corruption and often lack of legitimacy³. Besides social, economic, political ethnic and demographic problems which alienate the population, the attraction posed by radical ideologies to many also cause insurgencies to develop and mature in many developing countries.

The kind of insurgencies that emerge can be categorised into the following. One is what Stephen Metz terms as "spiritual insurgencies", which are a response to modernization and globalization, while embracing elements of nativism, some others fall

² A study on insurgency by the US Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute states that an ideology can be used to unify diverse groups and organizations and impose the leader's will under situations of high duress.(Cassidy 2006)

³ due to problems inherent in modernization, popularity of radical ideologies like Islamic fundamentalism and the materialism of relative deprivation (Beckett 2001:237)

into the category of 'commercial' ones, 'which W.G. Thom calls also as "economic insurgencies" where mineral resources or drugs constitute the real prize for those seeking power. However, geography determines the existence of this type for it is dependent upon availability of mineral deposits (some parts of Africa) and suitable soils for drug cultivation (parts of Asia and Latin America). A third kind is mentioned by Christopher Clapham as "reform insurgencies", aimed at, at least theoretically, achieving radical reform of the state (Beckett 2001:237).

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF INSURGENCY

The origin and development of an insurgency would depend on the existence of many factors. These include a cause, suitable geographical conditions (especially for conduct of guerilla war), and provision of outside support (Galula 1964:11-16, 23-28). The advantage would be gained over the adversaries through the successful use of factors⁴ of time, space, legitimacy and or/support (Baylis et al (eds.)2002:212-219). Operation is maximized by adoption of ways that level the field and force others to fight without the advantages on which they have come to rely on (Fowler 2005:5).

The insurgents utilise various techniques and styles of war employed in the past, like guerilla warfare (Beckett 2001:vii). This includes operations in difficult terrain, possession of local knowledge denied to the enemy and support from the local populace. They depend upon mobility and continue to undertake such hit-and-run raids enabling them to evade larger forces and consequently prolonging their struggle. When engaging their opponents they exploit predictable patterns of behaviour of trained soldiers to own advantage. Their nonconformity to laws or conventions enables them to fight with less restraint than government forces, as well as indulge in as few pitched battles as possible and make their actions informal. There is a tendency to resort to imaginative and non traditional means to attack traditional targets, and ultimately to fight in ways that directly link their actions to their goals (Fowler 2005:12).

⁴ Time is an important element in insurgent success, involving a non-linear progression including the space to maneuver and to gain legitimacy and/or support. Space also includes terrain and force-to-space ratios. Support depends upon legitimacy, derived internally from interaction with local populace and externally via resources from allies and sympathizers. Legitimacy is sought for the use of violence and this is translated into meaningful support for the cause by demonstrating moral superiority over state representatives. It become the corner stone to sustain the struggle, usually blending cultural and social cause with political ends.

An increased access to technology, ideas and other facilities provided by open political systems enable the insurgents to amass resources, both human and material. These coupled with their skills at organisation, adaptability and creativity allow them to draw the desired advantages from their particular context. This context includes of composition of both themselves and their adversaries their equipment, resources, numbers, and the favourable time to strike. The location, the intensity of the action undertaken and actual operational or tactical fighting comprise other elements of the context of insurgent operation. "Insurgency works by sacrificing concentrated power for fighting speed, surprise, and coverage"(Fowler 2005:53).

Propaganda also counts as a weapon to strengthen solidarity and to undermine authority of security forces in the eyes of the population, as well as the international community. It acts as a force multiplier, making the insurgents appear for stronger than they really are. Protracted nature of modern insurgencies makes it important for both sides to maintain determination and will to prevail. Even if insurgents feel the 'righteousness' of their cause as sufficient, they still need to reinforce ideological appeal for others. Propaganda is thus employed to strengthen own beliefs and to present the rationale behind the struggle in a manner acceptable to the populace at large. It is also used to pot ray to the latter how and why the victory, if gained, by the insurgents is legitimate.

Terrorism, though distinguished from irregular warfare by the form the violence takes (Baylis et al (eds.) 2002:211), has been used as a tactical tool by the guerilla (Beckett 2001:180 and for various ends. The ambit covers the securing of demands, gaining submission by society (Ram 2004:40-41) or for getting publicity, attracting latent supporters or for insulating the counter-insurgents(Galula 1964:39-40).

Yet, the insurgency survives on the strength of its militant wing. The armed militants, therefore become, the main target of the security forces, for they pose the most formidable challenge in the efforts of the latter in restoring normalcy (Ram 2004:56).

The security forces representing today's governments are becoming increasingly vulnerable to a combination of the insurgency practiced in both rural and urban areas (Beckett 2001:238). The threat, however, has exacerbated to new dimensions due to developments in globalization and information age technology. This has led to a linkage of a host of various insurgent movements and like-minded organizations that operate regionally and globally. The ideological underpinnings have also metamorphosed, with

Marxism based insurgencies giving way to a predominance exercised by radical fundamentalist Islam(Cassidy 2006:13). A unifying ideology based on transnational and radical Islam predominates, and there are very few insurgencies still based on the Marxist ideology that was so central in post colonial insurgencies. This ideology figured in the mujahideen's fight against the Soviet, and has been a factor in Kashmir Palestine, Philippines, Eritrea, Chad, Sudan and Algeria (Beckett 2001:238). The advent of the Al Qaida, however, has brought insurgency into a global level.

III. Global Insurgency-and Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda represents the trend where it is possible for nongovernmental, nonprofessional armies to fight and in a global way that most national armed forces cannot. It is an evolving and mutating insurgency that incorporates transnational networks and a multiethnic international membership. Its resilience and potential longevity stem more from its continued capacity to recruit, to mobilize and to inspire both current and future fighters and supporters.

There is a resort to the use of classic insurgency methods within failing or failed Islamic states. Its methods are broadly relevant and appealing to other similarly dispersed terrorist groups. The adaptive model and nature of organization, sources of support and the environment in which it operates are all global and transnational. This international scope coupled with that of its objectives, intent and recruiting base differentiates global guerillas from popular guerillas operating within one region or state (Cassidy 2006:11-12).

The National Security documents of the US, that emerged in the period November 2005 to March 2006, replaced the term GWOT with the term Long War. These stated it to be the defining struggle of the generation and as one that shifts emphasis from large scale conventional military operation to small scale counterinsurgency operations. This shift highlighting its protracted nature and a more expanded dimension in space and time.

While the Non State Armed Group(NSAG) was responsible for ushering in the transition to irregular warfare as primarily characterizing today's armed conflict, Al Qaeda became the first of this category to truly globalize the insurgency. Itself becoming the nucleus group behind various fighting organizations all sharing in its ideology, it leads the groups affiliating with it, which in turn function as a loose coalition, each with its command, control and communication structures (Cassidy 2006:11-12).

At the time of 9/11, Al Qaeda's core base was set in Afghanistan with satellite terrorist organization spanning the globe, with support from a conglomerate of Islamist political parties and other affiliated terrorist organizations for operational support (Bunker(ed.)2005:121). It thus went far beyond the state support of insurgent organizations prevalent during the Cold War. While the US-led Operation, Enduring Freedom did deal a blow to it, the organization achieved a strategic adaptation of ways to achieve ends, particularly through unity of effort and external support. (Bunker(ed.)2005:121). Much of its was achieved through the strategy of relocation of its cadre to sanctuaries, like Pakistan (Gunaratna 2002:217) where once again the "base" could be built up, expanded, and the alliance of other like minded militant groups, operating in those areas, could be secured.

Often the local groups resort to their own traditional styles of fighting, like the mujahiddeen in Afghanistan. This trend is likely to continue, as often traditional forms of war are primarily unconventional and of the nature of guerilla tactics. Notably in the form of ambushes and hit-and-run strikes, these tactics are often adapted and reinvented to fight modern foes, or to suit urban battlefields. The repertoire has been effectively broadened to include a variety of IED operations such as car bombs, suicide attacks, improvised roadside explosives. Besides, acts of abduction and beheading of both civilians and combatants from security forces are also committed. Also, foreign Islamic fighters bring their own brand of indiscriminate warfare to the fight (Shultz and Dew 2006:267). These outside actors bring important skills and support to local conflicts, and brook no restraint by any codes of warfare or limitation on targeting. Terror as a tactic replaces selective targeting (Shultz and Dew 2006:268). As operations merge their capabilities and intent would have to be looked at as if one, with observation focusing on combined operations. (Bunker(ed.)2005:133). With attempts to monopolize surprise and initiative much is left to the counter-insurgents to defeat the insurgent designs and regain lost ground.

IV. Counter-Insurgency, Efforts and Operations

The difficulties in countering insurgencies in many contexts appear insurmountable at first, for both governments and armies. However, solutions and ways to effectively deal with them have been the theme of many researches and works throughout the periods of time whenever insurgencies have appeared or thrived (Baylis et al

(eds.)2002:220). The problems arise due to the nature of this irregular war, which is thus different from fighting conventional forces. The goals and character of war therefore all being markedly dissimilar(Fowler 2005:54).

The intensity of challenge posed has prompted armed forces to defeat the perpetrators and prevent their resurgence. In many respects, development of counter-guerilla warfare and counter-insurgency, or COIN, have mirrored the forms adopted by both guerilla war and insurgency, for modern COIN encompasses a wide range of military, political, socio-economic and psychological activities employed by the authorities and their armed forces to defeat the threat in question(Beckett 2001:viii).

However, the progress of COIN throughout the years has not been uniform⁵. After 1945, it was characterized by a slowness-to adapt to this different form of war, despite the fact that many western armies did have either a recognizable doctrine, or at the very least, established principles for such situations. These could be utilised as the basis for a new doctrine, even if slowly, and as a result in every case, posts-1945 COIN doctrines have reflected the particular army's past experiences. In more recent times COIN has been subsumed into wider definitions of spectrum of conflict, being included both within low intensity conflict⁶ (Klare and Kornbluh (eds.)1988:53-54;Beckett 2001:viii), and later MOOTW, or Military Operation other Than War,⁷ (Beckett 2001:viii).

Victory in insurgencies has not been preordained in the favour of in the , even if the latter have won in some cases. For most part it has depended upon choice and circumstance, with COIN operations also having had their successes since 1945. (Beckett 2001). Many theorists have suggested a variety of principles based on both practical experience and analysis. Colonial works like those by Charles Calwell (1899) and Charles W Gwynn, 1934, point out the need for "bold initiative and resolute action' and firm and timely action, with minimum use of force and primacy of the civil government respectively. Yet, in most cases, direct engagements including open battle, were suggested as preferable to maneuvering, when it came to tactical considerations (Calwell

⁵ Mainstream military thought was little affected by these non conventional forms of warfare, despite the large number of campaigns fought against such opponents as colonial empties expanded in the late 19th century.

⁶ Some analysts equate LIC with guerilla warfare and COIN, while others broaden its scope to include a much wider range of threats, such as terrorism and counter-terrorism, surgical direct action, military operations, psychological warfare and even operation by conventional or general purpose forces, besides insurgency and COIN.

⁷ The US department of Defence outlines major included tasks to be arms control, combating terrorism, antitarug operation humanitarian assistance, military support to civilian authorities, nation assistance/support to COIN, peace operations and strikes and raids.

1899:91-92). John McCuen, 1966, insists on reversing the very principles and strategies on which guerilla and insurgent war is founded by providing a counter to four factors that characterize insurgencies- organization, terrorism guerilla warfare and mobile warfare. Julian Paget, 1967, stresses the need for a joint command and control structure, good intelligence, mobility, training, gathering local support, bases, supplies, and possessing the will to win hearts and minds Friedrich Heyte, 1986, suggests preventative and constructive measures, among others, while Paul Wilkinson, 1986, proposes non-adoption of totalitarian methods, and no concessions or deals, with the development of high quality intelligence 'long before the insurgency surfaces'. Richard Clutterbuck, 1990, also emphasises rule of law and intelligence and security as the base of tactics. Bard O'Neill, 1990, mentions a range of evaluative criteria for COIN, like environment, popular support, organisation and cohesion, and external support. There is also emphasis on a necessary support of population, gained through an active minority being conditional, but with the intensity of efforts and vastness of means being essential (Galula 1964:11-12, 52-55, 71,84). Many of these theorists stress on civil military cooperation and the necessity of a political role by the authorities. (Baylis et al (eds.)2002:221-223)

Robert Thompson, in his work of 1966, stresses on the use of appropriate military measures and the need to split active insurgents from their supporters. (Baylis et al 2002:220-221; Beckett 2001:107). The theorist is emphatic in elucidating the requirement for the government to have a clear political aim, and to establish an overall plan, whereby all political, socio-economic and military responses are coordinated. He also stresses the security of the base area prior to conducting of a military campaign, and with regard to military operations, he recommends the involvement of small-unit operations to meet and defeat the insurgents in their own element. Frank Kitson, 1977, differs from Thompson in regard to intelligence capabilities of the army for he opined that intelligence operations should be entrusted to army officers⁸ right from the beginning and also stressed the radical overhaul of the army's training with regard to COIN(Beckett 2001:225; Baylis et al(eds.)2002:222).

The stress on military force remains, even if the goals are political. Samuel Griffith, 1961, focuses on three actions to effectively counter insurgents (i)location of the threat with response armed at maintaining lawful legitimacy(2) isolating the insurgents

⁸ Kitson argues that the army was the primary user of intelligence.

both physically and politically from their bases of support, limiting their range and mobility (3)eradication, which would be a long drawn process, and would assume different forms in different political and cultural contexts. This could be attempted through eliminating safe havens, committing adequate number of the troops the accepted ratio of government forces to guerillas being often cited as 10:1 (Baylis et al(eds.) 2002:224), civilizing specialized units and/or technologies like helicopters to achieve superior mobility. Passive measures would include, psychological warfare techniques', case incentives, promise of amnesty and discrediting the insurgent cause as fallacious, and engaging and supporting moderates within the insurgent organisation. The emphasis is on either active or passive methods or a combination of both. However, the theorists stress that every effort must be premised on political will to defeat the insurgency and with a resort to a maximized use of full range of response capabilities(Baylis et al(eds.)2002:225).

One major action that could make COIN efforts a worthy success is that of winning hearts and minds⁹ of the local populace. This is done through steps taken by the representatives of the state to prove their moral superiority over the guerillas and their commitment to provide for the needs of their people, including responding to the sources of disgruntlement that either led to, or fuelled the insurgency. The aim is also to discredit the insurgent cause, and denial of popular support to the insurgents' efforts.

However, successfully attaining popular support is not the only problem presenting itself before the state or its armed forces. The first hurdle arises from the particular army's own military culture, which finds it hard to adapt, or even respond to, irregular challenges(Cassidy 2006:20-35). The regular soldier's mentality shaped by the institutional ethos and training provided, enshrines the belief that armies exist primarily to fight large-scale conventional wars, (Beckett 2001:24). Also, many governments inadvertently reinforce these conventional warfare idioms and even weaknesses, like Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)¹⁰, and many other governments plan to fight against peers, and not in surgents, anticipating threats from neighbours, rivals or a regional influence. Besides, it is easier to fight well-defined peers with a well-defined

⁹ A term introduced by Sir Gerald Templar.

¹⁰ Conventional armed forces rely on SOPs to train large number's of soldiers in the preferred way of doing things. All soldiers operate with the same understanding, allowing for their coordination necessary for fighting conventional wars. Leads to a predictable pattern of behaviour, which can be exploited to make people trained in that SOP in predictable ways.

composition and power than to combat something ill-defined in a war with no clear end (Fowler 2005:10-11).

Worst of all, as a form of conflict, insurgencies and counterinsurgencies do not offer their practitioners any short cut to triumph. Results are not necessarily obtained quickly or in conventional military terms of decisive battles won and lost. For these very reasons, the participants are confronted with political, social and other pressures to a far greater extent than most other forms of conflict (Beckett 2001:ix). Despite such problems posed, COIN was practiced in the cold war era, with mixed results and is practised today. A report on COIN by the RAND Corporation, July 2008, examined 89 insurgencies since World War II, and pointed out that insurgencies of today are globalised, and heavily influenced by transnational terrorist movements and linked into a global jihadist network. The authors of the report thus provided conclusions based on their study, the premise of the former being that "COIN is a context for allegiance of a nation's population; victory over a jihadist insurgency consist not of merely winning a war against terrorists but of persuading Islamic populations to choose a legitimate government and to reject violent religious tyranny". The authors also pointed out three types of COIN capabilities-(1) civil capabilities to help weak states improve political and economic performance(2) Informal and cognitive capabilities to enable better governance and improve COIN decision-making and(3) security capabilities to protect people and infrastructure and to weaken insurgent forces (Gompert et al 2008, Report No.MG-595/2-OSD)

V. Cold War Counterinsurgency Experiences of Superpowers

The Cold War period witnessed many insurgencies with the superpowers involvement in varying degrees. Direct embroilment occurred in the cases of Vietnam (1965-73) by the USA and Afghanistan (1979-89) by the former USSR. Ground forces were committed on a large scale, and the experiences of these counterinsurgencies once more indicated that the armed forces tended to operate within almost a preordained tradition with respect to COIN. In both cases, what was termed as strategic culture proved unhelpful and led to ignominious withdrawal(Beckett 2001:183).

Despite the familiarity of the US to waging of COIN, predominant cultural attitudes made it difficult to comprehend the nature of their irregular opponents. The Americans continued to stress on overwhelming firepower as the antidote to all irregular challenges. Thomas Mockaitis terms this is an expression of the American maximalist

approach to problem-solving, with the notion that the best way to minimize violence, required for maintaining order, is to use overwhelming force. Though this application has never brought victory in an LIC, Mockaitis states, but as the American political culture and attitude is not suited to protracted war, and since it places great faith in efficacy of military power to resolve conflicts, it would have difficulty applying minimum force.

The American way of war, focusing on the “strategy of annihilation” was the cause of such an orientation towards all wars. The history of US strategy testifies to an American conception of war that best characterizes American strategists as “strategists of annihilation”. This development was due to the increase in American wealth and the adoption of unlimited aims in war. The impact of these factors ultimately led to such a strategy becoming characteristic of the American way of war (Cassidy 2006:122-123).

This criticism was also leveled by the 1985 Joint LIC (JLIC) final report by listing four prevalent themes, covering statements that as a nation the US did not understand war, it responded without unity of effort, executed activities poorly and lacked the ability to sustain operations. It also highlighted two common trends that despite LIC being the most likely threat, the US had no coherent strategy for dealing with it and continually applied conventional solutions to unconventional challenges (Cassidy 2006; Downie 1998:2,77). This tendency to think and apply the same prescription to LIC was the greatest obstacle to developing capability for the latter. This implied an overreliance on traditional structure and approaches. (Cassidy 2006:121). For instance, various editions of the Field manual FM 31-21 ‘Guerilla Warfare’ continue to regard COIN operations as a continuation of conventional operations. This attitude of the sixties continued to stress on firepower, mobility especially in the air, and aggressive leadership, as in the case of FM 31-16 ‘Counter-Guerilla Operations’. A number of manuals advocated artillery usage for psychological impact, resulting from applying continuous pressure forcing the guerillas to reveal their locations and thus enable their encirclement. All supply functions and infiltration from across an international frontier could be prevented by establishing free-fire zones. (Beckett 2001:184-185; Dawnie 1998:55). As of present (2008), the US, despite prosecuting COIN in Afghanistan and Iraq, still has “capabilities deficient in several critical areas” (Gompert et al 2008, Rand COIN study, report no.MG-595/2-OSD).

The lessons that the former Soviet Union learnt from Afghanistan centred around the need for better tactical groupings, a better understanding of how to direct fire support

and an infantry trained in fire and maneuver (Beckett 2001). New operational concepts like the *bronegruppa*¹¹ were introduced (Shultz and Dew 2006:172, Grau and Gress 2002:311).

The greater use of helicopters as a mobile air borne attack platforms proved very successful (Shultz and Dew 2006:172-173) but not after the Mujahideen began to employ the Stinger missiles. In any case, a greater use of technology “does not make a military that embraces the big-war doctrine any less conventional or any more successful.” (Cassidy 2006: 31). The Afghan resistance effectively countered the Soviet strategy of annihilation by conducting a protracted war of attrition. Despite applying their innovations, the Soviets did not win the war, nor did they succeed in achieving other goals. However their efforts did indicate the kind of tactics and approaches required, and those that could work, but with a more skilful handing.

The problems that confronted the Soviets were a lack of agility, as the soldiers remained tied to mechanised heavy forces and to a conventional doctrine, an asymmetry of will and in tolerance for losses. They also underwent difficulties in sustaining their ground in the face of protracted war. There were no attempts to overturn a cultural inertia to change the doctrine, training and organisation of an army well adapted for a European war against its principal adversary (Cassidy 2006:31,50). Also, the Soviets never really understood their enemy or the country where they fought. Although, like the Americans, the Soviets were no strangers to COIN they did not show an indication to learn from previous experiences whether theirs or of others, for “British experience on their Indian Northwest Frontier is replete with tactical solutions to fighting the ancestors of the mujahidee. Mujahideen tactics were basically unchanged over the decades, and the British lessons were still valid.” (Grau and Gress 2002:310). Although the British search for solutions to the Frontier problem became centred around the creation of buffers, their tactical dealings with the Pakhtun tribes, are regarded as a reference for those dealing with similar, if not the same, predicament. British experiences in such areas led to a number of works on hill warfare, including the one by Calwell (Beckett 2001:47-48).

By the end of World War II, a large number of British soldiers and colonial policemen had an equal familiarity with the actual conduct of guerilla war. Many of the

¹¹ This concept was developed to use the fire power of the personnel carriers in an independent reserve once the motorized rifle soldiers had dismounted. It was a bold step as it enabled the commanders a potent maneuverable reserve able to attack independently on the flanks, block enemy routes, pick up forces, perform patrols, and provide convoy escort and security functions.

techniques involved in a political military insurgency, particularly of guerilla war, were merely adaptations of traditional rebel tactics against which the British had often fought in their imperial past. Thus by 1945, they already possessed three important characteristics for LIC: experience, appropriate military skill and flexibility. There was no elaborate theory demanding rigid adherence, but series of response adapted to fit specific conditions(Cassidy 2006:87).

The British principles for COIN therefore were minimum force, civil and military cooperation to win support of the population, and decentralization of command and control, nurtured by the regimental system and which created initiative in junior leaders. The success of British small wars was attributed to this development of military manpower system by Elliott Cohen, who stated that this system was uniquely suited to such conflicts. Michael Dewar suggested the success to result from the British willingness to fight like their indigenous adversaries. But the approach per se was not without criticism. Frank Kitson, for one had pointed out the need to train and educate the army for COIN, as their approach remained conventional for most part. Yet, his analysis of the nature of insurgency itself differed little from that of other COIN theorists such as Thompson and merely reflected evolving British practice.

Years of experience in LIC and COIN did indeed imbue the British institution with certain principles about use of force, leading to the acceptance of minimum force and only when required. Also, this is coupled with an exhibition of patience with protracted internal security problems, and not to overrely on technology as a be all and end-all solution. They also do not display an aversion to casualties in the context of small wars and COIN. Overall, several principles of COIN discerned from their imperial and colonial experiences did approve to have lasting relevance for the British army's role in LIC.

VI. British Experiences of North-West Frontier Warfare

The British conducted as many as 52 large scale expeditions on the North Western Frontier of India, between 1894-1914 (Beckett 2001:31). "The main problem was the position of the wild hill-tribes, which lived in the regions lying between Afghan and British territories and owed allegiance to neither". (Majumdar et al 2001:830). Dealing effectively with these tribes did not prove to be easy, and punitive expeditions had to be mounted to quell the turbulent clansmen. The years 1893 and 1897 witnessed serious outbreak of revolts by tribes like the Mohmands and regular military expeditions, notably

the Tirah campaign, were necessary to quell them (Calwell 1906:301-302; Majumdar et al 2001:830).

Measures such as building of strategic roads and railways in frontier districts and distribution of troops to cope with the adversaries more effectively and expeditiously did not prove adequate. Occasional raids into British territory and other disturbances by the tribes became a permanent feature to such an extent that the British Government had to resort to aerial bombing to subdue the tribals (Majumdar et al 2001:830), and this trend was repeatedly witnessed in later years as well, when the Royal Flying Corps, or RFC's¹², Bristol Fighters participated in operations in Waziristan 1916-17 and the RAF, conducted bombing raids against rebellious Waziris in 1919 (O'Ballance 2003:60,65). From 1919 onwards, the RAF's employment proved to be very effective at intimidating wavering tribal sections into making a settlement with the government, but determined lashkars, or tribal war groups, learned to cope with air attacks. "Insurgents became accustomed to protecting their bases from aerial bombing by situating them in caves". (Warren 2000:285).

As regards the ground troops, regulars were withdrawn from the Khyber Pass, Kurram Valley, Waziristan and the tribal area generally, with their place being filled by tribal levies under British officers which constituted the role of locally enlisted paramilitary militias armed and trained as light infantry, or by military police. (Majumdar et al 2001:890 O'balance 2003:52). However, following the uprising by the Mehsud tribe in 1900-1902, and the Mohmands and Zakka Khel in 1908-1909, and especially 1919, the British once again began the retaining of commanding post at important points and entrusting the regular troops with the duties of the militias for policing the tribal lines, besides resorting to extensive military preparations in general to suppress the uprising of the Waziri tribes in 1919, Mehsuds in 1925, serious revolts by Waziris, Mohmands and Afridis 1930-31, Mohmands in 1933 and the Tori Khel in 1936-37 (Majumdar et al 2001:891).

For much of 1920's and 1930's operations in Waziristan became "seemingly perennial" (Beckett 2001:47) In 1919 during the Third Anglo-Afghan War, many of the locally enlisted North and South Waziri militias deserted to join the Afghans, with the whole of Waziristan following suit in open revolt (O'balance 2003:65). Many tribesmen had undergone formal military training and as a consequence had a very good

¹² Became the Royal Air Force, or RAF, on 1 April 1918.

understanding of British tactical methods both of which aided the insurgent cause. Also, between 1900-191, several thousand Waziris and Mchuds had been recruited into the British Indian Army alongwith the militias; these skills were also put to good use against the government troops, when those elements had switched sides to participate in the rebellion against the government. These features became evident during the 1936-37 insurgency in Waziristan(Warren 2000:280).

The prime advantages possessed by the insurgent tribes were that of their being well-armed, the well-suited mountainous terrain, a residue of hatred towards the government from past wars guerilla tactics and a weak administration that gave the insurgency the opportunity to develop unhindered and unobserved. Yet tribal form of warfare also produced both advantages and disadvantages.

As for the British heavy casualties were incurred. Other problems were the open border with Afghanistan, the slow drive towards mobility to suit counter guerilla operations as opposed to defensive tactics and siege mentality, terrain, high economic costs and negative consequences of small-Colum operation, with regard to deence of forts and posts(Warren 2000:112-113).

However, a very delicate combination of drive and tact was required to implement chosen policies by the British. Ultimately, the nature of the British armed presence in Waziristan proved to be a constant provocation to the tribes, despite all British policies towards them. Assassination and murder of government personnel, and skirmishing between government militias and Aribesmen remained annual occurrences in Waziristan. Although the British applied various methods including negotiations, to seek the cooperation of the tribes, spontaneity of the revolts proved how little the government understood about happenings in tribal society(Warren 2000:66,68,72,106,120). The British hoped that swift and vigorous action would reduce the need for a long-drawn out debilitating campaign like that of 1919, yet frontier tactics remained mired in predictability and caution for most part (Warren 2000:105, 1120).

Nevertheless, many of the British principles are regarded as of relevance today as they were in the Frontier campaigns. These principles primarily signify the importance of intelligence, and the need to seize initiative with boldness and vigour (Beckett 2001:36).

VII. Counter insurgency for Contemporary Scenarios

The battlefield for the counterinsurgents today is no longer limited in scope and space. As the Al Qaida-led or inspired global insurgency expands regionally and

transnationally, participants in COIN have to engage the threat from various angles and dimensions, and deal with a varied grouping of militants and other insurgents, who may or may not have their own peculiar agendas subsumed within, or attached to the main aim.

The successful completion of COIN operations today, consist of actual experiences and suggested desiderata. The requirements to defeat effectively such challenges would also have to be continued to be developed or honed further. Faster moving forces, smaller than traditional size units but simultaneously numerically superior to their foes are perceived as required. Ready to strike when needed and capabilities based on requirement, this force is estimated to be in sharp contrast to usual characteristics of conventional forces. It is also necessary to break insurgences down by region to see which operations are ongoing in each region to assess the degree to which violence in each region has its own characteristics and its own variation in this type of war(Fowler 2005:55,58). Also, “to win, we must retake surprise and initiative and force insurgents to fight outside their favoured contexts and conditions”(Fowler 2005:155).

Planners continually require to keep in mind the ability of traditional, for instance tribal, warriors to adapt their time -tested skills to modern adversaries or to new areas of operations. Also, policymakers retain the need to consider how and where to deeply forces and how to plan for urban battles. (Shultz and Dew 2006:266). There is also indispensability of an extremely capable intelligence infrastructure endowed with human sources and deep cultural knowledge. This is accompanied by a sound understanding of the complex and qualitative nature of this type of warfare as much of it deals into the population’s perception of both the insurgents and the government’s, or the armed forces legitimacy and credible capacity to coerce¹³ (Cassidy 2006:163).

The main principles to be kept in constant view are employment of minimum force, but with credibility and persuasiveness, a unified and joint civil-military interagency approach, wherein all measures are taken to enhance the perceived legitimacy of the government, and to maximize the employment of indigenous forces¹⁴ early in both regular and irregular roles. The last, points to those forces which are local, and this in turn

¹³ The credible capacity to coerce, with restraint and the security it thus brings, is also inexorably linked to the people’s perception of the government’s legitimacy.

¹⁴ In the case of an intervening power or state these imply the native people or forces or even the state army of the country where COIN is being carried out.

provides the COIN effort with invaluable assets-troop increase, and addition of those “troops whose knowledge of the terrain, culture and language generally produce on even greater and exponential improvement in actionable intelligence on the insurgents and their infrastructure”(Cassidy 2006:127) Besides, conventional weaponry, tactics and strategies are seen as needing alteration to counter Al Qaida and allies (Bunker(ed.)2005:144). This process also becomes one of continuity for COIN planners.

As the US War On Terror rages on, chiefly in Afghanistan and Iraq, the above remain the requirements to be met by the COIN operatives throughout the world. This is all the more so by those prosecuting COIN in own countries, like Pakistan continue to be lessons gleaned from the catastrophes in Somalia, Chechnya and other battlefields where primarily the Western powers suffered both in terms of military performance and overall prestige Contemporary COIN, therefore, remains a continuing affair, where each successful or failed COIN effort contributes to the general process and its attempted triumphant application. The requirement for the latter can be met through the creation and implementation of a sound COIN strategy.

It is this subject of COIN strategy, as applied in the context of the insurgency in Pakistan’s Federally Administered tribal Areas (FATA), by the Pakistan Army, that forms the focus of research for this study. Although many in Pakistan, including the government, observers, analysts and sections of the media emphasized that it was Pakistan’s own war on terror, the COIN exercise was due to the US compulsions regarding the GWOT. At the time of writing, it remained so, i.e. as the US War on Terror being waged by Pakistan on its soil and by its own troops. The context of formulation and application of the COIN strategy, as well as COIN actions in general, were therefore dictated by this *raison d’etre*, which in any case, overrode all other causes or compulsions faced by Pakistan, as it stated them, in terms of affecting its COIN campaign.

VIII. Strategy and Counter-Insurgency

The role played by strategy in war has hardly escaped notice. Neither has its indispensability for dealing with asymmetric threats although with a difference to suit the changed circumstances(June of 2007, *German News*, XLVIII(02/2007:15).

Strategy is “the use of engagements for the object of war”(Gray 1996;4). Its realm covers the relationship between means and ends. This itself renders the whole gamut of strategy dynamic, because ends and means both differ depending on a host of variables. War uses both material and moral force, and both these components have not been static,

especially in today's situation where the War On Terror presupposes different goals, and therefore corresponding means, from the wars of the past. Thus "as a result strategy must be a continuous process of original thinking, based upon hypotheses which must be proved true or false as action proceeds; it is a process in which any mistakes of appreciation will reap the bitter reward of defeat." (Beufre 1965:136)

Thereby, strategic discussion is believed to consider what difference the use, or threat of use, of force would make to the course of events. It also involves the need to incorporate a holistic approach, wherein a politically desirable condition should inspire policy choices. These in turn which should be supported by a strategy making proper use of an operational competence founded upon tactical excellence. At the same time, it is also imperative not to shy away from asserting "the identity and strategic significance of a key force. In other words, notwithstanding the complexity of an issue, there is likely to be a particular kind of power, probably military power, that is most appropriate to a specific context(Gray 1996:8).

The relationship between strategy and tactics is therefore crucial. While tactics are defined as "the use of armed forces in the engagement" (Gray 1996:4), and the focus of tactical discussion being what force, or threats of force did, or might have done (Gray 1996:5), the sources of the tactics are attributed to strategy. It is the latter that decides the form of the conflict, its nature, the decision or not to use force, and its kind, the place of the military aspect, and even the use of strategic weapons. Strategy therefore is taken as being in charge for "choice of tactics is in fact strategy"(Beufre 1965:48). Besides, it should direct the evolution of tactics to enable their proper play in reaching a decision. (Beufre 1965:48-49).

However, the successful drafting of a strategy itself depends on a number of considerations. Firstly, there is the selection of the kind of strategy based on the fulfillment of the desired aim or objective. "The objective should guide the initial decision between military or military-political strategy, or a combination of the two" (Archer Jones 1996:221). Other considerations would include a thorough understanding of the terrains.¹⁵ (Cassidy 2006:64, Beckett 2001:32 Archer Jones 1996:222-224) the role of intelligence (Fowler 2005:70-75; Ram 2004:84-85; Mandel 2006:17-19, 142-143)",

¹⁵ In a COIN environment this factor becomes indispensable, as the insurgents, more so as guerillas rely heavily upon both physical and artificial offensive and defensive features to gain and retain the advantage over their adversaries.

and an equally in-depth comprehension of the adversary of the adversary (Fowler 2005:55-57 Shultz and Dew 2006:260) as “when statesmen and their military and intelligence services dismiss the capabilities of such irregular adversaries as primitive, and fail to plan appropriately, catastrophe ensues” (Shultz and Dew 2006: 260). This highlights the due consideration of this factor for dealing with contemporary insurgency, incorporating within an avowed emphasis on traditional cultures and ways of warfare of local insurgents.

The role of the armed forces, is to be understood by the process¹⁶ by which their capacity to achieve a decision evolves, which in other words, also forms the main key to military strategy(Beufre 1965:55). Consisting of four distinct elements of force development, their deployment employment and coordination of these actins in pursuit of national objectives (Drew and Snow 1988:81-91), the military strategy must also effectively deal with constraints (Archer Jones 1996:197) but while retaining own freedom of action. (Beufre 1965:135), which is indispensable to deliver decisively against insurgent actions.

IX. Counterinsurgency Strategy, Strategic Interaction, and Imperatives for Success

Since the primary strategic aim of the insurgents is to nullify the opponents' advantages and force them to confront the former on their terms, their tactics are formulated, selected and applied to this end in sight. By grasping this key feature, a COIN strategy can discover, or invent, an effecting counterstroke. It also uses this knowledge to determine the tactics necessary to successfully counter global insurgency. Thus, it would enable the military cultures to accomplish the much needed transition, wherever required, to the kind of institution needed to age irregular war. The military would be rendered capable of thwarting their irregular opponents and through primarily military means, if necessary. “A decision has therefore sometimes been achieved by military means alone as a result of superior strategy and without a major battle in the strict sense of the term.” (Beufre 1965:57). The sum total of the dispositions and maneuvers which constitute the process in which the opposing forces are brought within range, and where each moves

¹⁶ Or the capacity to grasp changes in the art of war more quickly than the enemy and so be in a position to foresee the effect which new factors will have.

for engagement in conditions most favourable to itself, is called as 'operations'. These set the limit for actual implementation of strategy, wherein the military commander has to decide the type of manoeuvre required to carry out the politically designated task. This choice of a course of action is an aspect of strategy and determines the strategic posture to be adopted during the military action.

The approaches can be direct or indirect and can be applied to both an offensive or a defensive strategy. The most suitable combination for an army's COIN strategy becomes all the more difficult and at the same time challenging and innovative, owing to the nature of the engagement itself. The role of the strategy in determining the outcome in such asymmetric conflict forms the theme of Ivan Arreguin-Toft's 'Strategic Interaction Theory' as discussed in *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (2005). He suggests that the strategies adopted by the strong actor (the state) and the weak actor (the militants) and their mutual interaction, based on the two approaches, decided the outcome in the favour of the strong actor if the strategic approaches by both actors are similar i.e. direct-direct or indirect-indirect. Similarly, if the above are opposite -direct-indirect or indirect-direct, weak actors are more likely to win. Thus if "we think of strategies as complex but discrete plans of action which include assumptions about the values of objectives, as well as tactical and leadership principles and rules of engagement, different interactions should yield systematically different outcomes independent of the relative power of the actors involved." (Arreguin-Toft 2005:18).

Arreguin-Toft also explains the two approaches' 'Direct' strategic approach is the conventional style of war, conventional attack and defence, when the adversary's armed forces are targeted with the aim of destroying or capturing the latter's physical capacity to fight, making will irrelevant. They feature soldier to soldier contests along with codified rules of conduct and a shared conception of victory and defeat. 'Indirect' approach implies the use of guerilla warfare and terrorism, aimed at destroying the opponent's will to resist, making physical capacity irrelevant. This is done by targeting enemy soldiers and non-combatants, and cause constant-if-incremental loss of soldiers, supplies and equipment, with little chance of quick resolution. Thus opposite-approach interaction implies victory for weak actors because they refuse to engage on the strong actor's terms, i.e. where it has a power advantage, leading to the protracted nature of the conflict. The converse becomes true for same-approach interactions as there is nothing to mediate or deflect the strong actor's power advantage.

The research hypotheses for this study are premised on the understanding of these approaches and their interaction, as well as their application, to the insurgency in FATA by the two actors. The Pakistan army is taken as the strong actor, as it represents the state, and the militants or insurgents as the weak actor. The research hypotheses are, therefore, as follows:

- (1) The Pakistan army's strategy for COIn has largely followed a direct, maximalist and fire power heavy approach.
- (2) The 'Strategic Interaction' theory is a useful aid in providing an assessment and recommendations for the possible outcome of the conflict. It can be employed to explain the rationale behind the suggested selection of an indirect approach by the Pakistan army for achieving parity in approach with the militants and thus to win the conflict through a successful COIN strategy.

At the same time, it becomes imperative to be cautious about existing difficulties, involving the choice of approach, as achieving a strategic success depends on six connected reasons (Gray 1996) and a strategic victory is hard to attain in an unconventional challenge (Mandel 2006). The factors are based on the strategist's (1) difficulties in straddling the diversified nature of today's engagements or use of forces, (2) the strategy maker's capacity to be innovative, (3) the physical and moral strains of command (4) acquisition of the required competence (5) the thorough understanding of even the little things that can prove to be catastrophic, and (6) the ability to make and adhere to judgments in the face of gross uncertainties, besides a comprehension of how very different kinds of armed force can generate the effectiveness yielding politically useful consequences.

Secondly, the problem of achieving victory arises from the unsuitability of the conventional forces for this task, the negation of advanced technology and superiority in military force and the protracted nature of the conflict. These problems can be addressed however, by adaptability reflected in the creative countermeasures, besides a redefinition of what strategic victory implies in this context, for "just continuing with dogged adherence to standard ways of winning is decidedly not adequate to deal with this irregular conflict." (Mandel 2006:155).

The COIN strategy in the current circumstances thus appear to be of the nature of suitable and well-reasoned, pre-defined victory, keeping all the peculiar factors and constraints in mind, or of management or containment, (Cassidy 2006:17). On an overall



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level, strategic planners “must plan on COIN as a feature of their overall security planning, not as an afterthought to it” (Fowler 2005:155) the employment of armed forces at present is in conjunction to the paramilitary, with aims to deal with local hostility if existing, and attempt to win the support of the local population, restoring and or maintaining the government’s legitimacy, civil-military cooperation, and a delineation of military tasks in support of the political objectives. These also incorporate issues like force levels, border security, anti-militant operations, and defence and security of the area and people (Ram 2004:61-67). These can also be accomplished through a more active involvement of indigenous forces, which “bring exponential increase in usable intelligence and can contribute to the legitimacy of the campaign, when those force are disciplined and well-trained. Their employment is a necessary component of any sound COIN strategy” (Cassidy 2006:130). This concept can be adapted to include local tribals or other groups also those disgruntled or having hostility to militants and their local supporters.

The prime consideration, however, rests with the correct choice of strategy, and its successful implementation. The strategy, thus, moves to determine the difference between defeat and victory, and so does its interaction, with the actions or strategy of the adversary, on one or many fronts.

CHAPTER 2

INSURGENCY AND THE CONTEXT FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY IN THE FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS (FATA)

This chapter examines the paradigm of insurgency and counterinsurgency as it appears in the specific context of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA, in Pakistan. It begins by highlighting the administrative system of the area as a prelude to a better understanding of the causes, growth and spread of the insurgency. It does so by presenting the former as one of the factors linked to both the phenomenon of the insurgency and the conditions it creates for the determination and conduct of the counterinsurgency. The British administrative system in FATA and its impact on FATA governance as being carried out today is also stated, along with the role the local population continues to play in this scheme.

The militancy in FATA is then described in terms of its geographical spread, and the causes and factors aiding it. These include the support from various quarters and a host of other events and state of affairs that contributed to the widening of the insurgency's ambit, and the proportions it assumed.

The situation created by such an insurgency is then covered in terms of the threats presented to the security situation of Pakistan per se, and the concerns it bred for other countries such as Afghanistan and the United States. The response of the Pakistani government to the militancy follows, with the chapter looking at the actions undertaken by the government and the standpoints that led to them.

The Pakistan army's conduct is dealt with in brief, outlining the various measures the army took to complement the government's chosen line. These actions of the army also serve as indicators of the determinants that shaped its counterinsurgency strategy, as well as underscoring those elements that merit inclusion both in the formulation process and its consequent implementation. The chapter ends with a look at the challenges that the army faced in both the above activities. The emphasis is on the presence of such hurdles both as part of the existing scenario, and their appearance as the counterinsurgency progressed, leaving the army strategists to deal with both one and the other.

I. Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

1. Location and Composition

Located along Pakistan's north-western border with Afghanistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA, consists of seven semi-autonomous political agencies or administrative districts and four frontier regions. The last includes tribal areas adjoining the Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan districts of the North West Frontier Province or NWFP. Article 246(c) of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan states the above delineation as well as that of the seven political agencies as:

- (i) Bajaur-smallest in size at 1290 sq.km. with a population of around 595,000¹⁷, it borders on Afghanistan's Kunar province.
- (ii) Khyber – 2576 sq. km. in area, it draws its name from the historic Khyber Pass linking NWFP and Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province. Population is about 547,000.
- (iii) Kurram – 2576 sq.km. in area, and a population of around 450,000, it borders Nangarhar Province in the north-west and Paktia in the south-west.
- (iv) Mohmand – 2296 sq. km. in area, it has a population of some 334,000 with Bajaur to the north, Malakand division of NWFP to the east, Peshawar to the south-east and Afghanistan to the west.
- (v) Orakzai –1538 sq. km. in area, it is the only FATA agency that does not share a border with Afghanistan. With a population of around 225,000, it borders Kurram on the west, alongwith. Khyber in the north, Kohat district to the south and Peshawar district to the east.
- (vi) South Waziristan –With 6620 sq. km. in area, it is the largest of the agencies and has a population of around 430,000. North Waziristan is to its north, Dera Ismail Khan district to the east, Balochistan to the south and Afghanistan is to the west.
- (vii) North Waziristan is the second largest agency with 4707 sq. km in area and a population of about 361,000.

Both Waziristan agencies border Afghanistan's Paktika and Khost provinces. Altogether, and a total population of 3,17 million according to the 1998 census.¹⁸

¹⁷ According to the 1998 census.

¹⁸ Unofficial estimates of FATA population range from 3.5 to 7 million.

Pashtun¹⁹ tribes predominate with main tribes being Tarkani and Ultmankhet (Bajaur), Afridis and Shinwaris (Khyber), Turi and Bangash (Kurram), Mohmands (Mohmand), Orakzai (Orakzai), Wazirs and Mehsuds (South Waziristan) and Wazirs and Dawars (North Waziristan). Wazirs and Mehsuds are traditional rivals, and are equally powerful. The latter live in the central mountain tract away from the high plain of Wana, which is the administrative headquarters of South Waziristan. Miranshah serves the same purpose for North Waziristan.

2. SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

(i) CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

Article 246 of the 1973 Constitution named the tribal areas as FATA and PATA, or Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (Warikoo(ed.)2007:133-135). FATA is geographically contiguous to NWFP and shares with it and PATA a common Pashtun dominated population, history and culture although with a separate status from both. While NWFP is one of Pakistan's four federal units, governed by an elected provincial government with the centrally appointed governor acting solely as the representative of the federal government and with PATA falling under the NWFP Chief Minister's remit alongwith being represented in NWFP's provincial legislature, FATA's arrangements are radically different in terms of administration.

Article 247 of the Constitution of 1973 states; "Subject to the Constitution, the executive authority of the Federation shall extend to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and the executive authority of the province shall extend to the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas"(International Crisis Group 2006; Asia Report No.125, 11 December:4). The acts of the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies are not applicable to these areas unless so decided by the President of Pakistan, who enjoys discretionary powers in the 1973 Constitution to make regulations with respect to the peace and good governance of FATA²⁰. However, the President could act only after consulting the local people represented in the local jirgas, or councils of elders²¹ (Warikoo(ed.)2007:133-35). The government's official rules of business state the responsibility for overall administrative and political control of FATA as resting with the Federal Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, or SAFRON. However, despite being

¹⁹ Or alternatively Pakhtun or Pathan.

²⁰ Article 247 (5)

²¹ Article 247(6) notes that the President can by order direct the cessation of whole or any part from being a tribal area with the consultation of a tribal jirga.

answerable to the elected Prime Minister and National Assembly, it is virtually irrelevant in policy implementation or execution in FATA, and its role is limited to acting mainly as a conduit for routing federal funds. Ultimate executive authority rests with the President and is exercised through the former's agent, the provincial governor.

(ii) **POLITICAL AGENT (PA)**

Each political agency has its administrative apparatus headed by a political agent or PA, who is a federal, and at times provincially recruited, bureaucrat. His assistant political agents head the two or three subdivisions of each agency, along with several political *tehsildars*²² and *naib-tehsildars*, who supervise the lowest tier of the agency administration, the sub-district or *tehsit*. Backed by *khassadars*, who are an irregular force to protect roads and other government installations and perform guard duties under the overall command of the PA, and levies or tribal militias besides paramilitary forces operating under army control, the PA exercises a mix of extensive executive, judicial and revenue powers with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and suppressing crime in the tribal areas.

The state relies on the services and collaboration of paid intermediaries, such as the maliks and holders of *lungi* status²³ to administer FATA. The PA grants tribal elders the status of malik, with the consent of the governor, on the basis of male inheritance. The PA can, however, arbitrarily withdraw, suspend or cancel both malik and *lungi* status if he deems the individual is not serving the state's interests. Maliks receive financial privileges²⁴ from the administration in line with their tribe's cooperation in suppressing crime, maintaining social peace and in general supporting the government, or in other words, showing loyalty to the federal government (Rammohan 2007, *USI Journal*, CXXXVII (569): 364).

The PA has several other tools at his disposal to divide and rule the tribes, including access to secret funds to pay informers and bribe tribesmen for information that can be used to exploit tribal rivalries. He can also recruit *khassadars* from different tribes, thus controlling a source of employment which the administration can use to coerce

²² Wield police, civil and revenue powers.

²³ The *lungi* is a form of official privilege and recognition granted by the political administration. It is lower in status to the malik and while theoretically is not hereditary, in practice it follows primogeniture.

²⁴ Other privileges include nomination to local government institutions, appointment to jirga and periodic access to the highest echelon of the government to represent tribal interest.

recalcitrant tribes or individuals, for instance, detaining *khassadars* or withholding their salaries to put pressure on their families or tribes.

(iii) **FRONTIER CRIMES REGULATIONS (FCR)**

Judicially, the tribal areas of FATA do not come under the control of Pakistani courts, unlike PATA. FATA's judicial system is enshrined in the Frontier Crimes Regulations of 1901, or FCR, which is a "hybrid colonial era legal framework that mixes traditional customs and norms with executive discretion." (International Crisis Group, 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December:5) Pakistan's civil and criminal laws do not apply to territory of political agencies and taxes are not collected. People in these areas settle their internal affairs on the basis of their common law or *Pakhtunwali*.²⁵ The FCR preserves the *jirga* to which the PA can refer civil and criminal matters, but the latter retains ultimate authority. The *jirga* relies on *Pakhtunwali* and passes verdict based on custom, which can be of the form of strong sanctions and punishment, which includes, among others, formation of a *lashkar*, or tribal militia, to punish the accused party.

Overall, the FCR concentrates discretionary policies judicial and executive authority in the PA, who under the FRC, exercises jurisdiction over 'administered areas', such as roads, government offices and other installations. The other two jurisdictions of 'inaccessible areas' and 'protected areas' are left to the tribesmen to regulate their own disputes, in the former case,²⁶ while in the latter, the tribal *jirgas* deal with civil and criminal offences though the PA can take executive action to deal with offences against a public official or state interests using force or the good offices of the *maliks*, depending on the gravity of the offence.

Regarding the use of force, Section 38-4 of the FCR gives law enforcement agencies, "a right to cause the death of a person" on suspicion of intent to use arms to evade arrest (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December:7). This authorization of force by the state is particularly relevant in the context of military operations in FATA, especially in South and North Waziristan Agencies since 2004, including air strikes.

²⁵ It is based on three elements of hospitality (*melmastia*), non-denial of the above to a criminal or enemy (*nanawati*), and the right to revenge (*badal*). The *Pakhtunwali*, therefore, constitutes the Pashtun code of honour.

²⁶ As these areas which are under nominal government authority.

3. BRITISH ADMINISTRATION OF FATA

(i) CREATION OF THE AGENCIES

Many of the administrative practices followed by the Pakistan government regarding FATA are in continuity from the British period. The British established a separate status for FATA to use it and the tribes straddling the Pak-Afghanistan border as a buffer against Afghan intervention and to interfere in Afghanistan.²⁷ In 1901, NWFP was granted the status of a separate province and divided into Settled Areas and Tribal Areas ("Agencies"), with the governor supervising administration under the Governor General of India, similar to the present system where he does the same as the agent of the President of Pakistan.

The political agencies were special territorial agencies with a form of government set up by the British. Numbers and boundaries changed several times, but the seven agencies at present were formed in different years, beginning from Khyber agency in 1878, followed by Kurram 1892, North Waziristan 1895, South Waziristan -1895-96 with the remaining being founded post independence, with Mohmand in 1951, Orakzai and Bajaur in 1973.

In 1895-6, with the formation of Waziristan agencies, and their boundaries roughly respecting existing geographical and tribal subdivisions, the British ensured their subsequent decisive role in the shaping of Waziristan's political history. Creation of administrative structure and placing of troops deep inside both Waziristans were two more ways to augment this new role, (Warren 2000:8-9). Alongside, London granted these areas a semi-autonomous status in return for tribal acquiescence to colonial rule. The British introduced the maliki system to create a reliable local elite whose loyalty they rewarded with a special status, financial benefits and official recognition of influence over the tribes. British laws were not applied to the area, and the tribals were left alone to be governed by their local laws.

However, the FCR, drafted in 1872 and promulgated in 1901 with amendments, was created to manage and control this restive frontier belt. It aimed at the provision of speedy justice in accordance with tribal customs, based on the premise of cohabitation between the jirga and the political agent, but with the latter superior in status.

²⁷ The same reasons exist for Pakistan, thus prompting the retention of the separate status for FATA.

(ii) **POLICY TOWARDS THE TRIBAL AREAS**

On the whole, the British policy towards the tribal belt remained a mix of persuasion, pressure and armed intervention, or a “carrot and stick” policy in general (Warikoo(ed)2007:134;Goodson 2001:37-38). The “carrot” became necessary, as control of tribes often proved both demanding and exceeding tough-as became the case often when the British suffered losses, which included also hundreds of troops, as a result of military incursions in North and South Waziristan. This brought forth the recognition that local Wazirs and Mehsuds outranked other Pashtun tribes as the most formidable fighters (Sirrs et al (eds).2004:205). Numerous attempts at pacification involved, among others, raising of militia corps or Scouts and the *Khassadars*, with hopes that someday those two kinds of government beneficiaries would be able to control the agencies by working together and fulfilling much the same sort of functions as the police, village khans and revenue collectors (Warren 2000:58).

(iii) **LEGACY OF THE BRITISH PERIOD TODAY**

The sway of the British government over the tribal areas of the latter-day FATA was never complete or even existent in actual practice. The Pakistan state today faces the same situation, where it is confronted with militancy in an area where the writ of its government does not hold. Despite all efforts exercised by governors and political agents the tribes succeed in maintaining and sustaining their semi-autonomy vis-a-vis such political representatives. Therefore, it is “a problem that has continued to persist in Pakistan and every government-whether a military or democratic one including General Musharraf’s, has had to contend with this issue”(Warikoo(ed)2007:169). Pakistan, thus inherited the status quo, replete with a history of defiance of British colonial attempts at administration, and the continuation of dominance by tribes by tribal chiefs, and their well-armed militias (Huband1998:9). Many of the latter, extended a hand of support to militants in both the pre 9/11 and post 9/11 contexts; leading to a situation displaying the fulfillment of all the requirements necessary for a strong insurgency to flourish, with a capacity to expand in terms of geographical areas as well.

II. **THE INSURGENCY IN FATA**

1. **GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD**

In May 2003 the militancy was confined to parts of South Waziristan. Almost five years on, it has spread to almost the whole of the seven agencies and some parts of the

NWFP(Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 10 January 2008). By August 2007, North Waziristan had become the most dangerous among all the seven constituents of FATA. Mohmand also experienced the emergence of tribal militants wanting to be known as Taliban, belying the status of this agency as the most peaceful one in FATA till that point. Tensions rising from militants actions also worsened in Bajaur. Khyber Agency suffered destabilization due to fighting between Islamic groups, and its occasional spill-over to Orakzai Agency further compounded the problems caused by periodic bouts of sectarian strife between Sunni and Shia tribes. The latter phenomenon has affected Kurram as well, with riots taking place for the first time in ten years, in a situation where the fallout of the Taliban-led resistance in the adjoining Paktia province is already being felt(Yusufzai 2007 *Newsline* 20(3) 33-37).

Even in January 2008, clashes were occurring between the militants and the military in South Waziristan, Khyber, Orakzai and Bajaur(Alamgir Bhittani and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 29 January 2008; Abdul Sami Paracha, *Dawn*, 29 January 2008; Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 3 March 2008; *Dawn* 13 March 2008).

2. CAUSES FOR THE RISE AND EXPANSION OF THE MILITANCY

(i) ARRIVAL OF THE AL QAEDA AND TALIBAN AFTER THE AMERICAN INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

The ouster of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan following the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom, caused the movement of survivors and renegades of this erstwhile regime to safe havens, which included FATA. Hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives and sympathies per se, in conjunction with the Taliban, used the mountain passes to enter both Waziristans and other bordering agencies from Afghanistan(International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no125, 11 December: 13-14; Heffelfinger(ed) 2005:283-4, 305-306; Warikoo (ed.) 2007: 133-135; Jalalzai 2005:75-77; Gunaratna 2002:11, Rammohan2007,*USI Journal*, CXXXVII(569):366,Aziz 2007, *Newsline*, 20 (3):36-37).

According to Pakistani officials, some 500-600 foreign fighters²⁸ mostly Arabs, Uzbeks²⁹, and Chechens, sought shelter there following US-led offensives against them in Spinghar near Tora Bora in December 2001 and Operation Anaconda in Shahikot Valley in Paktia in March 2002 (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December: 13; Naumkin 2005:38, 109, 264-265; Sirrs et al(eds.).2004:241-242).

²⁸ As well as Uighurs from Xinjiang, China.

²⁹ Mainly from the IMU, or Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

For the Al Qaeda, relocating to Pakistan's tribal areas was a strategic move based on two assumptions. The first lay in the hope of repeating history by driving the American and allied forces from Afghanistan in a protracted guerilla war, just as the jihadi fighters, or the mujahideen, forced the Soviets to withdraw more than a decade ago. The second is that the remnants of the Taliban would radicalize Pakistani society, in the process mobilizing a widespread revolt against Musharraf, leading to the installation of an Islamist government in Islamabad(Gunaratna 2002:217). One Al Qaeda compound has been discovered in Bajaur, believed to be used by Al Qaeda's top leadership (Heffelfinger(ed.)2005:271). The presence of the members of this organization continues to get attested with their arrest or elimination, which in the past has included the killing of senior operative Hamza Rabia in December 2005(Ismail Khan, Dawn, 26 September 2007), top leaders Abu Laith al-Libi and another militant Azzam al-Ameriki in North Waziristan in February 2008 (*The Indian Express*, 8 February 2008).

II) FOSTERING OF THE LOCAL SUPPORT BASE

The Taliban-Al Qaeda and other arrivals have provided generous financial support to many local militants and tribesmen in return for shelter and logistical support. The latter, however, insist that harbouring the "Mujahiddeen" is their religious duty. (International Crisis Group, Asia Report no.125, 11 December 13). The support for the Taliban is near universal in the border areas(Heffelfinger(ed.) 2005:283) on account of shared ethnicity, financial resources, sympathy for Muslim brethren (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, but in many cases coercion as well(Heffelfinger (ed.) 2005:283).It is also the issue of martial bonds for those foreign militants already settled in the areas, after they moved into the tribal regions post-participation in the Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan(Warikoo(ed.)2007: 133-135). During the Afghan civil war, several hundred foreign militants had also settled and married into local tribes in FATA (International Crisis group 2006, Asia Report 125, 11 December 2006: 13-14; Jalalzai 2005: 79-81). They had acquired landed property and been indulging in farming, but took up arms once more following the US-led attack on Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11, and also the Pakistan army operations in 2004(Warikoo(ed.) 2007:135; Jalalzai 2005:81). Such dregs have also included Uighur members of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement including its chief, Hasan Mahsum, who was later killed by Pakistani troops on October 2, 2004(Heffelfinger (ed.) 2005:310-311, 347-348).

Besides, various criminal, sectarian and religious groups including political parties grouped under the MMA or Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal have provided the Al-Qaeda-Taliban fugitives with logistic support to regroup in Pakistan. The arrival of the latter gave a new lease of life to these groups, who were facing problems due to international pressure(Heffelfinger (ed.) 2005:308).

(iii) **SUPPORT EXTENDED BY THE PAKISTAN MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE ESTABLISHMENT**

Religious extremists, both foreign and home-grown, have long been present in the tribal areas largely due to the acquiescence and support of the Pakistani government, which first encouraged the mujahiddeen against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980's and later the Taliban. The tribal areas were the natural gateway to Afghanistan, more so in the case of South Waziristan, which was an important supply route for the mujahiddeen as the same tribes live on both sides of the border. Support is still continuing, mainly by the Inter Services Intelligence or ISI(Heffelfinger(ed), 2005:283, 278). The Taliban have sympathizers within the military establishment(*Dawn*, 7 January 2008), as "the Pakistan Army and intelligence establishment still considers the Taliban as allies, and their only leverage inside Afghanistan" (Sareen 2007, AGNI X(II): 15).

Motivated by Islamist beliefs and the long held new that Taliban dominance in Afghanistan would provide strategic depth to Pakistan(Rammohan 2007, *USI Journal*, CXXXVII(569):359-365), the ISI and the establishment has also kept the India factor in mind. A Taliban government would continue enable the use of Afghan soil as a camping ground for Kashmiri militants, including Pakistani nationals³⁰, who were used previously (and may still being used) by the Pakistani leaders in Kashmir and Afghanistan(Nojumi 2002: 130-131). Deals for the common objective of extending state policy through clandestine means whether in Afghanistan or Kashmir, between religious forces, extremist jihadi groups and the ISI and other elements of the military establishment have continued unabated over the past two decades(Sirrs et al(eds.)2004: 193-195). Many of the renegade leaders are being sheltered in safe houses of the intelligence establishment, and the foot soldiers of these organizations are being offered both sanctuary and logistic support from the lower ranks of the ISI and the military(Jacob 2006: 69-72).

³⁰ Between 1995-2000, 60,000 to 80,000 of these were trained in Afghanistan and went back home (Nojumi 2002:131).

Even in the tribal areas, allegations regarding protection to the jihadis there by some elements of Pakistani intelligence continue to mount (Julian Borger, *The Hindu*, 17 August 2007) along with suspicions in terms of the nature of their link with the Taliban, obsession with the idea of strategic depth in Afghanistan and even the contention of Pakistan's active assistance to the insurgency in Afghanistan (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 23 December 2006), by covertly allowing the Al Qaeda-Taliban to operate from the border provinces of South Waziristan and Balochistan (Warikoo (ed.) 2007: 34-39). Both Afghanistan and the US intelligence³¹ have been in the forefront of raising such concerns (Haq 2007, *Newsline*, 19(3):25; Warikoo (ed.) 2007:345; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report Pakistan*, March 2007:14-15). Also not much effort is being made on the part of the government to stop unofficial help where direct aid does not occur (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December 25).

There have been instances however, where militants have turned against the government or the control of its agencies including the ISI (*The Indian Express*, 15 January 2007). The Taliban, built up by the Army and the ISI in these areas are inexorably slipping out of control, no longer satisfied with the status of obedient instruments of the Army-ISI combine, and renegade groups have begun to repeatedly challenge the limits their patron-combine had set for them (Rammohan 2007, *USI Journal*, CXXXVII(569): 365-366), demonstrating that despite allowing armed Islamic groups to flourish over the last two decades, the ISI is no longer able to keep them in check (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:194). The Lal Masjid stand-off, occurring right in the heart of Islamabad, was not only an indicator of this development, but its fallout also became a leading factor contributing to the growth of the insurgency.

3. FACTORS AIDING THE INSURGENCY

i) FALLOUT OF THE LAL MASJID OPERATION 2007

On July 10, 2007 Pakistani security forces conducted a military operation against the Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque, and its attached seminary complex of Jamia Hafsa-Jamia Fareedia. Named 'Operation Silence', it marked one of the biggest crackdowns on Islamic militants since Musharraf assumed power in a 1999 coup. It was also the first time that Islamabad ever saw such a pitched battle being fought in the heart of the city, as the

³¹ Remarks by Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the then Director of National Intelligence of US, John D. Negroponte.

military engaged in gun battles with the militants and cleared the compound room by room. Although the army had begun the siege since July 3, they were ordered to enter only after an emergency meeting on July 9 and a final attempt to resolve the week-long stand off failed. The previous attempts had included several deadlines for surrender and use of scare tactics³² to weaken the militants' resolve but the latter refused the offers.

The leaders of the Lal Masjid militants, the clerics Maulana Abdul Aziz and Maulana Abdul Rashid Ghazi, had close links with the Al-Qaeda Taliban militants in FATA, more so with their leaders (Zahid Hussian2007, *Newsline*, 20(2): 22-26). Besides, most of the female and male students of the seminary belonged to FATA and NWFP. Many of them were killed or went missing in the incident. In the operation, Maulana Ghazi alongwith 50 militants was killed while the army lost eight troops(Aziz2007 *Newsline*, 20(3):36).

The loss of lives, both in terms of the students and the militants, evoked strong reactions from FATA agencies. In Mohmand, a local shrine was occupied and its adjacent mosque was renamed Lal Masjid, and a Madrassah in the compound as Jamia Hafsa by tribal militants. Militants in Bajaur vowed to avenge the Lal Masjid-Jamia Hafsa killings. Altogether several acts of terrorism which involved suicide bombings³³ as well followed targeting the security forces. These were largely retaliatory in nature, meant to harm those who had participated in the operation (Yusufzai2007, *Newsline*, 20 (3) 35-36; Ajay Singh2008,*South Asia Defence and Strategic Review*, 1(6): 18-19; Ghaffar Ali Khan 2007,*The Herald*,October:60-61).There were also attacks by militants causing heavy army casualties(Rammohan2007,*USI Journal*,CXXXVII(569):366; Aziz 2007, *Newsline*, 20: 36-37).

ii) **POROUS BORDER WITH AFGHANISTAN**

The poorly marked border with Afghanistan stretching across 2500 km, has been utilized by the Taliban to recruit and train operatives in Pakistani territory³⁴. In some incidents, gross neglect by those manning some of the border posts has only contributed to the increase and unabated continuation of such activities(Haq2007, *Newsline*,19(3): 24). Intelligence reports of such heightened militant movements constantly piled up (Syed

³² Warning explosions and bursts of gunfire.

³³ One was at an elite SSG (Special Services Group) mess at Tarbela Ghazi in NWFP, on 13 September 2007(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*; 14 September 2007). The SSG is the Pakistan military's top commando force, and its al- Zarrar company whose members were in the mess took part in the Lal Masjid and Waziristan operations.

³⁴ United Nations 2006, No.5/2006/935, December 4

Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 19(3):21). Musharraf himself admitted to the above, and also noted the happenings on his side of the border, in which the Al Qaeda-Taliban were crossing from the Pakistani side to cause bombings and other terrorist activities in Afghanistan (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December: 25; Jacob 2006:58)

iii) **WEAKENING STATE OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL IN FATA**

The autonomy enjoyed by this region, both in the colonial period and today continues to hinder government plans and actions in this area resulting in a tenuous hold by the government. Like the British before them, the Pakistani authorities also exercise only indirect power among the tribals (Heffelfinger 2005:283-284). The failure to keep the tribes in check, on the other hand, has also boosted the confidence of the Islamists present in the region, and every failed attempt by the government only further exposes to them the weaknesses of the Pakistani state and its enforcement agencies to effectively deal with the situation (Warikoo (ed) 2007:235).

Besides, Pakistan's involvement and tolerance of armed extremist religious and jihadi groups has contributed to overall ineffective law enforcement in the country. Terrorist activities by criminal and sectarian groups have become a common occurrence for the last several years, and millions of small arms are in private hands in the country, the most notable of these being the AK-47 or the Kalashnikov assault rifle (Haqqani 2005:308). Such a state is extremely pronounced in the NWFP and neighbouring areas³⁵ (Harkavy and Neuman 2001: 296; Goodson 2001:145).

iv) **FATA AREA AS A SUITABLE MILITANT SANCTUARY**

The FATA agencies especially the two Waziristans are an ideal sanctuary and base of operations for the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other allied groups because of their proximity to Afghanistan's Paktika and Khost provinces. They were a major staging area for the anti-Soviet jihad (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December 14). The tribal and ethnic affiliations, lack of state authority and local autonomy are exploited by the militants, as well as the rugged terrain highly suitable to their guerilla, and traditional tribal form of warfare (Ajay Singh 2008, *South Asia Defence*

³⁵ Towns of NWFP such as Peshawar, Darra Adamkhel and Landi Kotal constitute second hand markets for arms, serving a wide variety of cash-paying customers including non-state actors. These arms bazaars have been inundated with Kalashnikov rifles, Stinger missiles and other lethal weapons like mortars, rocket launchers etc supplied by the Afghan mujahiddeen after the Soviet withdrawal. Any type of light weapon or small arm is available in these shops which are also made locally or brought from various sources.

and *Strategic Review*, 1(6):19-20; Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 24 September, 2007; Baxter (ed).2004:47).

v) **USE OF THE TRADITIONAL PASHTUN TRIBAL STYLE OF WAR**

For centuries, the Pashtun tribes across both sides of the Pak-Afghanistan border, or the Durand Line, have practiced a form of warfare adapted to the local terrain, developments in arms, and to their own social and hierarchical organization and customs. Since many such traditional tactics are also those employed in guerilla war, they suit the militants³⁶.

Traditional tribal warfare tactics dominated the actions of the guerilla war against the Soviets. "Mujahideen warriors fought as tribal warriors, and they fought very well" (Shultz and Dew.2006:179). Local fighters, commanded by their local Mujahidden leaders, battled in their local hills and mountains, conducting hit and run strikes.

One reasons prompting the adoption of such tactics by the Pashtun tribes, was the need³⁷ to use resources available for a protracted armed struggle. As a result, unconventional combat tactics were developed that allowed the tribal warriors to drag an invading army deep into the mountains and then to trap it in bloody struggles in which small tribal units employed raids and hit-and-run tactics(Shultz and Dew2006:188).

In terms of organization, traditional small unit operations were built around local tribal and *qawm*(social) loyalties, generating an informal military hierarchy, decentralized fighting units, local commanders with legitimacy and authority to impose discipline on their fighters and a capacity to mobilize rapidly. These combat organizations reflected, in turn, the inherent martial tradition and way of warfare, honed through years of warfare both against outsiders and among themselves. They became almost genetically expert at guerilla warfare after centuries of resistance, with considerable tactical sophistication. This resort to unconventional warfare as a response to any and nearly every kind of threat faced has led to the development of patterns of warfare being based on primarily the tenets of irregular warfare, protracted war, and adaptation to new military tactics and technology, and the adherence to the traditional tribal organizational pattern. This is expressed militarily in the small war party or *lashkar*, with the predefined place of the

³⁶ The militants' adoption of guerilla approaches to their conduct of war gets reinforced by such similar tactics. Also, since a vast majority of the militants, ie. the local ones, are tribal Pashtuns, such tactics become easy to adopt and practise due to an already existing familiarity they have because of such a system of war being well entrenched in the culture they are born and grown up in.

³⁷ This was a result of facing external aggressions that kept recurring throughout centuries.

individual warrior, and thus practically outdoing the need for a regular, standing, conventional, army(Goodson 2001:36-40).

The lashkar, the tribal army or an armed force gathered usually for a short time(Jalali and Grau 2001), incorporated the strong sense of pride in the concept of fierce individualism that the tribal society reveres. It thus reinforces the role of the individual warrior inside the tribal structure, who is shouldered with the responsibility to fight to defend the core interests of his family, clan and tribal community, and to protect his own personal dignity and pride and that of his family members. Retaliation to defend the honour of his family group could lead him to risk his life(Shultz and Dew2006:189). It was this strong individuality that made it difficult for the tribes men to achieve the kind of rigid discipline necessary for a professional army. Cooperation and acceptance of authority have been limited, even in important military operations, for the self interest of the individual does at times lead to the dissolution of tribal forces hastily brought together for some unconvincing reason(Goodson 2001:37). In Afghanistan, for instance, tribal habits reappeared in fighting tactics and in the behaviour of the individual soldier(Roy 1986:178), highlighting the importance attached to such codes and expectations of behaviour and conduct from the fighters.

Likewise, the tribal groups also cherished greatly the autonomy that they enjoyed since centuries, and resisted attempts every time by any force, especially the central governments, to take it away. In such cases the local community took recourse to a wide range of armed response(Shultz and Dew2006:189).

Terrain has been indispensable to armed resistance by the tribals. "The key to the development of this guerilla expertise is the extremely rugged terrain of Afghanistan and the tribal areas of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan.... The high mountains and barren deserts limited the opportunities for conventional military engagements. Only certain routes and passes through the mountains were passable- an ideal setting for ambush, sniping, hit and-run, and other preferred tactics(Goodson2001:37). The mountains also provided almost unassailable bases for operation. Penetrating tribal strongholds is as yet an impossible a task for outsiders. Even "in Pakistan during the 1980's although the army periodically made an effort to clean out the heroin laboratories in the Tribal Agencies it never really succeeded"(Goodson2001:38). Almost always a mass uprising of fighters has greeted the government troops that the latter have been quite unable to deal with "where the government troops have directed their offensive at

specific targets they have always been defeated by a tribal lashkar”(Roy1986:177). Even in defeat the tribals were never broken, and lashkars would continue the fight from high mountains(Goodson2001:37), despite the problems of sustaining and maintaining the tribal army for very long under arms, as the troops tend to disband as soon as the action is finished. Regrouping occurs on the basis of family ties(Roy1986:179). Tribal warfare is uncompromising and an unconditional form of war, presenting extremely difficult combat challenges for conventional armies, many of which have had difficulty in overcoming them according to their past experiences. “Ultimately it was tribal tactics- guerilla units skilled at the hit-and-run raid and motivated to fight to the last man that defeated one of the Cold War’s superpowers”(Schultz and Dew2006:168).

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE INSURGENCY

1. TERRITORIAL CONTROL BEING EXERCISED BY THE MILITANTS IN FATA

The extent of government control as existing in FATA has been greatly eroded in many areas, and control has virtually passed into the hands of the militants(Warikoo (ed.)2007:235) who are now ruling chunks of land, after taking over neighbourhoods under pressure from, or in connivance-with powerful foreign militants(Syed Talat Hussain2007, *Newsline*, 19(3):26)In North Waziristan, the local administration became virtually confined to government buildings, and Mir Ali and Miramshah *Tehsils* came completely under the sway of regrouped militants. South Wazirishtan’s local administration, or its remnant, negotiated the running of the area with militant commanders who ruled by night. Also they have expanded their influence in other agencies such as Khyber and Bajaur(International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December 18-22). Militants have set up their own roadside checkpoints and conduct patrols by armed fighters, and even carry out judicial functions(Yusufzai2007, *Newsline*, 20(6):34).

2. COUNTRYWIDE IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

The theatre of operations has also been expanded to include areas beyond tribal borders and there is infiltration of settled districts and high security zones, including the garrison city of Rawalpindi(Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 26 September 2007). The freedom of movement and territory is being exploited to train and plot more attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan(Khalid Hasan, *The Daily Times*, 3 October, 2007). Areas of NWFP adjoining the two Waziristans have also been used by the militants to set up virtually autonomous

enclaves(B. Raman, 2007, *Indian Defence Review*, 22(4):112). According to the CIA, a new nexus between Al Qaeda and the various extremist groups, based in this area³⁸ is responsible for various acts geared for their aim of destabilizing the country. These include numerous terrorist attacks spanning the entire country(Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 3 March 2008). The assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto has also been blamed on the militants active in South Waziristan(Carlotta Gall, *The Hindu*, 31 December 2007). Some Pakistani intelligence officials in their assessments suggest the existence of a dangerous symbolism inherent in attacks on security personnel, which extend far beyond mere reprisals, as they indicate the statements from the militants that any attempt to expand the security network in frontier areas would be met with deadly suicide attacks, with the battle being brought right to the heart of Islamabad(Syed Talat Hussain2007, *Newsline*,19(3): 26).

Throughout 2007, a total 144 attacks took place in the tribal areas, killing 379 people and injuring 307. 39 local people were killed by the militants on the charge of being US informers(Muni (ed). 2008:97).

3. TARGETING OF SECURITY PERSONNEL

The militants have mounted attacks on members of the security establishment. The targeting of army personnel was resorted to by the militant groups to show their opposition to that part of the establishment which they believed was serving American interests, by joining in the War on Terror. They were also opposed to any moves by the military-supported government of President Musharraf to reconcile differences with India over Kashmir especially on the issue of curbing, cross-border infiltration and attacks. Some members of the Jundullah group were identified as having mounted a failed assassination attempt on the Karachi corps commander, Lieutenant General Ahsan Saleem Hayat on June 10, 2004, which killed 11 soldiers and police, by that well organized ambush(Sirrs et al (eds) 2004:179, 187).

Previously two assassination attempts were also made on President Musharraf in December 2003, and later on the then Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz on July 30, 2004 (Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:283,) Sirrs et al(eds.) 2004:179-180). Recent attacks have included one which killed the head of the Army Medical Corps, Lieutenant General Mushtaq Ahmad Baig, in February 2008(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu* 24 February

³⁸ Tribal insurgency in South Waziristan has been connected with violence in Karachi. The terrorist group Jundullah trained and fought in South Waziristan before deploying in Karachi (Sirrs et al (eds) 2004:187)

2008). Not only Pakistan but Afghanistan also was facing the impact of the extremist resurgence post 2001, marking the lethality of the insurgency in FATA.

4. EFFECTS ON AFGHANISTAN, AND US CONCERNS

The sanctuary obtained in FATA is being used by the Taliban and their Islamist allies, both foreign and Pakistani, to conduct cross-border attacks against international and Afghan security forces. The two Waziristans and Bajaur constitute their strategic bases (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:13,18,25). The availability of refuge inside Pakistan has also helped them to replenish their arms supplies and to delude pursuers (Dorransoro 2005:339).

For the US as well, the curbing of insurgency within Pakistan became important not only from the Afghanistan point of view where its forces are engaging the Taliban, but also to prevent the exploitation of this new Al Qaeda sanctuary to “repeat history” (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu* 23 December 2006; Congressional Hearing, (2007) US Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing “US-Pakistan Relations”, July 25, 2007).

IV. RESPONSE BY THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT

1. IMPETUS TO ACT

According to observers, the Musharraf government was slow to act, and became serious about the security situation only after the assassination attempts of December 2003 (Heffelfinger (ed.) 2005:283; Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004: 179-180, 186).

The US was also keen to see Pakistan take affirmative action against the Islamist groups, and US pressure was also one of the key factors behind the subsequent Pakistani military operations in FATA (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December: 14). Overall, “the blitz of anti-terrorist actions has come about due to pressure from Musharraf’s benefactor, the Bush administration, as well as his own instincts for self-preservation” (Sirret al (eds.) 2004:180).

2. STRATEGY FORMULATED BY THE GOVERNMENT

i) AIM

Pakistan took up the pursuit of a “comprehensive strategy” to address militancy in the tribal areas, which was a combination of the political, economic, and where necessary, military approach (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:21; Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 18-26 July, 2007). The main aim of Pakistan’s counter-insurgency campaign thus was to kill, arrest or neutralize foreign terrorists, but

also to wean away Pakistani militants through sticks and carrots (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December :21). Musharraf continued to emphasize a policy drawing on a counter- insurgency model incorporating general development assistance, political overtones and redeployment of army away from population centres(Daniel Markey2007, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(4):85-103). However, he saw military action as crucial to eliminating the Taliban(Haq2007, *Newsline*,19(3):25).

ii) **DISTINCTION OBSERVED BETWEEN FOREIGN AND LOCAL ELEMENTS**

For this purpose, the government favoured firstly, a distinction between local and foreign Al Qaeda -Taliban(Economist Intelligence Unit 2007, *Country Report Pakistan*, March:15, Warikoo(ed.)2007:39-40, 153; Jacob2006:68) on the grounds that while the former were locals and not a terrorist group, the latter were alien, and of foreign origin. While Pakistan had been willing to cooperate with the US in activities against the foreign, “Arab” members of Al Qaeda, there was pointedly no movement against the Taliban in Pakistan(Sirrs et al(eds.)2004:154), it tried its best to capture the foreign extremist elements hiding in Pakistan and kept the domestic jihad factory intact from the firing line “(Warikoo(ed.)2007:153).

In anti-terrorist operations, no single Taliban member was captured, while around 700 suspected Al Qaeda militants were handed over to the Americans(Warikoo(ed.) 2007:39-40; Jacob 2006:68). The government chose to apply more pacific efforts to wean the local militants away from participation in the insurgency, but also with military in many cases.

iii) **ATTEMPTS FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENTS**

The Pakistani government signed two major peace agreements in South Waziristan in 2004 and North Wazirsitan 2006 with the militants(International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December:16-17, 18-19), besides agreements also in Bajaur, and two more in South Wazristan in 2005(Yusufzai2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):33); (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125; 11 December 18—19).

In effecting such moves, the jirga his been repeatedly involved. In 2003, a jirga was to discuss the modalities for peaceful surrender of five wanted harbourers of Al Qaeda terrorists(Jalalzai2005:77;Sirrs et al(eds.)2004:2003). Jirgas have convened meetings with local government authorities in Wana and Peshawar(Sirrs et al(eds.) 2004:204). To save the North Waziristan accord a government backed jirga composed of

tribal elders and parliamentarians shuttled between the area and the NWFP Governor carrying proposals and counter-proposals(*The Hindu*, 25 July 2007). Jirgas were also participating in conducting agreements between the militants and the government in North Waziristan in January 2008(*Dawn*, 29 January 2008).

The government's seriousness for making peace deals become evident through efforts to salvage the deals from being broken down, as in the case of North Waziristan (Yusufzai2007,*Newsline*,20(3):33—34) the importance of which Musharraf himself attested(Haq2007, *Newsline*,19(3): 25). The preference to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict with the tribal supporters of the Taliban-Al Qaeda insurgents remained paramount as the year 2008 progressed(Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 3 March 2008).

iv) **FENCING OF THE AFGHAN BORDER**

There has also been a proposal by the Pakistani government to fence the Pak-Afghanistan border to reduce the traffic of militants, and that mining and fencing it might be the only option left for Pakistan. 1000 posts along the border have already been set up, and plans have been announced to fence 35 km of the border in the NWFP(Haq2007, *Newsline*,19(3): 24-25). One objective for doing so has been the hope that it would end accusations by Western government regarding Pakistan's failure to stop militant infiltration into Afghanistan(Economist Intelligence Unit 2007, *Country Report Pakistan*, March: 15).

V. **PAKISTAN ARMY AND COUNTER -INSURGENCY IN FATA**

1. **MILITARILY ENGAGING THE MILITANTS**

The military option was also taken up to prevent infiltration, but also to disrupt Taliban and other movements(Rogers 2006:40). The rationale guiding the search and-destroy drive in South Waziristan, March 2004, was that a quick, surgical strike against the foreign terrorists and their local allies would succeed(International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December:14). The objectives were the destruction of terrorist dens, dismantling of their networks like tunnels, trenches, towers and communication systems(Warikoo(ed.) 2007:135) and to make "blocking move" to prevent militant flight from South Waziristan to other areas³⁹,(Sirrs et al (ed)2004:204).

Subsequent operations were conducted in North Waziristan, and the government was willing to extend the operations to the entire north-west region if necessary

³⁹ Such as the Shawal Valley, a forested mountain stronghold ranging in height from 4000 to 11000 feet in North Waziristan.

(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 18 and 26 July 2007). Fighting continued throughout the years following 2004. Clashes were occurring in South Waziristan, Bajaur, and Orakzai with the army repulsing militant attacks from Khyber Agency and launching offensives in areas adjoining Orakzai Agency in the early months of 2008 (Alamgir Bhattani and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 29 January 2008; Abdul Sami Paracha, *Dawn*, 29 January 2008, *Dawn* 13 March 2008) along with the plans for another offensive aimed at militant bases in the tribal areas and curbing militant influence in Waziristan (Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 3 March 2008).

2. TROOP INDUCTION

Fifteen infantry brigades had been inducted into FATA, particularly Waziristan drawn from the Force Command Northern Area in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or POK, the dual task XI corps in Peshwar and Strike Corps of Army Reserve North and Army Reserve South, by the end of 2007 and early 2008 (Ajay Singh 2008, *South Asia Defence and Strategic Review* 1(6): 20-21). Adjustments to troop numbers were continually made, beginning from the 2004 South Waziristan itself, when 3500 new troops were sent to reinforce the more than 13,000 already deployed (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:204).

3. EMPLOYMENT OF THE LOCAL TRIBES IN THE ARMY'S COUNTER - INSURGENCY EFFORTS

Operations were also a suggested means for fulfilling another aim of separating tribal militants from their foreign allies, and then applying tribal pressure on the former for coming to terms (Carlotta Gall, *The Hindu*, 31 December 2007).

Involvement from the tribals has also been sought for various seasons beginning from overall cooperation, intelligence gathering, formation of tribal lashkars to hunt down militants and wanted tribesmen as well as to drive out foreign militants by the use of force. For instance in April 2004 tribal elders from the Shawal Valley offered full cooperation with the army authorities (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:204). Tribal leaders of both Waziristans helped security forces in identifying hideouts of foreign militants (Naveed Siddiqui, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007). Tribal lashkars were employed to search for fugitives (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December: 16; Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:154 203-204, Jalalzai 2005:76-77), and to drive out Uzbeks from areas in Waziristan (*Dawn*, 8 January 2008).

4. SUPPORT TO PRO-TALIBAN MILITANTS-LED TRIBALS AGAINST FOREIGN MILITANTS

The government forces are also rendering help to those local Pro-Taliban tribal militants and tribals who oppose foreign groups, as in when they engaged in bloody clashes with Uzbek militants(Muni (ed.) 2008: 99; Rammohan 2007, *USI Journal*, CXXXVII (569): 364). The intelligence services have built on a web of sources among these and other groups to collect information on foreign groups operating in these areas (Mark Mazetti and Eric Schmitt, *The Hindu*, 21 April 2008).

5. ATTITUDE TOWARDS PEACE DEALS AND CEASEFIRES

Coupled with military action the army also kept the door for negotiations open, and the peace-deals witnessed the military's participation (International Crisis Group, 2006, Asia Report no.125, 11 December 16-17, 18-19), with the Peshawar Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Safdar Hussain signing the Shakai agreement in South Waziristan 2004(Jalalzai 2005:78). However the indication to conduct military operations without accepting ceasefires proposed by militants was also present in the case of fighting in North Waziristan October 2007(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu* 10, and 11 October 2007).

6. ASSISTANCE FROM US

US forces have supported the Pakistanis in Waziristan, chiefly by providing helicopters, missiles and reconnaissance drones(Sirrs et al (eds.)2004:205 Heffelfinger (ed.) 2005: 284). The Pakistan army operating in FATA has been in receipt of back-up support from the intelligence collection teams of CIA⁴⁰ and the National Security Agency (NSA)(Jalazai 2005:82). The CIA⁴¹ has limited authority granted by the Pakistan government to kill foreign operatives in the tribal areas using armed and remotely piloted Predator aircraft(Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, *The Hindu*, 21 April 2008) which it has used to launch missiles in these areas several times(*Dawn*, 7 January 2008), Most of the heavy casualty attacks on madrasas and private houses believed to be sheltering high-value targets have been carried out either by the Americans single-handedly or in coordination with the Pakistani forces(Muni(ed.)2008:98). Military operations in Waziristan 2004 were also complementing the "hammer and anvil" spring offensive of

⁴⁰ Under current US laws, most counterterrorism operations in Pakistan have to be conducted by the CIA (*Dawn*, 2 January 2008).

⁴¹ Since the end of 2001, the CIA and FBI have cooperated closely with Pakistani intelligence and security forces, besides the ISI, to apprehend the elusive Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.

the US military across the border in Afghanistan(Sirrs et al(eds.)2004: 179,187) Troop deployment beginning in late February 2004 was also in response to the US Mountain Storm spring offensive to hunt down the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan(Sirrs et al (eds.)2004:204).

7. CHALLENGES FOR THE ARMY STRATEGY

Many problems were also encountered during the execution of the army's conduct arising from the issues of unconventional nature of the conflict, the specific terrain and local support to the militants. The general law and order situation prevalent in FATA, besides the level of control being exercised by the government, due to both historic precedent and the established system of governance for this area, also affected army efforts.

The above were issues to be tackled by the army strategists on account of their being already a part of the quagmire they were to find a way out of. They, therefore had to be dealt with in the process of drafting a successful strategy, but quite a number of other challenges confronted the army as it moved ahead with its actions. Some were in the form of local response, while others were institutional. Among the latter, one hurdle stemmed from quite a few personnel's perceptions of the enemy and the conflict from the standpoint of their own Islamist leanings. This was to reflect in their consequent actions. Other problems derived from the shared Pashtun ethnicity for a vast majority of personnel deployed in the area and specifically those engaging in combat. The involvement of many serving and former personnel with the militancy became another issue(Ajay Singh 2008, *South Asia Defence and Strategic Review*,1(6):19; Siddiqua 2007 *The World Today*, 63(4):5; Jalazai 2005:76; Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn* 3 March 2008; Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004: 205; Heffelfinger (Ed.)2005:331) . The vacillation exercised by the military leaders, including Musharraf, rooted in the preference for continuation of the jehadi policy appeared as all the more a hurdle. All the above factors cumulatively set a daunting task before those charged with resolving it, through selection of the right means. Both this process, and its implementation rested also on one more determinant-militant tactics, conduct, and their response to the changes in the situation caused by the army actions.

CHAPTER 3

MILITANT COMPOSITION AND TACTICS AS ISSUES FOR THE ARMY STRATEGY

This chapter elaborates two aspects of the militancy in FATA critical to the strategy formulation and execution by the Pakistan army. These aspects comprise the constituents of the military and the tactics adopted by them. A special reference to the latter is provided by the inclusion of the mujahiddeen tactics against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Lastly, the army conduct in response to the above is mentioned, highlighting the problems that beset the Strategy.

I. THE INSURGENTS.

1. THE AL QAEDA.

Pakistan's north-western frontier is being utilized by the Alqadea to recruit new operatives and establish new training camps. According to the U S National Intelligence Estimate, released in July 2007, the organization has been able to retain many of its top lieutenants, who are able to exploit the comfort zone in the tribal areas, (Bryan Bender, *The Hindu*, 27 July 2007). Most of the leadership remains in this area (Gunaratna 2002:11) which may be including Osamabin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri Carlotta Gall, *The Hindu*, 31 December 2007).

Efforts at regrouping of the cadre in this area include replacing of senior leaders and operational commanders lost in fighting or otherwise (*The Hindu*, 19 July 2007) as well as incorporating those members who have crossed the border with Afghanistan to arrive in FATA, or those who might attempt the same (Benjamin and Simon 2003:168). Also, "Alqaeda has succeeded in re-establishing its base by skillfully exploiting weakness of the state in the Pashtun tribal belt, along the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier" (Rubin 2007, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(1):58).

The links of this organization with sectarian and Sunni extremist groups in Pakistan have also helped its settlement into its new havens, besides also in expanding its network, in terms of members materiel and influence, (Jacob 2006:71-72; Gunaratna 2002:217; Heffelfinger 2005:308).

2. AFGHAN TALIBAN.

The leadership of the ousted Taliban regime has been able to find and secure base areas for operations in FATA. "The Taliban commanders shura, or leadership council, directing operations in Eastern Afghanistan is based in North and South Waziristan". Foreign Affairs Rubin 86(1)70). The top rung including the former regime's functionaries, consisting of the ex-defence minister Mullah Obeidullah, interior minister Abdul Razzak deputy prime minister Mullah Hasan Akhund are believed to be hiding in Pakistan (Jacob 2006:55) primarily in the FATA area.

Jalaluddin, Haqqani, widely believed to be the mastermind behind Al-Qaeda and Taliban efforts to regroup in Paktia province, is also said to be in the tribal areas (Jacob 2006:54). His son Sirafuddin Haqqani commands a local Pakistani militant group mark mazzethi and Eric Schmitt *The Hindu* April 21, 2008.

The North Waziristan ceasefire of 25 June 2006 was endorsed by the Taliban leadership, with Mullah Dadullah Akhund reportedly visiting the waziristans to persuade local militants to focus their attention on the coalition forces in Afghanistan, as opposed to the Pakistan army. Mullah Omar is believed to have endorsed the North Waziristan agreement and also persuaded the local militants to sign the accord, although the Pakistani Government strongly denied his role. (Internal crisis group 2006 Asia report No.125, 11 December:18:19). The Afghans Taliban are also co-operating with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hiizbe Islami to conduct cross border attacks in Afghanistan (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No., 11 December : 13; Heffelfinger (ed)2005:277; Sirksetal (ed)2004:150,156); Jacob 2006:65-69). Hekmatyar is believed to be operating from Peshawar through two agencies of Bayaur and Mohamand Rubin 2007, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(1):71). Some of his cadre has also been reported to have met Pakistani officials at Miramshah in an attempt to foster an alliance by the latter in pursuit of their pro-Taliban Afghanistan Policy (Jacob 2006:64).

3. CENTRAL ASIANS.

(1) VIGHURS AND OTHERS.

Besides Arabs linked to Al-Qaeda, all hard core in their orientation but small in number (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia report No.125, 11 December 21; Corlatta Gall, *The Hindu*, 31 December 2007), there are a number of Islamic radicals from Central Asia, Chechnya and areas like China's Xinjiang. These hardened fanatics along with

their local accomplices from the core of the militancy in FATA(International Crisis Group2006, Asia report No.125, 11 December:21).

The Uighurs of Xinjiang, and those of their diaspora in Kazakhntan and Kysgyztan, together with the Uzbeks were members of their respective components of Bin Laden's International Islamic Front, but no of Alqaeda. Supporting him ideologically, they stress upon maintaining their separate ethnic identities and refusal to subsume themselves in Al-Qaeda.

Altogether, this mixed force consists of surviving drags of the war against the Soviets in 1980's as well as those of the post-9/11 war against the Us-lad Coalition in Afghanistan, (Jalalrai 2005:82).

(ii) UZBEKS.

The Uzbeks form the most prominent group among the foreign elements operating in FATA. Fighter from central Asia and the Caucasus and their uzbek counterparts are rallied around Tahir Yuldasher, the head of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), International Crisis Group 2006, Asia report No.125, 11 December:21). After the September 11 incident, and Operation Enduring Freedom that followed the IMU suffered its greatest defeat and its ruminants fled to Pakistan for rehabilitation and regrouping. Its capability was substantially diminished, but steps were undertaken to reorganize and to remobilize,(Naumkin 2005 :264-265).

Yuldashev had led an estimated 250 Central Asian families over the Afghan border into South Waziristan of the estimated 600-700 foreign militants in Waziristan in September 2003, atleast 100-200 were Uzbeks belonging to the IMU, jalalzai 2006: Heffelfinger (ed)2005:284-85).

These post 9/11 renegades succeeded in re-motivating the Uzbek, Chechen and Uighus drags of the anti-Soviet war of the 1980's who had married locally and settled down in FATA, to again take up arms against the US, (Jalalzai 2005:83).

In March 2004, after a massive offensive in the tribal areas, the Pakistan authorities asserted that it were the IMU militants who constituted the core group of fighters surrounded by Pakistani through troops. The Pakistani military targeted Yuldasher allegedly in commend of the militants, and later suggested that he had been wounded in the heavy fighting that ensued and had harrouisly escaped capture (Naumkin 2005:114-115; Jalalzai 2005:77. According to military's assessment, roughly 500

militants in the village of Kalusha in this region were mostly Uzbek and Chechen with the local tribesmen constituting their support. There were interception of radio transmission in both Uzbek and Chechen, by military communication experts as according to the Pakistani commander of the counter-insurgency operation, (Naumkin 2005:114-115; Jalalzai 2005:72).

In clashes since 2003, dozens of militants were killed and hundreds left the area for the relative safety of Pakistani urban centers in small groups. Only 100 Uzbek fighters are believed to have remained along with Yuldasler, but with his network smashed, his warlike supporters gone and he himself being on the run, (Jalalzai 2005:77; Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:284-285). Shortly after the Kalusha operation, there was a flare-up⁴² in Uzbekistan, leading to the assumption that a part of the militant force had fled back to Uzbekistan, being forced out of Pakistan (Naumkin 2005:114-115; Sirksetal (eds)2004:183).

The remaining Uzbeks as it is still unclear how much of their fighting capability was dented by the Pakistani⁴³ military operations (Naumkin 2005:114-115) are carrying out a variety of functions in FATA. Along with Chechens they are acting as instructors in the training camps established in South Waziristan where recruits undergoing training range from local tribals to those from the parents of Pakistan, Xinjiang and Central Asia. Some members of Jundullah were also among those trained by the Uzbek instructors in these camps, (Jalalzai 2005:82). The Uzbeks are also believed to be taking a lead in managing and resolving local disputes (International Crisis Group 2006 Asia Report No.125, 11 December:21).

4. THE LOCAL MILITANTS OR THE PAKISTANI TALIBAN.

The local tribal militants, known commonly as the Pakistani Taliban, support their Afghan counterparts, claiming inspiration from them and pledging allegiance to Mullah Omar. They have committed themselves to come to each other's rescue if required, (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:21). These local militants represent, not only a new generation, but as they emerged after the US-led military operation in Afghanistan, also a revolt against the Pakistan government's support for the US. (Rammohan 2007 The USI Journal, CXXXVII (569): 363-364).

⁴² Insurgent activities, in the form of bombing and gunfire occurred in the cities of Tashkent and Bukhara during March 28-31, 2004

⁴³ Incidentally, the Pakistani agencies have had links with the IMU. The ISI provided funds and sanctuary. Between 1995-98 Yuldasler was based in Peshawar (Naumkin 2005:71).

Incidentally, the Pakistani agencies have had links with the IMU. The ISI provided funds and sanctuary. Between 1995-98 Yuldasher was based in Peshawar (Naumkin 2005:71).

Since 2001, these Pakistani militants have steadily grown in strength and boldness. Bolstered by the foreigners among them, they have also been influenced by the Arabs and the Central Asians to take onagendas, (Carlotta, Gerll, The Hindu 31 December 2006).

There are 15-20 small local groups in south Wariristan and 10-12 in North Wariristan. Training centers thrive in both areas, esp.in and around the heavily forested shoural region in North Wariristan. Recruitment, training and raising money are some of the activities undertaken by the local militants to bolster their ranks and infrastructure. Umbrella organizations have been formed separately for both Wariristans, known as the Mujahidin Shura for each area. The current leadership is diversified, being divided among the various groups, but can group together under one appointed leader, or Amir, if required.

Among the many others local groups Commanders/leaders, Nek Mohammad and Abdullah Mehsud, were slain; same like Maulana Adul Aziz, Haji Sharif, Maulvi Abbas, Sharif and Mohammad Javed have surrendered' while others continue to be at large and carry on their operations. These includes Maulvi Fagir Mohammad in Bajaur, and Batullah Mehsud in South Wariristan (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*,20(3):36; International Crisis Group 2006 Asia Report No.125, 11 December;17). The latter heading the umbrella organization Tehreek-I-Taliban or movement of Pakistan Taliban has emerged lately not only as the most visible proponent of Al-Qaeda's ambitions in Pakistan, but also of the militancy itself. (Carlotta gall, The Hindu 31, December 2007). In December 2007, Mehsud was made the head of the Tehreek by all small and large Pakistani Taliban groups operating in both wariristans Bajaur, Mohmand, Parra Adamlehel, Swat and others. He commands several thousand battlehardened fighters (Yusufzai 2008, *Newsline*, February).

In recentl times, there has been a coming together of the local Taliban from both Wariristans, to aid and rescue each other in case of military operations by the Pakistani army or the US through its forces deployed in Afghanistan. Greater cooperation is taking place between both sets of the Taliban (Yusufzai 2007 *Newsline*, 20(3) 33-34).

A number of these militants and their commanders had participated in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan, or had fought alongside the Taliban against the US-led coalition forces and the Northern Alliance during their Operation Enduring Freedom. These included the local tribesmen, like the Wazirir (Rammohan, 2007 The US Journal CXXXVII(569):362-363) and commanders like the late Wek Mohammad and Abdullah Mehsud and Baitullah Mehsud who also trained with the Taliban (Cabolta Gall, the Hindu, 31 December 2007.) International Crisis Group 2006 Asia report No.125, December:21).

At present these groups incorporating the tribal militia foundations, constitute the third category of the Taliban operating in Afghanistan. "While they are largely independent with over-riding self-serving motives, they are likely to align with the resurgent Taliban if push comes to shore" (Jacobs 2006:64) .

While Baitullah Mehsud became active on both sides of the Pak-Afghanistan border since assumption of the command of the Tehreek in December (Anvar Iqbal Daus 3 March 2008). The Afghan Taliban have denied any links whatsoever with him.

5. JEHADI GROUPS

Many of the jihadi organizations, esp. the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) have also joined in the fight against the army. Lured also by "the success of the (Pakistani) Taliban in establishing a new Taliban mini-state" they are moving to this troubled area for fulfillment of their common agenda. This success "is acting like honey to the bees, as it is attracting banned militant groups like the Jaish-e-Mohammad to FATA" leading to the situation where "Militants from all over the country, from Mardan to Multan, are converging on Wariristan" (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:22). There were also reports of the Jaish founder, Maulana Masood Azhas, leading the insurgency in Bajaur, or nearby where he is believed to be hiding at present (The Indian Express, 16 January 2008).

The red mosque clerics had also developed close links with both Baitullah Mehsud and Maulvi Faqir Mohammad. The Mosque and its attached seminaries groups like the JeM, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin and Harhat-e-Islamic involved in terrorist attacks in the country in recent years, with most of the militants who fought against the security forces

during operation silence being well trained and having combat experience in Kashmir and Afghanistan (Zahid Hussain 2007 Newsline20(2):25).

All together, the collaboration between these carried groups has resulted in a more coordinated campaign against Afghan and international troops in Afghanistan (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia report No.125, 11 December:22,24; Bryan Bendar, The Hindu, 27 July 2007). Besides the current stream of extremist mobilization appears to have forged a greater unity of perceptions and objectives between the Al-Qaeda-Taliban combine on the one hand and a range of Pakistani and terrorist elements who have long been thought to be the officially sponsored Jehadi category”(Rammohan 2007, The USI Journal, CXXXVII(569) 366).

II. THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

1. THE MMA AND THE MILITANCY.

The Muttahida-Majlis-e-Amal(MMA) or the united council for action was a majority of seats in NWFP in the national elections of October 2002. Forming the provincial government, created a support base among the populace based on exploitation of anti-American sentiments, particularly in the Pashteen-dominated region.

The formation and evaluation of the MMA itself was rooted in opposition to the US actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan support to them. In October 2001, 26 religious parties and some smaller groups across the sectarian divide opposing the US military campaign in Afghanistan and Pakistani partnership in the war on terror, established the Pak-Afghan defence council. However, the council lost its relevance once Taliban resistance ended and the religious parties failed to galvanize popular support. Six major parties in the council then formed the MMA in January 2002 to contest the October elections on a common platform. These parties constituting the NMMA are Janirat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F,led by Fazlur Rehman); Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam JUI-S,led by SamiulHaq) Jamaat-I-Islami(JI) Jamiat Ulema-e- Pakistan (JUP)Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) and the Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH) (International Crisis Group 2003, Asia Report No.149, 20 March:1,5).

The presence of an MMA government in NWFP set the scene for a rain pant Talibanisation of the province . the MMA's overt support to the Taliban contributed to establishing the frontier regions as a haven for the guerillas. The militants could easily embark on an undisguised propaganda campaign and were also able to prepare for the

military operations they intended to carry out inside. Afghanistan (Porrnsoro 2005:349; International Crisis Group 2003, Asia Report No,49,20 March:4).

The MMA has also vehemently opposed Pakistani Military actions in the tribal areas. The members of Parliament from these parties conducted a walkout from National Assembly accusing the government of capitulating to the American, besides violating the traditional freedom and independence of local pashtun tribes. The MMA even decided to withdraw support to the central government of Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali till the end of June 2004 (Sirrset al(eds)2004:154,183,194).

Military strikes were utilized as opportunities by the militants and their MMA allies to whip up anti-western, pro-jihadi sentiments in these areas. Troops deployment was opposed, as was operation silence. MMA President Qazi Hussain Ahmed presided over a protest rally on July 31, 2007, after resigning from the National Assembly on July 23 to state his opposition to the operation (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia ReportNo.125, December: 21, Yusuf zai 2007, Newslines, 20 (3):36, Aziz 2007, Newslines 20(3):36-37.

However, the MMA played a crucial role in securing the peace delay. Maulana Fazlur Rehman's JUI-F brokered the shakai, Sarorogha and the North Wariristan accords. Turo JUI-F national parliamentarians from south wariristan, Maulana Merajuddin Qureshi and Maulana Abdul Malik Wazir, were enlisted as go-between by the Peshawar Corps commander. These interlocutors publicly backed their militant alters while arranging the deal with Nek Mohammad and others, stating that since these people meant no harm to Pakistan, thus it would be inset to be friend them rather than turning them into outlaws.

At Sarariggam JUI-F-national parliamentarian Maulana Sirajuddin led a Jirga to mediate the deal Fazlur Rehman's mediation produced the 25 June2006 ceasefire North Wariristan, and later the 2006 agreement JUI-F national parliamentarian from North Wariristan Maulana Syed Nek Zauman stated that they were happy to see a new beginning after misunderstandings between the administration and the local Taliban had led to unpleasant moments (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December : 16,17,18,19).

The sympathies of the JUI-dominated MMA towards extremist groups were also expressed elsewhere. The JUI had developed links with the IMU, and because the major supporter in Pakistan Naumkin 2005:71,109 pressured against taking action against members of jihadi groups. In January 2003, for instance, 21 such men, arrested by the

police, were released on the orders of the Chief Minister Akram Durrani. The encouragement of a gun culture in the name of local traditions by the MMA government led to a state of affairs where private militants displayed weapons in public (International Crisis Group 2003, Asia report No.49,20 March:14,32). Virtually autonomous enclaves set up the militants in areas of NWFP adjoining the wariristans were with the complicity of the MMA(B.Raman 2007, Indian Defence Review, 22(4)112. The members of the MMA constituent parties also provided safe houses. Al Qaeda members were arrested from JI members homes (Sirrsetal 2004:198). Abdullah Mehsud was also hiding in the home of a JUI-F activist Shaikh Mohammad Ayub Mandokhel in Zhob, where he died (Yusufrai 2007, Newsline,20(3):39).

The employment of religious parties by the military was only one indicator of their mutual relationship. One reason why these parties are able to exercise such weight in matters relating to tribal areas and Pakistan in general are because of the leverage provided to them by the military. The clergy support the military on several issues due to identical points of view. These are notably jihad, Kashmir relations with India and among others the mainstream secular parties. They understand and accept the military as the source of central authority and as the guardian of state power. This thinking is accentuated by the military's monopoly over the means of coercion and its image as the defender of an Islamic Pakistan (mainly against a Hindu India). The religious right is therefore, the military's naturally.

The military on its part, has also rewarded that ally by co-opting the religious sector along with its causes, reflecting in the islamisation of the country's political, constitutional and legal development (International crisis group 2003, Asia Report No.49,20 March:2-3). The aim of the militancy also appears as marked by similar.

2. A COMMON AIM

The aim of insurgency revolves around achievements of a variety of goals. These range from prosecuting a general war against the US and the expulsion of any government or political combine that seeks to cooperate with the Americans. They aim to liberate Afghanistan from the US led coalition and Pakistan from those practicing non-islamic values. They want to turn Pakistan into a pure islamic state (Rammohan 2007, The USI Journal CXXXVII(569):363-364.)

Thejihadist agenda is well entrenched in their extremist leanings for all groups involved, irrespective of their status as tribals or global terrorists for “These militants are not merely misguided tribesmen irked by the military’s intrusion into their semi-autonomous homelands, and supported by an alienated population that has borne the burnt of the military operation. They are jihadists with a clear goal: to assert their influence, and their version of radical islam within Pakistan’s tribal belt and across the border in Afghanistan” (International Crisis Group, Asia Report No.125, 11 December 2006:20).

The idea therefore is not to undo Pakistan but simply to take it over, the spread of Talibanization therefore being not limited to the FATA alone once they gain control, but also to other parts of Pakistan, not excluding the organs of the state, but if possible, the state itself. Radical islam, and the conception of themselves being first and foremost soldiers of Islam remain the driving force behind all their intentions and actions, rather than a military victory or political coup arranged to meet own ends; not even economic or administrative issues tailored to suit own needs, (Sareen 2007,AGNI,X(II):10-17). Military actions are thus seen as means to an end, and an insurgency combining the features of guerilla warfare and Terrorism, seen as a desirable way, if not the best way possible, to triumphantly achieve these aims, ends and the incorporated goals and objectives.

However, on many occasions, such groups have engaged each other. Pro-Taliban militants clashed with uzbek militants in March 2007 (Muni(ed)2008:99).

III. THE INSURENT TACTICS.

The militants have employed a variety of tactics both against the local tribal people and the Pakistan army. As for the former, they have resorted to the use of coercion to extract obedience (Heffelfinger(ed).2005:283) and in many cases even struck at them using arms (DAWO 16March 2008).

1. GUERRILLA WAR

The pattern of warfare adopted by the insurgents in militarily challenging the Pakistan army has been built around and developed on standard guerilla techniques. The Pakistani Taliban “have started a Guerilla-style war that is classic in approach” (Yusufzai, Newline 20(3) 2007:33). The main tactical features of such an unconventional war

remain hinged primarily on the conduct of hit and-run attacks, remote-controlled landmine (or other) explosions, ambushes, and mounting of long range rocket attacks, (Yusufzai, Newsline, 20(3) 2007:33-37). The militants have also used mortars, heavy machine guns and shoulder-fired rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) against the army's armored vehicles and helicopters (Sirroetal 2004:204).

The army Kalusha operation of March 2004 witnessed an example of the application of this unconventional style of war in combat action. Local and foreign militants carried out successful ambushes, inflicting heavy losses and taking officials hostage. Entrenched in fort like buildings, they offered fierce resistance (International Crisis-Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:16). The Al Qaeda and supporting tribesmen had built defensive positions in the mud brick fortress style compounds to hold the army at bay. Tunnels connected these compounds, and one of these numerous tunnels was over a mile long and led to a stream (Sirro etal 2004:204-205).

Ambushes are aimed both at military personnel and vehicles. In a few months before August 2007, an intelligence major and his colleagues were ambushed and killed in the Loisam area of Bajaur, (Yusubzai 2007, Newsline 20(3):36) military convoys were attacked signaling the spread of the insurgency. In 2007, a convoy was ambushed in North Wariristan in July. While one was fired at by the militants, the second convoy was attacked through an explosion generated by an IED³ (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 19 July 2007). The use of remote-controlled devices is also becoming increasingly common, (Ghaffar A.Khan 2007, The Herald, September:38).

The attacks on military posts has combined with the convoy strikes to lead to a large number of casualties being heaped upon the military (Jalalzai 2005:80) such attacks were part of militant responses to the military's operations (Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:331). In the Mehsud areas of South Wariristan, attacks on government installations and personnel were launched after careful preparations. Leading the efforts, Bartullah and the late Abdullah Mehsud integrated the renegade militants into their reactivated local groups, establishing bases, ammunition stocks, bomb-making workshops and training camps, (International Crisis Group, 2006, Asia).

In Surat also, IEDs have been frequently employed by the militants to target convoys (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 26 October 2007.)Report No.125, 11 December:17).

Rocket attacks and landmines were used to retaliate against military operations sirretal (eds)2004:197-198 such attacks on posts of security fierces and government installations had become routine in Bajaur,(Yusufzai, Newslines 20(3)2007:35-37). In one incident rockets were fired into heavily populated areas of Bannu from the militant strong holds (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 26 July 2007; Aziz2007, Newslines 20(3) : 37 miranhans remained another attack of such attacks which were on concentrated mainly at security checkpoints, Aziz2007, Newslines,20(3):36:37.

There were instances of hijacking of ammunition-laden military trucks heading towards South Wariristan meant for the troops engaging Baitullah Mehsud. One such incident occurred in the Darra Adam Khel area of the NWFP, (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 28 January 2008).

Overall, the militants are well-trained, fairly well-equipped and display a strong determination to fight the US and any of its regional or extra regional allies, (Siddiqua,2007, The World Today, 63(4):5). Clashes occur almost daily, with the militants almost always initiating them (Khalid Hasan, The Daily Times,4 October 2007). They have also exhibited a penchant for attacking security forces at Grill, (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:18,esp.checkpoints convoys and personnel of both military and paramilitary.

“the town is less than 40KM from Miramshah. Out of the four missdes that were fired two exploded while the remaining were diffused by security officials.

5 for eg.

An FC convoy near Mirali was attacked by a number of madrassa based pro-Taliban militants in March 2006.

2. RECENT TACTICAL TRENDS AND DIRECTIONS.

The greater mutual cooperation exhibited by the two sets of Taliban in both Wariristans has emerged lately, and is in contrast to the situation in the part wherein they had contacts fut without much coordination in terms of planning and launching guerilla operations. One action that highlighted such a development was when Taliban fighters in South Wariristan took up positions on hill tops over looking major roads in anticipation of

military operation in North Wariristan, to prevent being overtaken by events once the government launched fresh military activity in the area. This deployment was to show their readiness to face any eventuality, pointing out at a possibility of coordinated Taliban attacks on the army in both Wariristan (Yusufzai 2007, Newsline,20(3):33-34).

The militants are also believed to be developing the capacity regarding capture of and retention of ground, thus manifesting "Characteristics of a formal military force-in-particular to take and hold territory" (Jalalzai 2005:37). The militants' ability to establish control and assure authority in several areas could be an indicator of such a capacity.

A trend is also developing showing an inclination for adoption of conventional strikes. While armed clashes, fire fights and gun battles are common (Kennedy and Botteron 2006:285-286:2007, Aziz Newsline, 20(3):36-37), yet there is also movement towards stirring clashes in a conventional form, as opposed to resorting to the above through ambushes or planned hit and run strikes. This orientation became apparent when some 300 militants attacked and captured the Sararjha fort in South Wariristan, after a several hour fighting against the FC manning it, (The Hindu, 17 January 2008). Another action that caused concerns that the militants were opening up new fronts against the Pakistan military while it was already engaged in a number of places, especially South Wariristan and Surat, was the brief capture of the Kohat tunnel on the Karachi-Peshawar Indus Highway (Nirupama Subrahmanian, The Hindu,28 January 2008). The tunnel, located in Darra Adam Khel, fell into militant hands as they took on security forces with mortars and rockets from bunkers in the heights around Chetovel. The militants suffered losses and retreated after the three day battle; However they did build bunker on the hills surrounding a key tunnel and were equipped with armament to such an extent that the ensuing battle could take three days to dislodge them. The retreating militants left behind an anti-aircrafts gun with live rounds and 30kg of explosives Abdul sony paracha Daun 29 January 2008).

This pointed to the increase in both the capability, and the will, of the militants to step up their actions and to redefine the shape of their armed challenge.

The rugged terrain of the tribal areas has been fully exploited by the militants to their own advantage (Sirretal (ed) 2004:184, Qasim Nauman, Pakistan observer, 24 September 2008). Their training in such environments, along-with the practice of tactics

in Afghanistan, has made the militants masters of the peculiar FATA topography (Ajay Singh, 2008 South Asia defence Strategic Review, 1 (6):19).

“the town is less than 40KM from Miramshah. Out of the four missiles that were fired two exploded while the remaining were diffused by security officials.

5 for eg.

An FC convoy near Mirali was attacked by a number of madrasa based pro-Taliban militants in March 2006.

⁶ The Frontier Corps' troops used artillery and helicopter gun ships to dislodge the militants.

THE MUJAHIDEEN IN AFGHANISTAN - STYLE OF WAR-FARE.

1. ADOPTION OF THIS STYLE OF WAR BY “THE MILITANTS.

Many local militants have also “Oorroved from the tactics employed by resistance fighters in neighbouring Afghanistan” (Yusufzai, 2007 Newslite, 20(3):33. This could have been an easily available option as many of these militants and their commanders had participated in the war with the Soviets alongside the Afghan Mujahideen (Sirssetal (ed). 2004:204).

In general, the Mujahideen proved to be ideal guerilla fighters, being exceptionally tough, having been reared in harsh environments and a society that emphasized virtues of courage and endurance. (Ewans 2005:137; Goodson 2001:650-62,72 Shultz Jr and Dev 2006:168-195 equipped with an intimate knowledge of the country they had a fervent belief in their cause and the inevitability of its triumph” (Evans 2005:137).

Composed of part-time⁷ and full time volunteers linked to local bases, their operational style closely followed their tribal style of war. (Raj:173-176, 1986) some commanders attempted to create more professional style organizations, notably Ahmadshah Masud⁸ and Ismail Khan. Khan an ex-army officer, “ran his forces in a military organizational structure like those of formal armies”(Nojumi 2002:144).

Levels of Mujhadeen guerilla activity varied depending upon enemy proximity. Ambushes and patrols occurred practically daily, in the immediate locality of towns. Groups operating away from such centers, however exhibited greater activity aiming at a

large range of targets-police posts government groups, administrative buildings and enemy patrols, (Roy 1986:174-175).

The conduct of guerilla warfare incorporated a whole range of tactics. Raids were a primary way of obtaining arms from every security posts and a good way to demonstrate their ability to attack the latter's installation with relative impunity. Shelling attacks⁹ using a variety of weaponry,¹⁰ on garrisons, outposts, airfields and cities were a daily event, and aimed at harassing foes, esp. when they prevented them from sleeping and depressed their morale. Countering of air assaults remained throughout, but not without the Mujahideen learning to face them through thorough planning, immediate action drills, early warning systems and air defence ambushes (Jalali and Grau-2001:105-115,239). Deployment of air power in flat and open terrain was countered through adoption of small unconventional solutions for rapid movement, to avoid strikes (Urban 1988:95).

7. Mobilized only in times of crisis using

8. Masud and Ismail Khan had organized full time guerilla cadres. Masud unlike a majority of other Mujahideen commanders, had grasped the key elements of guerilla warfare-surprise organization rapid concentration and dispersal of forces (Urban 1988:101,216). He was able to create the most organized and well disciplined force that fought against the Soviets. Conducting militant operations simultaneously, they came to dominate several important provinces (Shultz and Dew 2006:191).

(2) TACTICS OF HIT-AND-RUN

Defensive positions were aided hugely by the rugged terrain field fortifications along with coordinated defence and a counter attack reserve helped in serving cordon and search operations battlefield actions and in sustaining combat. They learnt also to rotate defensive forces through a position to lessen effects of combat fatigue and psychological stress. Fortified and otherwise fighting positions housed a number of entrenched multiple resistance pockets forcing the enemy to chase the Mujahideen and attack whenever

⁹ The Mujahidin gunners learnt to construct multiple firing sites, fixed surveyed and mobile firing bases, besides shifting firing position to avoid return fire, and dispersing

quickly after firing to avoid enemy response. Terrain was an advantage as reverse slope firing position in the valleys made it difficult for Soviet artillery to reach them.

¹⁰ Mortars, rockets, recoilless rifles and sometimes mountain guns and mortars possible but with himself getting exhausted. The enemy retreat led to Mujahidin pursuit, and this instant transition to pursuit was a characteristic observed even during the war with the British (Jalali and Grace:2001:268,298,315).

Successful ambushes were mounted through elaborate planning, good intelligence, secrecy of movement, proper site selection and detailed instructions to combat elements and a simple task organization. Heavily armed Mujahideen inflicted heavy losses as they effectively maximized their advantage of fighting from well-protected position against an enemy caught by surprise and trapped in the open. A small number of highly mobile Mujahideen were able to move and attack and after initial firing, the ambush became a desultory protracted sniping exercise like recreation for ambushes than decisive combat. Tactically well-organized, they hit the column and left rather than exploiting the initiative gained through surprise, and to complete the destruction of the demoralized and panicked enemy. This feature of the Mujahideen ambush remained a hallmark of their hit-and-run tactics throughout the war.

3. WEAKNESSES

The many deficiencies they did suffer from included a lack of coordination and discipline, absence of communication between different groups, their inefficient control, and their "command and control was fragmented and worked through happenstance and chance encounters" (Jalali and Grau 2001:271). They could not fully exploit every reluctance to fight in many situations (e.g. at night) to achieve decisive results. There was lack of attention to tactical security and a reaction to set-patterns based on their overconfidence of territorial control, invulnerability of their defences, and of

¹¹ They were able to obtain detailed information about the enemy including size of forces, direction of movement and the estimated time of arrival of enemy convoy to ambush site. The security of towns captured by them. As a consequence they had to face enemy ambushes deep in their surprising, aggressive raids and counter attacks recapture towns.

Many of these problems stemmed from the spontaneous nature of unpaid volunteers. Control became difficult, and forces joined battle and left as they wished often without informing the coordinating commander.

Continued holding of seized enemy strong points therefore was not easy and even attacking of such targets proved to be tactically disadvantageous. Never able to seize a garrison with more than a few hundred defenders, even when the balances of forces was hugely in their forms (Ginstozzi2000:114) and by the use of purely their own skill and non reliance on a revolt inside the garrison (Urban 1988:172) they proved that the transition to set piece battles, something they almost always generally avoided, was not forthcoming. Conventional attacks ended in a disorganized chaos (Jalali and Gran 2001:404).

4. CHALLENGES

The challenges for a Mujahideen commander, thus appeared in the various forms of enabling covert movement of groups, convincing the guerillas to perform undesired roles, keeping the extremely fatigued fighter for an extended period of time and most importantly, commanding and controlling a volunteer multi-regional force and integrating them into a single command.

The Mujahideen succers, however, were those that were premised on the ability to sustain active warfare for long periods.

¹² Missions of rear area security and lines of communication security, instead of actual combat

¹³ Due to long treks in mountains for weeks of time, skill in non traditional ways of fighting and employing surprise attacks, hit and runs strikes, deception and misdirection(Shultz and Dew 2006:190)all at la time and place where enemy was not fully ready to react effectively (Jalali and Gran 2001:162). The high mountainous terrain was highly favourable to their style of war(Urban 1988:100)and the leadership was uncompromising innovative, provided by independent field commanders who led by consensus, force of personality and moral persuasion (Jalali and Gran 2001:275) and were able to instel morale in their fighters. (Shultz and Dew 2006:190).

Their Chief advantage lay in asymmetrical tactics forcing the Red army too do something they did very poorly respond adhoc to surprise attacks” (Shultz and Dew 2006:175).

5. OPERATIONAL STYLE

The Mujahideen had developed the habit of Ali Jalai termed as a short hit and long run tactics and they felt they were fighting a war of a 1000 battles and no single battle has a decisive one, therefore, combat was to be limited a time and space to increase survivability. Natural at constituting light infantry, and conducting ambush and pursuit focus was on battle, and tactical actions but when the occasion demanded, could display capability worthy of operation level actions, usually under planning and leadership of former officers. However since the goal was to hit survive and fight again, they could not exploit success. Group leaders let alone coalition, could not hold a force together for long after a fight-mountain warriors couldn't stay together in victory or defeat, rendering the conversion of tactical victory into operational gain impossible.

Tactical innovation were carried out to counter technological applications.

Guerilla commanders were often usually influential villagers who already had leadership role in the local area, with few having any professional military experience of the Soviets, otherwise with the time- tested methods of fighting which were nothing other than the tactics applied in theAngle Afghan wars of 1839-42, 1878-80 and 1919 (Guauand Gress 2002, Jalali and Gran 2001:399).

4. TERROR TACTICS

(1) ACTS OF TERRORISM

The adoption of terror tactics by the militants is done in conjunction with their resort to arms against the Pakistan army. These have included a number of acts ranging from suicide bombings to be heading of captured soldiers.

In March 2006, for instance a remote controlled bomb destroyed a police van in Deralamail Khan, killing six officers. In June 2006 suicide attacks were made on a military convoy and on Para-military personnel (International crisis group 2006, Asia Report No..125 December 24). In early 2007 also, four suicide strikes occurred in the

month of January 15 itself. (Syed Talat Hussain 2007 Newsline February:21-26). Those attacks targeting soldiers continued in Wariristan economist intelligence units 2007 country Report Pakistan March:11).

In other acts of terrorism, Abdullah Mehsud kidnapped two Chinese Engineers in October 2004 (Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:285;311:International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125,11 December:17). Musharraf, following the incident, publicly stated that he would should Mehsud deal if he ever came across him. The army commandoes mounted a rescue mission on October 14, 2005 killing the five kidnapers but one Chinese Engineer also died. Abdullah Mehsud defended his actions saying that it was his way of embarrassing Musharaff's government and forcing it to stop military operations in South Wariristan. This particular act of kidnapping, he believed would hurt the government the most (Yusufzai News line, 20(3):40; Heffelfinger(ed) 2005:285.)

¹⁵ One in North Wariristan, one in Islamabad's Mariott Hotell and two in Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan.

¹⁶ The two Engineers, Wang Peng and Wang Ende, were serving with firm from China building the Gomal Zam Dam sited in south Wariristan and Tank.

The resort to the use of terror tactics was made much more frequent following operation silence. FATA as a whole was engulfed by such acts, of which means suicide attacks ¹⁷ could be counted (Yusufzai 2007 Newsline, 20(3):35-37; Aziz 2007, Newsline 20(3):36; Ismail Khan Daun, 26 September 2008). In July 2007 Masjid took place, militants claimed responsibility for suicide bombings and other attacks against security personnel. This claim was made on July 21 (Aziz 2007, Newsline, 20 (3):36).

The militants under Baitullah Mehsud are also suspected to have carried out the assassination of the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in December 2007. Baitullah himself is believed to have mastermind the attack and have dispatched a five man assassination team. An anti terrorist court in Rawalpindi accepted the charges against Mehsud and four other suspects and issued non-bailable warrant of arrest against all of them. The CIA also supported the assessment regarding Mehsud's involvement CIA

Directors Michael V.Haryden stated that Banazir was killed by militants loyal to Mehsud and supported by the Al Qaeda net work (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu 20, January 2008 and 2 March 2008; Carlotta Gall, The Hindu, 31 December 2007.; Anwar Iqbal Daun 3 March 2008).

17 Attacks in the month of July for instance occurred in North Wariristan killing 24 soldiers and injuring 26 others on July 14, 2007, attacks in Swat and Dera Ismail Khan killed 28 security personnel and 21 others besides injuring 96 others, on July 15, on July 20, four die and five are injured at a security checkpoint near Miramishah (Aziz 2007, Newsline, 20 (3):36).

(3) SUICIDE BOMBINGS

- One major form of striking of enemy that the militants are employing with great inclination is the attack by a suicide bomber. "Pakistan has now attained the unmeliable distinction being the only country, apart from Iraq, where suicide attacks are increasing with dangerous frequency. The Jhadists, who till a decade ago would not even have contemplated taking a recourse to this mode of hurting the enemy have now adopted this as their primary tactics. They now run a large net work comprising master trainers first stage persuaders and would be bombers: (Ahmed 2007, The Herala, September:36). The attack on security personnels soldiers, security posts, and civilians alike continued unabated throughout 2007 (Aziz 2007, Newsline, 20(3) 36-37) and more so nice July, when a significant rise was noted, as a fallout of operation silence. In the past low enforcement personnel suffered fatalities but did not constitute a prime target, and just happened to intercept the suicide bombers as part of their duty. As of the case at present, the army remains the first target, followed by the paramilitary forces in the tribal areas and then the police in the settled areas, with the only motive being revenge.(Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, The Herald, September:38).

The attack in the garrison city of Rawalpindi were aimed at army personnel. The suicide attack which killed Lieutenant general Baig also occurred in this city. Prior to that however, by February 5, 2008.

The city had already faced four suicide attack (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 5 February 2008,) with one occurring near Musharraf's army office on 30 October 2007, The Hindu, 1 November, 2007). The theater of operations of the militants has, therefore, expanded to infiltrate high security zone, (Ismail Khan, Daun, 28 September 2007)).

Much of the terror network can be traced to the Wariristans, where master trainers such as Fazlus Rehman, Haji Oman Hizbullah, Ahsanulah and Maaz operate, alongwith Maulana Abdul Malik and Baitullah Mehsud the latter alongwith Ahsanullah, a Chechen provide the training in suicide jacket making and detonation, and training to the recruits, while the others act as persuades.Ahmed 203, The Heralad September:38-39).

It is however Baitullah Mehsud who has claimed to have hundreds of suicide bombers ready to attack government and military targets. His group trains and dispatches suicide bombers from the tribal areas, along-with four other groups (Carlotta Gall, The Hindu, 31 December 2007). The government claims to have evidence linking many such attacks to Mehsud, and in one instance, six men arrested in Dera Ismail Khan claimed in January 2007 that a web of militants connected to Pakistan. (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007, country report Pakistan, March:15 Musharraf has blamed Mehsud for several terrorist attacks and suicide killings, and accused him of being a terrorist facilitators (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu 23 January 2008).

Another known to be sending out suicide bombers is Qari zafar, another Afghanistan war veteran. Based in waina he provides training to explode car bombs rig road side bombs land vests (Carlotta Gall, The Hindu, 31 December 2007: Ahmed 2007, The Herald September:39).

A UN report in September 2007 highlighted the fact that 80% of the suicide bombers in Afghanistan had came from Warirstan (Ismail Khan, Daun 26September 2007). More and more infiltrators are being caught in Afghanistan for carrying out such strikes, as the Taliban insurgents there are also adopting this tactics on increasing scale, (Jacob 2006:56).

However “suicide attacks in Afghanistan do not have the same frequency and level of devastation as in Pakistan” Daun, January 2007). According to the report prepared for 2007 by the Pakistan Institute of Peace studies, 60 suicide strikers alone killed 720 people (Daun, 7 January 2008). As the February 4, 2008 attack showed the militants have increasingly used this tactic to deliver psychological blows to the army and the paramilitary specifically and to the establishment perse. Attacks continued in 2008 as well where in one instance of March 2 a suicide bomber rounded his explosive laden car into a vehicle of the tribal police in Bajaur, killing two and injuring 21, most of them being security personnel (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu 2 March 2008).

4. TARGETTED KILLINGS AND BEHEADINGS.

The militants have routinely targeted government officials ¹⁸ pro-government tribesmen and personnel of the security forces several government officials in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu were assassinated .(International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:24). Pro-government maliks, who resisted the Taliban onslaught, have been brutally killed (Rammohan, 2007, The USI Journal, (XXXVII (569): 364). In Mir Ali and Miramshah sub-districts, several officials were kidnapped or killed. The Mujahideen shura of North Wariristan banned. ¹⁸ For instance on March, 16, 2004 two political tehsildars were taken captive and later Ghafor Ali Khan 2007, The Herald, October:65).

Tribal elders from meeting officials and targeted pro-government tribal elders, killing more than 150 maliks and even clerics suspected of collaborating with the government. Beheading those they accused of spying for the US, they issued warnings that all collaborations would meet the same fate. (International Crisis Group 2006, 11 December:18 Asia Report No.125).

Targetted killings have claimed hundreds of pro-government tribal elders. Such incidents have also spread to major cities and settled districts. The killing of a widely respected cleric Mauhana Hassan Jan is a case in point (Ismail Khan, Daun 26 September 2007). Even soldiers who had been abducted or captured have been beheaded, ¹⁹ rising the stakes in the battle against the militants” (Yusufzai, Newline, 20(3):36). However such

incidents displayed the possibility of proving counter productive to the militants themselves, as these could trigger blood-fends that may continue for a long time owing to the Pashtuna" urge for avenging murders and restoring their honour (Yusufzai, Newline, 20 (6):37). The problem such as eventually could cause was not overlooked by some militants. This was the case in Swat, where Maulana Fazlullah and his associates dissociated themselves from those involved in the beheadings, one of his deputer declared on October 30, 2007 that such men were criminals and would be caught and punished.

Abduction of soldiers by the militants has also been interpreted as tactic aimed at lowering the morale of the personnel and for damaging the army's reputation as a professional force, esp. in the eyes of the populace, leading to their loss of confidence (Qasim Nauman, The Pakistan observer, 24 September 2007). Hundreds of soldiers have been kidnapped since 1 August 2007, and some have been released as well making such occurrences add a view.....

On August 19, 2007, 16 parliamentary soldiers were abducted from the Spinkai Raghzai area of south Wariristan. One was beheaded five days later (Ghafer Ali Khan 2007, The Herald October:65).

Dimension to the raging insurgency in the tribal areas. This was primarily in terms of the impact caused on the army and other law enforcement agencies (Ismail Khan, Dawn 26 September 2007).

5. PEACE DEALS

(1) ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE DEALS.

The different peace deals signed with the militants called upon them to fulfil certain conditions, however, the insurgents put forth their own arguments regarding the fulfillment of their end of the bargain. Shortly after the signing of the Shakai agreement 2004, in South Wariristan on 24 April many militants who were party to it, denied and or revenged on the surrender or registration of foreigners as was asked of them ²⁰ (Jalalzai 2005: 78).

The main signatory on the behalf of the militants, Nek Mohammad denied that he had even agreed to such a condition, stating "There is no Al-Qaeda here had there been a

single Al-Qaeda fighter here, the government, would have caught one by now”(International crisis group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:16). He and other tribal leaders insisted that the only foreigners lining in South Wariristan over the remnants of the Afghanistan Mujahideen of the 1980’s who had settled down and raised families. They challenged Musharraf to produce a single Arab of Al-Qaeda caught or killed by the army in that area (Jalalzai 2005:78-79).

Ink the weeks following the signing of the agreement, foreign terrorists failed to register and the Shakai agreement broke down (International Crisis Group 2006 Asia Report No.125, 11 December:16).

20 The militants were asked to surrender or register Al-Qaeda and other foreign militants with the authorization. They were also to ensure that they would not use Pakistani territory for cross-border attacks. In return for good behaviour and pledges to renounce violence they be given amnesty and financial incentives.

11 December: 19)

Nevertheless the militants subsequently out rightly denied the presence of foreign militants in North Wariristan. On the contrary they asked the Pakistan government for evidence, saying “why should no bother(to restrainforeign militants) ifthey are not here?” (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:20).

On July 15, 2007 the militants mainly the Pakistani Taliban, unilaterally scrapped this peace agreement. The uncertainty which had grown following the death of Abdullah Mehsud on July 24 further affected the militants attitude towards retaining of other peace deals. The grounds the militants cited for discontinuation of the agreement were mainly centred around the issue of roadside checkpoints. The militants wanted the government to pull back troops redeployed ²¹ at several checkpoints as it constituted a violation of the peace accord. The Jirga members who had brokered the deal tended to agree,²² (Yusufzai 2007, Newslite, 20(3):33-34, Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu 26 July 2007).

In South Wariristan, the Sarargha ²³ pact signed with militants ²⁴

²¹ The reasons given by the government were that suicide bombings were targeting the forces and also that there was need to check kidnappers and car-lifters.

²² The Jirga argued that all violations of the peace accord should have been reported to it by the Government, and thus the latter should not have unilaterally deployed troops in violation of the terms of the agreement.

²³ Sararogha Foet is same 80 kilometer from Wama

²⁴ Upto 100 of Baitullah's fighters over also signatories led by Baitullah Mehsud on February 7, 2005 required him and his associates not to attack government functionaries or forces, not to shelter and assist Asl-Qaeda and other foreign terrorists and to aid the government was on terror. Violation of the accord would result in punishment according to local customs and existing laws. However they were not required to surrender foreign terrorists they had sheltered. Baitullah, who had surrendered reportedly endorsed a six point peace agreement and pledged loyalty to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Baitullah insisted he had not surrendered to the government and made two important demands of his own. These were the removal of security checkpoints and the speeding up of development projects in the region. He however, later went underground but re-emerged and revitalized his networks (International Crisis Group, 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:17; Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:282.

The air strikes carried out by the Pakistan army in Hainzola district of South Waziristan in mid-January 2007 made, Baitullah vow revenge (Economist intelligence unit 2007, country Report Pakistan, March:14-15).

Abdullah Mehsud and some 100 foreign mostly uzbek, militants did not commit the Saragha deal ²⁵ (Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:283, Jalalzai 2005:78).

²⁵ The Wazir tribe also rejected the deal. Immediately after the signing of the deal, two local Waziri journalists were killed and a third injured, on the pretext of "joining the enemy".

(2) INCLINATION FOR CEASEFIRE

The militants have also signed ceasefire with the army over different periods of time. On October 5, 2004, Baitullah and Abdullah Mehsud agreed to a ten day ceasefire to allow

mediators to resolve the issue of the registration of foreign militants. In north Wariristan the Mujahiddeen Shura offered a month long ceasefire on June 25, 2006. on August 25, they extended it after the government agreed to key demands (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December 17-19; Muni (ed) 2008:98-99).

The Afghan Taliban,²⁸ namely Mullah Dadullah and Jalaluddin Haqqane played a major role in convincing the local Taliban about it. Mullah Omas reportedly approved the tune (Muni(ed)2008:99).

On December 17,2007, the Noerth Wariristan militants announced another ceasefire, and agreed with the government to end hostilities. This ceasefire was extended till January 20, 2008 by the militants (Dawn ² January 2008). Another truce was offered by Faqid Mohammad in Bajaus in March 2008 indicating dialogue with the government, but simultaneously against.

²⁶ In the return for withdrawal of troops from theregion they offered not to shelter foreign militants.

²⁷ These included the release of all arrested militants and the dismantling of checkpoints set up during the military operation.

²⁸ The top Taliban leadership urged Baitullah to sign the deal to enable the movement to concentrate Afghanistan without having to worry about Pakistan and of its actions against Baitullah Mehsud (Anwarullah Khan, Dawn, 16 March 2008). Baitullah himself offered a ceasefire in April 2008 (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 25 April 2008) after an official truce in January (Anwar Iqbal, Daun 31, March 2008).

IV.MILITANT CONDUCT AND ARMY ACTIONS

- ISSUES FOR ARMY STRATEGY.

The Pakistan army took recourse to both military means and pacific measures to respond to the insurgency as well as to the pattern that developed with periods of time.

1. MILITARY OPERATIONS AND PACIFIC MEASURES.

In March 2004, the Kalusha operation was launched near Wana by the army. 5000 troops using heavy artillery and helicopter gunships fought a pitched battle with 400-500 tribesmen and suspected Al-Qaeda terrorists. Musharraf declared on March 18 that a "high value" Al-Qaeda member was possibly being protected through the heavy resistance offered by the militants. However, militants ambushed troops inflicting heavy losses and taking officials hostage (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December: 14; Surrsetak (eds)2004:204-05).

This operation was followed by the April 2004 Shakai agreement. Its breakdown in the following weeks resulted in renewed military action involving airforce jets and helicopter gunships against suspected militant sanctuaries in the Shakai area. Nek Mohammad was killed in June 2004. The military then renewed its amnesty offer and even pledged not to hand over foreigners to a third country. In November and December 2004 South Waziristan's militant commanders surrendered (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December 16,17; Jalalzai 2005:78 Kennedy and Botteron (eds)2006:9,280-287).

Following the October 2004 ceasefire, the Peshawar corps Commander offered amnesty to Baitullah and Abdullah Mehsud. The military withdrew the offer to the latter due to the kidnapping of Chinese Engineers, while with Baitullah it concluded the Sararogha pact in 2005. Abdullah Mehsud was being tracked by an embarrassed government which had doubled its efforts to catch him, finally cornering him in a raid in Baluchistan where he died. (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December:17; Yusufzai 2007, Newslines, 20(3):39-40 Heffelfunger (ed)2005:285).

Military operations in North Waziristan followed to deal with the worsened security situation. However the peace accord was signed in 2006, but the consequent scrapping of the accord led to more military action. The army also had to contend with the aftermath of Operation Silence 2007, thus clashes continued with the militants in various areas of different agencies (International Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.125, 11 December 17-19; Yusufzai Newslines 20(3): 33-37; Aziz 2007 Newslines 20(3):37).

The military continued to mount operations for the remaining period of 2007 and also that of early 2008. North Wariristan became a Chief battle ground more so in October 2007. The army also responded to militant strikes in January 2008 chiefly in South Wariristan and the NWFP area of Darra Adam Khel alongwith FATA area adjoining the latter. In many instances the army neglected militant proposed ceasefires and continued to press on the offensive. Unofficial nevertheless were also observed in some cases. Clashes and negotiations remained interspersed The Daily Times throughout this period (Nirupama Subramanian, The Hindu, 10 and 11 October 2007 and 17 January 28; The Daily Times, Naveed Siddiqui, 4 October 2007, Alangir Bhattani and Zulfiqar Ali Daun 29 January 2008; Abdul Saini Paracha Daun 29 January 2008 Anwar Iqbal Daun, 3 March 2008).

2. ARNT TRUVAKS ABD UBTRA-MILITANT CLASHES

The army has both taken and provided help to local tribals on account of clashes with the militants. The insurgents had struck at several tribal gatherings. These strikes included suicide attacks also. In Darra Adam Khel on March 2, 2008 a suicide bomber struck a grand jirga of five tribes in Zarghon village, discussing the increasing pro-taliban activities in the region. Atleast 32 people died in the attack. Other suicide attacks on local people led to 50 died on February 29, while 20 died in Bajwur on March 1, (Nirupama Subramanian The Hindu 3 March 2008)/.

In another incident in the Spinnonen area of North Wariristan, 60 militants clashed with members of a Jirga (Daun, 16March 2008).

The army provided assistance to local tribesmen who challenged the Uzbek militants. In a week long series of armed clashes in April 2007 between the Uzbek militants and Woris tribesmen under Maulvi Nazir Ahmed, the security forces aided the tribals²⁹. These clashes left 160 dead, and hundreds of Uzbeks were driven out of the Wana region; Maulvi Nazir has been an out spoken critic of Baitullah Mehsud and has blamed him for attacks on the Wazirs. One such attack led to the convincing of a Jirga in Wana three days after militants stormed two offices and killed nine tribal elders a government sponsored peace committee (Daun, 8 and 10 January 2008; Yusufzai 2007, Newslite, 19(8):52-54).

²⁹ The clashes had erupted in March and continued for well over a month. Victory was claimed on April 20.

Besides employing tribal organizations such as the Jirgas and the locally recruited lashkars, ³⁰ the army has also approached tribal leaders for their cooperation. In one incident those of both Wariristans had helped in identification of Lidesouts of foreign militants, mostly Uzbeks and Tajiks, in the mountainous region (Naveed Siddiqui, The Daily Times, 4 October 2007).

3. OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES BEFORE THE ARMY STRATEGISTS.

Many difficulties, however were encountered during course of the various operations carried out by the army. In the beginning itself, made with operation Kazha Punga 2002, hurdles to the executives of actions by the army were becoming apparent. Lieutenant general Safdar Hussain, the Peshawar Corps Commander admitted on March 21, 2004- just a few days after the commencement of the Kalusha operation on March 16, 2004-that his troops facing extremely professional "opponents in almost impossible terrain he also stated that troops were being fired on from every direction and that it was not clear whether "the locals" were on the army's inside. "Fierce resistance" was being offered by fighters entrenched in their fort like building as well (Sirrsetal (eds)2004:205; international Crisis Group 2006, Asia Report No.128,11December 14).

The militants dominated the Wana area trapping the paramilitary troops in an ambush, holding positions in hills and

³⁰ Agreements with these tribal militia were made in order to search for the fugitive militants and firing them to the authorities (Sirrset al (eds) 2004:154,203-04).

³¹ Operation Kazha Punga(Named after the place where it was carried out) in South Wariristan, on June 25,2002 brought to light the nature of the threat. A force of 500 comprising infantry, paramilitary and 559 elements found themselves overwhelmed by the militants many of whom managed to escape. Mountains, their hail of fire caused heavy casualties in men and material. The army, called into break the ambush and retrieve the trapped men, began a cordon and search operation (Musharraf 2006:267-268).

Brigadier Mohamood Shah, chief of security for the tribal areas, told reporters that the soldiers, were having trouble distinguishing foreign militants from local tribesmen, as many of the farmer had settled in the region and spoke the local language (Sirrsetal (eds.)2004:205).

The operation against the Dila Khula compound ³² in the Mehsud area was again confronted with stiff resistance. The ground operation was carried out by 10000 regular troops backed by our support, and sustained high casualties. “ It was costly, but it was a victory” (Musharraf 2006:269).

Searching for the militants became difficult as they hid among local tribes thus their pin pointing appeared as almost next to impossible. Their familiarity with the terrain and local support ³³, esp;ecially from their own tribes caused further hardships for the army and paramilitary (Abwar Iqbal, Daun, 3 March 2008: Jalal zai 2005:76).

The requirement of intelligence was also hampered. In most cases “ our information was deficient as delayed on and our forces were much slower than Al-Qaeda the intelligence side there were occasional misunderstandings between the Pakistan Army and agencies, both American and Pakistani. The army flamed the intelligence agencies for inaccurate intelligence “ (Musharraf 2006:266).

³² A major training and logistical base, it had three distinct operational and administrative bases.

³³ “The terrorists always had agents among the villagers and their own lookouts, with excellent communications and would thus be warned in time to make their getaway” (Musharraf 2006:266).

In terms of operations, the military intelligence also did not want to hit hard the tribals for fear of offending the people and its likely repercussions on the lower rugs of the army personnel (Warrilo(ed) 2007:135. A large section of those troops fighting in FATA, because of their shared Pashtun linkages ³⁴ were beginning to show apprehension of fighting fellow Pashtuns, perhaps belonging to related tribes or subtribes, as this could trigger of a cycle of revenge, which may lost generations (Ajay Singh 2008, South Asia defence and strategic review (6):20).

The ISI cadets who hail from the region have relations among the people and large casualties would antagonize them (Warikore (ed.)2007:135). The fear of collateral damage-civilian casualties-also prevented Pakistani troops from targeting in particular,Baitullah Mehsud (Anwar Iqbal, Daun, 3 March 2008).

However, despite these problems facing strategy makers in the course of the implementation of the strategy, the institutional ones became more pronounced. The questions of ethnicity, intelligence failures, and of peace deals and military operation arose-on the backdrop of the army's own strategic culture, which for one, was nurtured in the mould of Jihad and Islamian.

The army's approach, to strategy formulation, implementation and problem solving thus carried these imprints, as did the process of confutative to these issues.

³⁴ The FC is overwhelmingly Pashtun in composition, while the army the composition is 20-25%. 15-20% of the officer corps is also Pashtun (Muni (ed)2008:97).

CHAPTER 4

THE PAKISTAN ARMY- STRATEGY, APPROACHES AND CONDUCT

In this chapter an evaluation of the army's COIN strategy would be undertaken, based on several considerations, including constraints and the role of US. The conduct of the strategy in actual operation would also be assessed, along with any differences between the two. Lastly, an assessment would also be provided for the army's institutional capacity for COIN, preceded by a summary of views expressed on the government's, and the army's, strategy and conduct regarding the insurgency in FATA.

(I) Analysis of the Approach

1. A Brief Overview of Major Military Actions (2003-07)

The involvement of the Pakistan army in FATA began in 2001, as a result of the compulsions posed by the US led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, in the form of prevention of fleeing Al Qaeda-Taliban fighters from gaining sanctuary in the tribal areas. Bowing to US pressure (International Crisis Group 2006 *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:1, 14-18) the Pakistani military consequently deployed for the first time ever in FATA. (Baxter(ed.):47,2004; Dorrnsoro 2005:326,351), directing its attempts mainly at closing and guarding the frontier with Afghanistan (Dorrnsoro 2005:320).

In the subsequent years, this objective expanded to stopping of cross-border infiltration of militants into Afghanistan, removal of Al Qaeda and its affiliates hiding in FATA (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 26 September 2007), and curbing of cross-border attacks and action against militants within Pakistani territory (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:1).

Troop movement began with a division moving into the area in June 2002. The first military operation commenced on October 2, 2003 at Angor Ada, and later in Wana on January 8, 2004. These were followed by a series of operations. One began from February 24, 2004, and another lasted from March 18 to March 30(Jalalzai 2005:75-76).

Intended as a search -and-destroy drive, the Pakistan army deployed troops at transit points⁴⁴ for militants crossing into Afghanistan (*Dawn* 21 February 2004;The Nation 21 February 2004). The Kalusha operation, for instance, concentrated on a 50

⁴⁴ Angor Ada, Azam Warsak, Kausha and Shakai Areas.

square karea near Wana⁴⁵ to deal with around 400-500 foreign militants and 2000-2500 local tribesmen recruited and trained by the former (Owais Tohid 2004, *Newsline*, April; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:14). Joint US-Pak military operations were also conducted in July 2004 (Kennedy and Botteron(ed.) 2006:286), after fighting renewed in June 2004 after the collapse of the Shakai agreement.

Operations were launched also in North Waziristan⁴⁶ in March 2006. By the middle of 2006, over 75 operations in all had been conducted (Nirupama Subramanian,*The Hindu*, 25 May 2006). As stated in chapter II, by August 2007, the intensity of clashes⁴⁷ with the militants had increased, following the spread of militancy in the other five agencies, and more so after the conduct of Operation Silence in Islamabad, July 2007.

In January 2008, another offensive was mounted against Baitullah Mehsud, following clashes in South Waziristan, in which the army reportedly cleared some areas hit by militancy and occupied some militant strongholds and hideouts (*Dawn*, 25 January 2008) Beginning on January 27, it lasted for four days. Codenamed Operation Zalazala, the army used tanks and a multi-pronged artillery barrage to encircle-Baitullah's home territory. Mehsud strongholds were occupied. This operation formed the most concerted drive till than against him (Iqbal Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 21 May 2008;Declan Walsh, *The Guardian* 25 January 2008;Daud Khattak, *The Daily Times* ,19 May 2008).

2. Tactics

The army and the paramilitary took recourse to the use of artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes (Nawaz 2008:544;Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(6):34-35; *Dawn*,8 October 2007;Musharraf 2006:268;International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:15-17) along with infantry divisions. Tactics pursued involved the pounding and shelling of militant strongholds with mortars and other heavy weaponry, with helicopter gunships backing up ground operations by infantry/paramilitary units(*Dawn*,23 July 2007;Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn* 29 June 2008). Air strikes (*Dawn*, 8 October 2007) and fighter jets were employed for bombing targets, mainly militant hideouts (Sailab Mahsud, *The News*, 12 June 2004) PAF or the Pakistan Air Force used

⁴⁵ The village of Shin Warsak, Daza Gundai, Kalusha, Ghaw Khawa and Kari Kot.

⁴⁶ Major actions was seen in the border town of Danday Saidgi and Miramshah.

⁴⁷ Areas where such clashes took place were mainly those of Miramshah and Mir Ali.

precision weapons against militant compounds (Musharraf 2006:268). Missile strikes were also resorted to by NATO-ISAF troops in Afghanistan (*The Hindu*, 3 November 2007).

3. Troop Deployment

In 2001, 40,000 troops were given the task of closing the frontier (Dorransoro 2005:326) with the number increasing to 100,000 during the March 2002 Coalition assault on Tora Bora in Afghanistan (Baxter(ed.):2004:47). FATA operations by the army witnessed deployment of 80,000⁴⁸ troops (Musharraf 2006:271; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:14) alongwith 100,000 paramilitary and tribal levies⁴⁹(Sareen 2007, *AGNI*, X(II):17). Occupation of border posts was done by the troops, and by 2006, “we occupy nearly 900 posts along the Pakistani-Afghan border” (Musharraf 2006:271).

Deployment began in June 2002⁵⁰, with troop divisions arriving from the Mangla-based I Corps, its northern army reserve and a string of other formations protecting Punjab. Other Corps⁵¹ included the Peshawar-based XI Corps which contributed the 7th Division. This was reinforced by two more brigades(Musharraf 2006:268) from the Pannu Aquil- based XXXI Corps’ 37 Division, and two brigades from the I Corps’ 17 Division. The Kohat- based 9 Division, engaged in the frontier regions, received a brigade each from the Multan-based II Corps’ 14 Division, the Quetta-based XII Corps’ 16 Division, the I Corps’ 35 Division and the XXXI Corps’ 41 Division (Praveen Swami, *The Hindu*, 5 September 2006). Troop concentrations fluctuated depending upon the requirements, (Ahmed Hassan, *Dawn*, 17 July 2007)like for instance, preparations for major offensives would see an increase in figures, (Naveed Siddiqui, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007). The purpose of the large-scale deployment in the Bara offensive 2008, was stated to be “minimum use of force and maximum deterrence” (Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 28 June 2008).

4. Peace Deals

Confronting high losses and local alienation, the army entered into agreements with the militants, first in South Waziristan on April 24, 2004 at Shakai, and on September 5,2006 at Miramshah (*Daily Times*, 6 September 2006; *Dawn*,7 September,

⁴⁸ Qasim Nauman, (*Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007)gives the number as 90,000.

⁴⁹ Together totalling about 200,000 odd troops.

⁵⁰ A troop division was moved into the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency and Parachinar in Kurram (International Crisis Groups 2006, *Asia Report no. 125*, 11 December:14) .

⁵¹ One or two brigades from the abovementioned divisions were used as reinforcements.

2006). Assistance was taken from the JUI and its leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman to broker the deal with the militants led by Nek Mohammad in South Waziristan, and other pro-Taliban commanders in the North. (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 14 October 2006; Shamim Shahid, *The Nation*, 6 September 2006).

The conditions in the North Waziristan agreement included agreeing by the government to the halting of all ground and air operations; releasing those arrested and refraining from doing so further; demolishing all new checkposts; compensating the militants for human, material, and financial losses; restoring all suspended privileges and benefits to the tribesmen; returning all materials seized and resolving all issues according to local customs and laws. The government also expressed its intent for all foreigners to leave excluding those whose departure was constrained by same compulsions, provided they respected the prevailing laws and agreement (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:19). The conditions for Shakai “offered the local militants amnesty and financial incentives in return for good behaviour and pledges to renounce violence.” They were also asked to surrender Al Qaeda and other foreign militants or register them with the authorities and ensure that they would not use Pakistani territory for cross-border attacks” (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:16).

The militants were also paid money to repay the debts the latter owed to Al Qaeda-linked foreign militants. The militants clarified that they had been paid Rs.4.2 million by retired colonel Inamullah Wazir and the ISI officials who were negotiating on behalf of the army. The Musharraf government admitted the payment of \$540,000 after their surrender (Jalalzai 2005:78-79; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:17).

The agreements were signed on behalf of the Government/army by Safdar Hussain, the Peshwar Corps Commander, in South Waziristan and by Lieutenant General (retd.) Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai, the governor of NWFP, on behalf of the government, in the North. The Army was represented in the latter agreement by Major General Azhar Ali Shah. (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:16, 18-19).

However, the deals collapsed. For Shakai, it took only a few weeks after the signing, as the tribals failed to register, or produce, foreign militants hiding in the area (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:16), and the tribal

lashkars failed to capture any. One other reason cited was that of the military continuing operations in Bajaur, October 2006 and in Hamzola December 2006 (Siddiqa 2007, *The World Today* 63(4):5-6). On July 15, 2007, the deal in North Waziristan was unilaterally scrapped by the militants themselves, ostensibly on the issue of roadside checkpoints, but it was also interpreted as a retaliation to Operation Silence. The government, however, had launched back-door talks with the militants to revive this deal. A 30-member *jirga* led by the chief of Madakhel tribe, Malik Qadir Khan, was constituted for this purpose (*Dawn*, 29 January 2008).

5. Characterizing the Approach

The strategic approach of the army beginning with its operations had been a combination of both the conventional (use of direct military action) and unconventional (resort to peace agreements). The actions undertaken by the army were interspersed with attempts to secure a pacific solution, as highlighted by the peace agreements. However, developments following the collapse of the deals were ominous in pointing towards adoption of a primarily conventional approach by the army. The planned offensive in North Waziristan scheduled for late October 2007 was due to the government's losing hope of a successful dialogue with the local Taliban, with the aim being to crush or flush the militants out of the area (Naveed Siddiqui, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007). There was also an inclination to begin an all out battle to pacify the two Waziristans "once and for all", by employing fresh troops and paramilitary forces to establish bases at all strategic points and to disarm the local tribes (*The Indian Express*, 21 October 2007).

Casualties inflicted on the militants in the operation in North Waziristan were high at 200 (*Dawn*, 8 and 9 October 2007) ostensibly perhaps in pursuit of the above intent. Operations that followed in Swat⁵² (October-December 2007) also demonstrated the army's inclination to deal a military blow to its opponents, with seemingly not much leverage being provided to other means.

II. Strategic Constraints

1. Aim and Objectives

A confidential report of the Interior Ministry stated "we have to move swiftly and decisively, lest NWFP should fall under the aegis of Talibanisation" (Zahid Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 20(2):25). The fight against militants in FATA presented the Pakistani government, and the army, with a key strategic dilemma. The army found itself opposing

⁵² Casualties amounted to 290 militants dead (Nirupama Subramanian *The Hindu*, 10 December 2007).

those who for long retained a place as major players in the country's carrying out of its foreign policy. The jihadi establishment, created and nurtured for carrying out the government's or the army's agenda in Kashmir (as well as other parts of India) and Afghanistan, were for long the main elements of the unconventional war launched by Pakistan against its neighbours. Even at the time of writing Pakistan is seen by many as deliberately undermining the Karzai government in Afghanistan, by encouraging any force fighting it (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:146). The dilemma began from the point where those same players switched their allegiance from serving the Pakistani state to that of Islamic extremism with or without state support. The army's relation with the US acted as a major deciding factor of the militants and extremists' position vis-a-vis the state and its army. This was manifest in their increasing determination to wage an insurgency within Pakistan itself, rather than fighting the US-NATO combine in Afghanistan alone (Khalid Hasan, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007). Another point responsible for the break in relations was the contrasting views held by the government and militants. "Pakistan's rulers believed they controlled events; the country's religious parties and militant organizations took a different view. The government was not using them; they were using the government to facilitate the Jihad." (Benjamin and Simon 2003:200).

For Pakistan, however, action and decisions could not be all that clearcut. "From the point of view of Pakistan's Islamists and their backers in the ISI, jihad is only on hold but not yet over. Pakistan still has an unfinished agenda in Afghanistan and Kashmir and, given its lack of military and economic strength, sub-conventional warfare with the help of Islamists remains one of Pakistan's options. Just as the major anti-India jihadi groups retained their infrastructure that could be pressed into service at a future date, Afghanistan's Taliban also continued to find safe haven in Pakistan in the spring of 2005" (Haqqani 2005:308).

For long, the Musharraf government had pursued a policy of appeasement towards Islamists and tolerated the spread of militant Islam (Zahid Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 20(2):26). It even denied the existence of training camps, but the announcement of the camps' bombing in Waziristan by the army revealed the posture the army then had to adopt (Sirrs et al (eds) 2004:24). Hard-handedness, therefore, became a questionable option. The presence of hardline elements in the army becomes one more cause for prevention of a decisive action, but simultaneously, often such affiliations were denied, mainly on the grounds that the militants attacked the army but this was considered as an

attack on the institution itself(Siddiqa 2007, *The World Today*; 63(4):6). This led to a collective response from the army to the common threat, in keeping with its organisational cohesion and corporate character. (Siddiqa 2007, *ibid*:6). However, the Taliban were still seen as allies, and not so much of a threat. (Sareen 2007, *AGNI*, X(II):15) especially in a situation where not much faith could be placed on the US for support to Pakistani interests in Afghanistan, as perceived by many in the army. They are also resentful of Musharraf's tilt towards the US, and felt that he was bowing to foreign pressure. "Overall, the military policy towards the Taliban and militancy in general remains fuzzy. While the army continues to support American objectives in the war on terror, there has been no strategic shift to totally abandon militants and militancy." (Siddiqa 2007,6 *The World Today*, 63(4):6).

For Islamabad, an obvious contradiction existed between its moves against the Al-Qaeda on its Afghan flank and its backing of the Islamic extremists struggle in Kashmir. This controversy allowed the ISI to pursue a double-edged strategy (Sirrs et al (eds). 2004:202) which seeks to protect the local jihadi infrastructure but acted against Al Qaeda affiliates. Peace agreements were viewed as one way of doing so. The signing of peace deals with militants was also highly criticised by many quarters, for they lead to a further growth in cross-border infiltration into Afghanistan(Muni(ed)2008:147) and a consequent rise in attacks on coalition forces (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December: i, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25; United Nations 2006, *Report no.S/2006/935*, 5 December: Markey 2007, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(4):91) and in the militancy by providing a spur in reorganisation, recruitment, training and arming of the militants, besides expansion and consolidation of their influence and control even in territorial terms (International Crisis Groups 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:i,1,16-19,27;Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65; Siddiqa 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):5,6).They were perceived as a result of an "absence of a consistent and well thought out strategy to deal with the militancy in FATA and the official inability to take decisive action against the militants" (Ismail Khan 2007 *Herald*, 38(7): 71). The government however argued that the North Waziristan agreement had brought down the level of violence in the area, and violence was occurring only in South Waziristan where a similar deal was not possible after the collapse of the Shakai and Sararogha deals. A major reason for the lack of another deal was cited as the presence of a number of tribal warriors (Siddiqa 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4)) North Waziristan, nonetheless, also

witnessed violence after the deal there was scrapped by the militants (Yusuzai 2007, *Newsline* 20(3):33-37; *Dawn*, 19 July 2007).

II. Specific Issues in FATA

1. Terrain

The particular features of the terrain in FATA are reported to be highly advantageous to the militants due to their training to fight in such environments, primarily Afghanistan. For fighting alongside the mujahiddeen or the Taliban, they received chance to practice their tactics beyond the frontier; as well as in the situation where cross-border attacks occurred. Baitullah Mehsud, for instance, trained and fought with the Taliban in Afghanistan in the 1990s (Carlotta, Gall, *The Hindu*, 31 December 2007).

The army on the other hand, while being trained to fight in such areas, was not able to develop the required comfort level and did not become as capable as their adversaries in navigating this hostile terrain (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007), composed of a lay of the land that is characterized as difficult, long and mountainous, (Baxter (ed): 2004:47).

2. Tribal hostility

As FATA remains at the time of writing only peripherally integrated into the Pakistani state, it had its own share of the local populace becoming deeply resentful of the government's interference in what the people considered to be their own sovereign affairs (Meikael Khan 2002, *Newsline*, June, Kennedy and Botteron (eds) 2006:4; *The Hindu*, 10 August 2007). Many tribal fighters even considered Pakistan to be a foreign state and the presence of its military as a mark of foreign occupation (Kennedy and Botteron (eds.) 2006:9). Local people were alienated by Pakistan's handing of the situation as well, along with its "heavy-handed" occupation (Markey 2007, *Foreign Affairs*, 86(4):91).

In such a scenario, the army's flexibility got limited. The deployment of government soldiers into these semi-autonomous areas also was believed to hold, the potential of uniting the tribal chieftains the army. If the latter were perceived as a common foe by the tribals, such an eventuality became probable. (Clarke et al 2004:86). The risks such a situation poses become graver in the caused state of affairs by the phenomenon where maximum control of the area rested with the tribal chiefs and their well-armed militias (Huband 1999:9).

Besides the tribes, many, including the religious parties, saw President Musharraf's support for the War on Terror as surrender to US interests, equating it with

dishonour. Several groups in FATA as well as NWFP openly denounced the government and resorted to the formation of Taliban-style groups to militarily take on the troops (Qasim Nauman, *The Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007).

Lack of government control in those areas only worsened the army's problems. Whatever government presence remained, it often became paralysed and jeopardised by the increasing spate of militant attacks causing disarray and disruption (Khalid Hasan, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007).

3. Intelligence

Pakistan's intelligence establishment was often found wanting in providing timely information of events and enemy capabilities in FATA (Owais Tohid 2004, *Newsline*, April). Officials lamented the loss of earlier networks of informers and inside operators, mainly due to "breaking off" with the Taliban and the ideological rift between the tribesmen and the government based on their latter's relationship with the US. Contacts became exceedingly limited, resulting in a decreasing ability to gather information, which became prone to further restrictions as further challenges to the gathering of intelligence arose. The "enemy" perception of the Pakistani government has therefore, according to the officials, led to a reduced capacity to collect and collate timely intelligence, which in turn, caused agitation to the US (Syed Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 19 (5):22).

However, the intelligence was believed to have developed links with the militant commanders, most notably Baitullah Mehsud, ostensibly with a view to win them over- a move that only reinforced the latter's position to the detriment of the military (Ismail Khan 2007, *Herald* (38(7):71; Siddiq 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):6).

III. Military Issues

1. Scope of Military Action

As previous engagements showed, the military used its might to address the challenge posed by its adversaries. The breakdown of the peace deals, and failure of other pacification attempts to deliver the desired results only broadened the scope of already existing and continuing military actions. The offensives in North Waziristan (and in Swat) in late 2007 were cases in point. The government was coming to rely more and more on force, simply because of the situation it found itself facing- the militants' unbroken resolve to wage an insurgency within Pakistan itself (Khalid Hasan, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007) the ever-increasing insistence of US on results, besides the deteriorating security situation of the country. Preparations for a showdown on a massive

scale, if necessary, were not foregone (Naveed Siddiqui, *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007; *The Indian Express*, 21 October 2007). Suicide bombings, were one factor which caused the military to take more and more armed action, for as President Musharraf expressed the concern that if such bombings continued, then “we are in trouble” (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 19 July 2007).

2. Preparation of Troops for this conflict

Questions were raised regarding the army’s abilities to effectively tackle such opponents particularly keeping in mind the nature of the challenge being faced. There was a visible lack of required training for and adoption of a well-suited counterinsurgency doctrine, (Khalid Hasan *The Daily Times*, 4 October 2007). The failure to significantly defeat the insurgency has also been attributed to the inadequacy of military capabilities required (Akhtar et al 2006, *Contemporary South Asia* 15(4):393), is(4):393). Moreover, the training received did not result in converting of the existing situation to the advantage of the soldiers (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007).

The soldiers themselves were harbouring doubts regarding their participation in the war due to ethnic and religious linkages. Many of the soldiers and those of the paramilitary recruited from areas adjacent to FATA and being Pashtuns, confronted the case of being ordered to fight and kill fellow Pashtuns, (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007; Sareen 2007 *AGNI*, X(II):17). Secondly, the declaration of many hardline clerics and extremist groups that fighting militants was equal to fighting against Islam had a negative effect on the soldiers who found their religious credentials being called into question. Fat issued by local clerics was such as one regarding denial of Islamic funerals to troops killed in fighting militants and statements by the clergy⁵³ only worsened the soldiers’ dilemma. (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 24 September 2007).

3. Retaliation by Militants and Implications for Troop Security

The militants have resorted to tactics incorporating ambushes, suicide bombings and roadside explosions to respond to the presence and actions of the military. An ever-increasing frequency of attacks of such order has forced the troops to develop a bunker mentality, resorting to movement outside their bases only when availability of tribal

⁵³ The Naib Imam of Lal Masjid, Amir Siddiqui, stated that the soldiers killed in the blast at Mingora, Swat, had died the death of “infidels”, (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 27 October 2007).

escorts was assured (Ismail Khan 2007 *Herald*, 38(7):71). Commanders were forced to adopt tactics ensuring less likelihood of militant attacks, like coordinating flight schedules with prayer times (Siddiq 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):5).

4. **Morale**

Soldiers are highly unsure as to the sincerity and validity of their mission (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 4 October 2007), especially due to the absence of any clear objective (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007 *Herald*, October:65). Other factors such as perception of eroded state authority in the area, coupled with government dealings⁵⁴ with militants like Bartullah Mehsud (Siddiq 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):6 Ismail Khan 2007 *Herald*, 38(7):71; Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *ibid*:65) greatly demoralized soldiers.

The behaviour of the troops visible signs of low morale. Many left the forces but without voicing their opinions for fear of a court martial, with resignations beginning right after the March 2004 Kalusha Operation (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65). In many cases soldiers have actually defied orders, like for instance on September 19, 2007, when six soldiers of the Shawal Rifles deserted and refused to take orders in the Razmak subdivision of North Waziristan, being deployed in an area adjacent to Shawal where militants had killed 15 personnel on the preceding day (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65). Some members of the Frontier Constabulary and the Frontier Corps were also reported to have balked at conducting operations against their fellow tribesmen in the tribal areas (Nawaz 2008: XXXiii). One major general from the Orakzai tribe preferred premature retirement rather than being party to army operations against Pashtuns (Muni(ed.) 2008:97).

The militants kidnapping of soldiers has also led to incidents of unprofessional attitude by the soldiers. While the militants attempted such a move right along with the launching of the March 2004 operation in Wana, it was only recently that such abductions became more common and more violent, with a danger to soldiers' lives. In the period of August-September 1, 2007, more than 350 army and paramilitary personnel kidnapped from different areas of both Waziristans, with the South showing unprecedented numbers (Ismail Khan 2007, *Dawn*, 26 September 2007). Often the reasons cited were those based

⁵⁴ For example, one unwritten clause, known as the sixth point, in the 2005 Sararogha agreement, gave the local Taliban virtual control over the Mehsud area; the government withdrew forces, abandoned checkpoints and allowed the militants free hand in their activities. All this demoralized the security forces (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65).

on establishing of checkpoints, but critics argued that those existed long before launching of any operation (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65). The worst case at the time of writing reported was that at Laddha subdivision of South Waziristan, when on August 30, 2007, some 270 army and paramilitary personnel, including a colonel and eight other officers, were waylaid and taken captive reportedly by only ten militants, without the former even attempting a firefight though being armed to the teeth. This action precipitated the largest surrender of troops after the 1971 war (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:64-65). The army, however, presented several explanations,⁵⁵ all of them conflicting (Qasim Nauman, *Pakistan Observer*, 4 October 2007).

Another factor lowering morale was that of the beheading of captured soldiers (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):36;20(6):34 *Dawn*, 25 July 2007).

5. Use of paramilitary forces and tribal levies (*lashkars*)

The repeated use of paramilitary forces, notably the Frontier Corps (FC), became relevant for a range of reasons. Firstly, the question of numbers did not get addressed if only the army deployed by itself, as the numbers required were high,⁵⁶ keeping the terrain and nature of the conflict in mind.

Musharraf's statement that "two army divisions deployed in districts of NWFP bordering tribal areas would remain until December 2007 when better equipped and trained paramilitaries would take over the fight against militants" (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 19 July 2007) highlighted the importance attached to those forces by the army.⁵⁷ The FC, with officers drawn from the army were well-suited to provide technical assistance to the army. For instance the FC troops were believed to be well-trained in using long-range artillery guns, generally in use by the army routinely in Waziristan to shell militant positions (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(6):35).

Secondly, the paramilitary, even if operating under army control, were central to the requirement of aiding the running of the administration as well as effecting law and order and suppressing crime in the area by the Political Agent, as stated in chapter II.

⁵⁵ First, it was said that the convoy had been hit by bad weather and was taking shelter in the area. Then a fierce battle was stated to be taking place, which prevented the convoy reaching its destination. Finally it was accepted that the troops were in custody of extremists led by Baitullah Mehsud.

⁵⁶ For example in Jammu and Kashmir, India has deployed a few hundred thousand troops to combat 3000 to 4000 jihadis, while in the tribal areas, the militants numbered probably twice, if not thrice that number (Sareen 2007, *AGNI*, X(II)©)

⁵⁷ However, overall control of all security infrastructure, including the FC, rested with the army. This command setup was established in 2002 when the army moved into Waziristan (Siddiq 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):6).

The role of tribal levies/militias, known locally as *lashkars* was also envisaged in the existing and proposed scheme of things (Ismail Khan , *Dawn*, 26 September, 2007). The army has relied upon the use of tribal *lashkars* to flush out Al Qaeda terrorists and their tribal supporters, with orders to continue operations against the latter even if the foreigners surrendered, (Dawn, 20 June 2004; *Jalalzai* 2005:76-77). However, the *lashkars* did not exhibit a sound performance, as they were not successful in hunting down or capturing foreign militants or even their local supporters Zulfiqai Ali, *Dawn*, 19 January 2004; The News 22 May 2004; Dilawar Khan Wazir, *Dawn* 22 May 2004).

However, the importance of the *lashkars* was believed to remain as many of the local foes they engaged were also tribal *lashkars*, like those of the Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan (Kennedy and Botteron (eds.) 2006:9). Involvement of the *lashkars* however, was believed to provide the army with much needed local support , besides also making problems like successful navigations of the terrain, and providing intelligence, a lot easier. In addition they provided an increase to the numbers⁵⁸ of forces engaged in the area. -

IV. Role of USA

1. Pressure for Action

Much of the activity undertaken by the Pakistani military in FATA, as stated in Chapter II, was attributed to by observers and analysts the consistent insistence by the US to deliver on the ground. As Pakistan became a frontline state in the GWOT, a positive approach towards it became displayed even more by the US. President Bush described Musharraf as “a courageous leader” risking his life to crackdown on Al-Qaeda, while Condoleezza Rice declared that Pakistan had come “an enormously long way” since September 11, 2001 and even 2002 (Haqqani 2005: 309)

The realization that only fulfilling a key responsibility could maintain this good image was not lost on Pakistan, yet its actions amounted to the practice of an opposite understanding. The peace deals were criticised by the US (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007, *Country Report Pakistan*, March:15) for it gave the militants an upper hand, and wanted to prevent it from making such moves in the future (Sareen 2007, *AGNI*, X(II):18-19). Success, from the US perspective, was limited, leading to continuation of pressure on Musharraf (Rogers 2006:58). The US establishment also decried Pakistani anti-terrorism

⁵⁸ In Afghanistan, during the civil war, the militias provided the government with badly-needed combat-worthy infantry (Giustozzi 2000:222, 224).

efforts. Vice President Dick Cheney made a surprise visit to Islamabad at the end of February 2007 to ensure Pakistan's acceptance of the American agenda of the GWOT, and to express his country's disappointment at its ally's performance so far (Siddiqi 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):4). An earlier visit by the Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, along with Cheney's, were prompted by Musharraf's statement in early February regarding Pakistani involvement in GWOT emphasizing that Pakistan had done enough and also denial his country's sole responsibility towards counter-terrorism in the areas bordering Afghanistan" (Siddiqi 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):4). In November 2006 also, Musharraf stated that the war "has to be won on the Afghan side. In Pakistan we are certainly taking action against the elements supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan" (Nasir Jamal and Ahmad Hassan, *Dawn*, 20 November 2006), and "The Afghan government needs to focus more on improving security inside its own country instead of flaming others" (Musharraf 2006:271).

In January 2007 itself, the US House of Representatives (HOR), while formulating a legislation implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission adopted a bill making military aid to Pakistan conditional on President Bush's certification of the country's cooperation in preventing Taliban operations in areas under its sovereign control (Siddiqi 2007; *The World Today*, 63(4):4; 5. Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 79(5):24-25). This and another bill came almost parallel to the statement made by the Deputy Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, John D. Negroponte, in his testimony before the House and Senate select committees on intelligence in January, that the Al Qaeda was operating from their "leaders' secure hideout in Pakistan", and that it was "necessary" to root out militant bases in Pakistan to end "insurgency in Afghanistan". (Economist Intelligence Unit 2007, *Country Report Pakistan*, March: 14-15; S. Talat Hussain 2007 *Newsline*, 19(5):24-25:24). To Pakistan's relief, however, the Bush administration distanced itself⁵⁹ from the bill and Bush expressed his confidence in Musharraf's capabilities to deliver (*The Hindu*, 10 August 2007)

The contention, however, was far from resolution. In July 2007, the US intent was precisely portrayed in official statements Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Richard Boucher stated that some military action was necessary and had to be taken for

⁵⁹ The US embassy issued a rare press release, "US Strategic Relationship with Pakistan Stronger Than Ever", stating that the US Administration had serious concerns with several provisions and did not support the bill in its current form (S. Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 19(5):24).

the militants would not settle for a peaceful way forward. Also, certain fundamental conditions would have to be met irrespective of any peace agreement (*The Hindu*, 19 July 2007). The National Intelligence Estimates (NIE)⁶⁰ released in July, formed the basis for such statements. Overall, the US continued to reiterate its emphasis on the prevention and curbing of Talibanization, cross-border activity, and an end to the Al Qaeda “plotting and planning” from the tribal areas. (*The Hindu*, 19 July 2007). In early 2008, the US Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen visited Pakistan twice, and held talks with Musharraf and Genral Kayani on the security situation, and plans to train the FC in COIN and intelligence gathering to improve their efficiency (Nirupama Subramainian, *The Hindu*, 5 March 2008). The US was skeptical of the 2008 deals, and approved of military action, as in the case of the Bara offensive beginning June 2008 (Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 22 May and 27 June, 2008).

2. The Option of “Direct Action”

In pursuit of the above aim, the Bush administration started to hint at possibility of US military strikes against Al Qaeda bases inside Pakistani territory (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 26 July 2007) Regarding a direct intervention, the Homeland Security Advisor, Fran Townsend, had earlier pointed out that since “the Administration’s primary job is to protect the American people”, therefore, there were “no options off the table” (*The Hindu*, 24 July 2006; Ismail Khan, *Dawn* 26 September 2007). Although she did state that the first option was to back Musharraf’s efforts, yet direct action as a second option was not foregone, was the conclusion interpreted. A meeting chaired by Musharraf did consider the probability of a unilateral strike by NATO if the situation remained unchecked. (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 18 July 2007). However, by mid-2008 Musharraf wormed against a NATO strike (Ihtashamul Haque, *Dawn*, 1 July 2008).

3. Assistance

The US offered to upgrade the Pakistani military, including the FC to help achieve its GWOT aim. (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, December; *The Hindu*, 19 July

⁶⁰ This Estimate concluded that the Al-Qaeda presented a heightened threat of attack against the US. A small portion of the assessment was disclosed publicly and mainly pointed out the role Pakistan’s tribal areas were playing in the regeneration of this network (Bryan Bender, *The Hindu*, 27 July 2007)

2007). The Bush Administration also expressed its intent to provide \$750 million for the development of FATA to end militant influence there (Aziz 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):36; Nawaz 2008:568), besides also making financial assistance available to the Pakistani military. A programme called 'Coalition Support Funds' enabled the provision of \$ 5 billion to reimburse Pakistan for its anti-terrorism military operations. (Rohde et al, *The Hindu*, 25 December 2007) Another programme made available \$ 300 million per year in traditional American military financing, paying for equipment and training (Rohde et al, *ibid*). On the whole, Pakistan relied on US for roughly a quarter of its entire \$ 4 billion budget (Rohde et al, *ibid*). Also, another "classified" plan approved by the Pentagon in late December 2007 aiming at building an effective counter-insurgency force by the Pakistani army, by focussing American aid towards specific equipment and training for security forces operating in FATA, was believed as being sent to the US Embassy in Islamabad for implementation, (Rohde et al, *The Hindu*, 25 December, 2007)

4. Pakistani Reactions

Pakistan expressed its anguish⁶¹ at being singled out for not performing well in GWOT. (Syed Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 19(5):24) Major General Waheed Arshad said that Pakistani forces were capable of carrying out the operation against militants themselves, and only they have the right to do so" (Aziz 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):37), Pakistan gave a pointed reaction to the probability of US strikes, terming such actions as "unacceptable", "ill-conceived" and "deeply-resented" with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz asserting Islamabad's military capabilities, which were inclusive of fulfilling troop requirements, to handle the problem by itself. (Nirupama Subramanian *The Hindu*, 24 July 2007). The Pakistani Foreign office sternly' warned the US that any attack inside Pakistani soil would not be accepted (Aziz 2007, *Op. cit*:37). Musharraf himself was dismissive of US charges of "not doing enough" stating "In fact, Pakistan is the one country in the world that has done the maximum in the fight against

⁶¹ Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri reacted angrily to the statements, saying that why information regarding terrorists was not given to Pakistan, if the US had it. (Syed Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 19(5):24). Also, Pakistan was lodging pro forma protests against US intrusions in FATA, including coalition fire from across the border in Afghanistan. One such incident in March 2008 killed 4 Pakistani civilians in Lwara Mundi, a hotbed of militancy on the frontier where frequent clashes between security forces and militants had occurred (*The Hindu*, 14 March 2008; Jalalzai 2005:80).

terrorism. We have also suffered the maximum casualties.... We have lost more men than any other country- and we fight on” (Musharraf 2006, *ibid*;271) The responses from the army also were not forthcoming, with a general resentment against Musharraf, if he agreed to the operation of US-NATO forces inside Pakistan(Siddiqa 2007, *The World Today*, 63(4):5). A meeting of the Corps commanders closely scrutinised the border situation and openly expressed feelings about the US not giving enough credit for Pakistan’s achievement” (S. Talat Hussain 2007, *Newsline*, 9(5):25). Pakistan also lodged its protest at the killing of 11 FC soldiers by US led forces in Mohmand in June 2008. (*Dawn*, 12 June 2008). The US, however, stated that the aerial attack was targeting Taliban, and the Pakistan army had been informed (Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 12 June 2008).

2. Strategic Constraints and Conduct

The pursuit of “carrot and stick” strategy was the more than visible in the army’s actions. The vacillation between use of force and peace deals highlighted also the army’s unresolved dilemma pertaining to targeting its one time allies. Also, the factor of high casualties and the increased rate of suicide strikes, coupled with the relentless defence of the extremists prompted the move towards outright decision, even if forcibly. One major consequence of military operations and consequent militant actions was a high casualty rate. By October 2006, 600 military and paramilitary, as well as many government official, had been killed by militants (Yusufzai, 2006, *Newsline*, October) December 2006, 700 casualties had been sustained (Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 23 December 2006), while by August 2007, “900 soldiers had died at the hands of battle hardened local and foreign were lost in clashes, explosions and suicide attacks, with the average of three law-enforcement personnel being killed a day (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 26 September 2007). The toll had gone up to more than 1000 by the end of 2007 (Rohde et al, *The Hindu*, 25 December 2007). However, no militant leaders were among the high number of casualties inflicted upon the militants, except Nek Mohammad and Abdullah Mehsud who were, however killed by a US strike and by an explosion⁶².

⁶² He blew himself up when security forces raided the house he was hiding in Zhob, Balochistan (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):39).

The planning for the operations also revealed haste in striking the enemy, as soon as possible. As US pressure mounted, the military rushed headlong into an ill-conceived operation before regular political channels could be exhausted (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 19 February 2004). Lt. Gen. (Retd) Asad Durrani, former director general of the ISI was also of this view: "military action was taken in haste"(International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:15). Brig (retd) AR Siddiqui, pointed out the lack of coordination between multiple security agencies, including regular army units and the FC, as well as military intelligence agencies, which undermined the operations(International Crisis Group 2006, *ibid*:15). Senior FATA officials claimed they knew that neutralising and capturing foreign militants would require more than a surgical strike and had briefed the high command on the need for patience and a more nuanced approach, but to no avail (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:14-15).

Local people also complained that the military failed to take them into confidence or consult them before launching attacks. Strikes that were not well-targeted caused civilian deaths, which had the prospects of further support for the militants, even by those who were otherwise indifferent and whose support could reportedly prove to be critical to the success of the COIN campaign. Thus, the use of indiscriminate and excessive force undermined the military's local standing (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:15). The army's resort to economic blockades under the collective responsibility clause of the FCR hampered economic life. In one instance, after the Shakai agreement collapsed, economic sanctions⁶³ led to the closure of businesses, impounding of dozens of vehicles and arrest of the Zalikhel sub-clan of Ahmadazai Wazirs, including 13 elders(The News, 31 May 2004; *Dawn*, 31 May 2004). In 2008 as well in the Spinkay Raghzai area, the army bulldozed dozens of shops and houses as collective punishment for harboring Taliban militants (*The News*, 20 May 2008; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:14,16). Problems were experienced by the local population in Waziristan, which also reeled under the occurrences of boarder clashes in Afghanistan. In one instance, a

⁶³ Accompanied by military action also

clash with the Taliban near the Ghulam Khan checkpoint near Miramshah raised tensions in the area (*Dawn*, 22 June 2008).

“A misdirected military approach” by the Musharraf regime bypassed the local population and civil administration and isolated the tribal leadership (Nawaz 2008:XXXIII).

The military activity undermined the authority and capacity of the local civilian administration. The Peshawar Corps Commander began to assert his authority over FATA affairs. The governor and the political administration were regularly bypassed. As a result, the militants and radical groups became emboldened, and gained the upper hand, as there were no civil institutions to provide order. The PA’s authority too, had gradually eroded (Nawaz 2008:XXXiii; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report No.125*, 11 December:15).

An increasingly assertive military was believed to be reacting in a knee-jerk manner and bypassing the political process, creating more confusion (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 10 January 2008). However, those supporting the military’s view said that with thousands of forces fighting in the lawless tribal regions, the stakes were already very high and it was but natural for the army to intervene, or at least be part of the decision-making process. (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 10 January 2008).

Criticizing the military’s propensity to sideline normal political and administrative channels, accusations were levelled at the army in its efforts for securing the peace deals. Those were mainly categorising such efforts as “errors”, for the army’s reliance on its “own sources and methods or the mullahs for brokering peace with militants... this is a vicious cycle that undermines the state and reinforces the influence of the mullahs” (International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:16). An analyst described the unwritten Shakai agreement as the first step on a slippery slope, stating that this deal legitimized the status of the local militants as the power-brokers, thus further eroding and weakening available administrative channel” (Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 23 April 2003). The corps commander’s pro-Jihad speech at Shakai reinforced perceptions that the military and the government had surrendered to the militants (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:16).

An army official however defended the army’s decision to opt for a deal by saying that heavy casualties, high local alienation and the situation created by the locals

declaring a jihad against security forces had left the army with little choices (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:16).

The government sought to lessen the damage by involving tribal *jirgas* in negotiating the peace deals. For saving the North Waziristan agreement of 2006 it launched back door talks with the militants and even withdrew army and paramilitary troops from two checkpoints and passed on the responsibility to the tribal *Khassadar* force (*Dawn*, 29 January 2008).

In terms of the leadership exercised by the military as well, problems existed. This exercise of leadership was flawed because of its own state of affairs⁶⁴, characterized by a lack of creativity due to bondage of standard operating procedures, sycophancy, conformity and careerism. The last led to (i) centralization of command; which is alien to maneuver warfare and curbs initiative, (ii) lack of delegation of authority and (3) a zero risk syndrome; which creates a risk averse culture (Nawaz 2008:569-570).

3. The Level of “Achievement”

The present conduct of the army only pointed towards gathering a heap of disadvantages for itself. Their operations were dubbed as “haphazard, poorly executed and unsuccessful,” badly planned and poorly conducted (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December: 27,12,i) “arbitrary” (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):37), “ill planned and poorly implemented” (Rammohan 2007, *USI Journal CXXXVII(569):357*) and whether any reassessment should be done to take corrective measures, since the strategy did not appear to be going anywhere (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 26 September 2007). While the military claimed success citing the casualties inflicted upon the militants⁶⁵, there were hardly any takers (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 21 March 2004) due to body count being a poor criteria of measuring success in a guerilla war (Grau 1998:11). The operations conducted by 2006 were seen as largely unsuccessful⁶⁶ (Rogers 2006:33,40; Jacob 2006:52) though operations in 2004 did result in death or

⁶⁴ Described as “inept and weak.... We (the leadership) have no vision and perspective of the future and thus live on a day-to-day basis” (Nawaz 2008:569).

⁶⁵ The claims of Army commanders were treated as “highly exaggerated”, as they were not able to attest those claims by producing those arrested or dead bodies of those killed before the media (Jalalzai 2005:80-82; International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:15-16).

⁶⁶ As support of local militants to the Taliban, its allies and Al Qaeda continued. According to the US, the Pakistani government had failed to rein in radical Islamic elements or to suppress paramilitary activities in the districts close to the Afghan border (Rogers 2006:150)

capture of more than 100 foreign militants associated with Al Qaeda (Sirrs et al (eds) 2004:183).

Gaining favour of the local tribes also not seen as pertinent to conducting of COIN operations. The army attempted actions while talks with tribals were going on, a loss of credibility in the thus causing sight of the locals (International Crisis Group, *2006 Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:14-15, Ismail Khan 2007; *Herald*, 38(7):71). Latif Afridi, a former legislator from the tribal region, pointed out the need to “include tribes men having knowledge of the hilly terrain and intra-tribal rivalries” (Owais Tohid 2004, *Newsline*, April). At the same time, it was suggested that the army should avoid holding negotiations with tribesmen and militants a task best left to the political authorities (Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65). Also, the army was advised caution, implying that it should tread carefully due to the domestic repercussions of renewed military operations in the tribal areas, particularly the two Waziristans. The cost of pursuing such actions after suffering heavy casualties, was to be also borne in mind (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):37).

The military’s claims of success was also contested by evidence that many of the militants who had been targeted had escaped to find sanctuary elsewhere. Many foreign militants had fled South Waziristan because of the military operations. The US army acknowledged that this military action had dispersed the Al Qaeda terrorists based in Pakistan, and thus no “hammer and anvil” trap could be laid as planned earlier. Doubts were also expressed regarding the militants’ finding shelter in Baluchistan⁶⁷ (International Crisis Group, *2006 Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:17; Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004: 183-184, 187, 201, 205-206; Hefflinger (ed.) 2005:311).

That the government’s pro-Taliban policy was also undermining its military efforts, was pointed out by analysts. Military operations were being

⁶⁷ Though the Baloch groups engaging the Pakistani army are secular in orientation, they were believed to strike a common cause with the religious militants and the Uighurs on account of a common enemy-the Pakistan government and China, respectively. Also the militants inadvertently render help to the Baloch groups by keeping tens of thousands of Pakistani troops engaged away from the latter’s strongholds in Baluchistan. When both tribesmen and militants are believed to be pressed too hard in their hideouts in northwest Pakistan, they run to the southwest, or in other words, Baluchistan. The immense vastness of the area here, as compared to both Waziristans, provides a greater measure of safety. These high and rolling mountainous ranges have constituted the Baloch’s natural defences against invaders (Hefflinger (ed.) 2005:310-311).

“outweighed symbolically by the idea of senior Taliban leaders living openly in Quetta. As long as these leaders remain, however great Pakistani efforts against terrorist facilities elsewhere may be, the message being sent by Pakistan to the “Taliban culture” is that Islamabad does not see it as a threat” (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:143).

The government’s striking deals with the local Taliban also was interpreted as favouring the latter (*Dawn*, 6 September 2006, *The News*, 7 September 2006; Ismail Khan,). While the government continually emphasised that it signed the deals with tribal elders and not militants observers and notables, even far the 2008 deal and not militants (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December; Baqir Sajjad Syed, *Dawn*, 27 June 2008 19), the very logic of such a move was questioned, simply because of the persisting situation, in which it were the militants that dominated the scene and not the tribal *Maliks* or *Khans* who had been rendered powerless by the former (Sareen 2007, *AGNI*, X(II):14). Even the local warlords had lost out to the hardliners, many of whom were opposed to any dialogue (Syed Talat Hussain 2007 *Newsline*, 19 (5):26)..Intelligence agencies did report the presence of outsiders in the militant ranks. In Swat for instance, there was a strong belief among government circles that Fazlullah was no longer in effective command of all fighters active in Swat (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(6):36). The question was also of the hold of his two *shuras* (councils), on comprising clerics and the other local notables over the different band of fighters called the Taliban or mujahiddeen in Swat and armed generally with AK-47s and in some cases with sophisticated Weapons including rocket-launchers, RPG-7s and the like. Some fighters appeared disciplined and under the command of Fazlullah and his deputies, but there were many others who called themselves Tehrik Islamia Pakistan and were more radical and inflexible in their approach. Believed to be only nominally aligned with Fazlullah, it was seen as capable of parting ways if Fazlullah were to take on a difference course (Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(6):37).

Suggestions regarding the approach towards the deals hinted at the necessity of change to be carried out. Brigadier (retd) Mahmood Shah, former security chief of the tribal areas, for example, suggested that wholesome dialogue should be held with the tribal elders and not with a group. Then the issue can be

resolved easily, for “one group cannot represent all the tribal people”(Ghafar Ali Khan 2007, *Herald*, October:65).

The focus on lenient treatment of indigenous jihadi groups was also criticised, as these groups were reported to have close linkages with the Taliban remnants and were their ideological brethren. They had provided religious indoctrination, had trained them and were the motivating factor as far as jihad in Afghanistan was concerned (Warikoo (ed.)2007: 154-156).

The Wana strategy, or supporting one section of local militants against the foreign one, was hailed as a success by the government because of the argument presented by the government that its peace agreements, though much criticised, had paid off as the tribesmen rose against foreign fighters under the terms of these accords. The tribal offensive was presented as a popular uprising in a response to the committing of criminal acts.⁶⁸ by the Uzbeks and local tribesmen aligned to them, against the populace in Wana and nearby areas(Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 19(8):52). Nevertheless, the army faced problems regarding the successful implementation of this strategy, for. The attitude of Maulvi Nazir, however made it amply clear that the government or the army, would ultimately have to shoulder its own responsibility, for he refused to operate outside Wana and stated that the eviction of Uzbeks and other foreigners from other areas, including the Mehsud areas, was the responsibility of the government. That, brought the onus on the government/army to convince the Mehsud tribal commanders to replicate this strategy, but since their ranks included Baitullah Mehsud as well, it appeared highly unlikely, if not altogether impossible, for the implementation of this strategy by many quarters. At best, therefore, this was only a temporary solution fraught with risks, which for one, incorporated a possibility of tribal wars⁶⁹ in South Waziristan at the least, which could be sparked by acts of terrorism committed by the foreigners or their supporters(Yusufzai 2007, *ibid*:53-54).

However, the Uzbeks' eviction was also not without interference by other militants in their favour. The Afghan Taliban ensured that the Uzbeks were given

⁶⁸ Becoming involved in kidnappings, beheadings and other crimes, besides interfering also in tribal affairs. Also, Maulvi Nazir and his supporters had a big complaint that the Uzbeks did not want to wage jihad in Afghanistan, instead they wanted to fight the Pakistan army and establish an Islamic state in Wana.

⁶⁹ Maulvi Nazir warned all subtribes of the Ahmed zai, Wazir in inhabiting Wana that harbouring foreign militants would pose serious consequences for them, and warned neighbouring tribes also not to allow use of their soil for any retaliatory or vindictive action against the Ahmed zai Wazir.

a safe passage, and their departure was more to do with an understanding between them and the tribesmen of Maulvi Nazir. Most of the Uzbeks shifted to other parts of South Waziristan or headed for North Waziristan. Most importantly, the victory of that tribal group strengthened one group of militants at the expense of the other (Yusufzai 2007, *Newstline*, 19(8):52-54). Clashes between the Uzbeks and Maulvi Naizr's group occurred also in 2008, signaling the presence of the Uzbeks in the region Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn* 14 January 2008).

The government's FATA policy in general was rated as "floundering" mainly because of resignation or exit of three NWFP governors including Lieutenant General Orakzai, in less than three years (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 10 January 2008). Lieutenant General Orakzai had replaced commander (retd.) Khalilur Rehman. The latter's predecessor, Ifikhar Hussain Shah, was removed due to his differences with the Peshwar Corps Commander (*Daily Times*, 23 May 2006).

The government, however, repeatedly claimed success, citing as evidence the surrender of almost all the main Wazir militants, the killing or arrests of several hundred foreign terrorists and the capture of their key bases. "The militants are on the run, and they have nowhere to hide", said an official in the crisis management cell at the governor's FATA secretariat (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:17).

The criticism, though, continued to mount. "Ironically though, while the situation continues to be explosive, the country's leadership remains mired in politicking, a classic example of Rome burning and Nero playing the fiddle" (Ismail Khan, *Dawn* 26 September, 2007). As Peter Bergen from the CNN stated that since all major of pretty much every major arrests Al Qaeda leader have been made in Pakistan, which indicates that the government has been doing a reasonably good job. On the other hand, all the major Al Qaeda arrests have been made in Pakistan, which demonstrates that it is a safe haven for them.... Pakistan is a sympathetic environment, even if the government is doing a great job, the fact is there are people that will help out Al Qaeda"(Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004:27-8).

The US was also critical in its approach The American perception remained focused on the ground issue of its troops being condemned to stay on the Afghan side of the border, while the others were given sanctuary on what had become "Talibanistan". This was seen as an untenable position in the long term

with options⁷⁰ being viewed as including putting pressure on the Pakistani government, and the army, to decrease the de facto support being provided to the extremists, the main issue being Pakistani policy towards preferred-instrument of Pakistan's national policy in Afghanistan, then violence would continue in Afghanistan, and as a corollary, in Pakistan as well. The external dimension of support being more important, the future of insurgency in Afghanistan is thus looked upon as depending on the actions to be or not taken, not by Kabul, but by Islamabad. disinterest towards giving up the Jihad wing of its military strategy, in which the Taliban play an important role (Sirrs et al (eds.) 2004, 147, 150, 155, 156; Heffelfinger (ed) 2005:264, 278, 280; Warikoo (ed.)2007:159).

Moreover, the situation was seen as becoming much worse than it was when military entered the tribal areas. "Strategic errors are not always easy to correct but there is a failure on the part of the Pakistani authorities to even recognize failure" (International Crisis Group, 2006 *Asia Report no.125*, 11 December:17).

The Pakistan Army, Strategic Culture, and Counterinsurgency

As is the case is with many armies, the Pakistan army also faced the same predicament-preparedness for conventional war, but an institutional unreadiness to effectively deal with insurgency at home. It found itself confronting the same problems that beset any army facing insurgency but itself being oriented towards largely a conventional form of warfare.

Even in the year 2008, the army continued to face difficulties in a decisive handling of the insurgency. Although military success was claimed when the Mehsud strongholds were occupied in January, the army's consequent actions reflected its tendency to tread the beaten path, as it had done during the preceding years in FATA. The assumption of office by a democratically elected government and its decisions regarding the counterinsurgency, were amid hopes that it would adopt a new, aggressive and more realistic strategy to combat terrorism, *Dawn*, 7 January 2008).

⁷⁰ Some in the US State Department argued that military operations could result in a tremendous backlash, and ultimately do more harm than good (*Dawn*, 7 January 2008). The US was of the view that it needed to boost its counter-terrorism efforts both inside Afghanistan and in relation to cross-border terrorism originating from Pakistan. (Heffelfinger (ed.)2005:276). Also, the US-led forces in Afghanistan expressed no intention to cross into Pakistan to target the militant hideouts, stating that their liaisoning with the Pakistan military was good, and they tried to work with the latter to ensure that their positions were mutually supporting. (*Dawn* 10, January 2008).

1. The Army and the Gillani Government, 2008

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP)- led coalition government unveiled decisions regarding the tribal regions in March 2008. Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani stated that terrorism and extremism were the foremost challenges that his government had to tackle immediately. Saying that "the war against terror is our own war" the government was willing to open talks with all those willing to give up arms, he also announced the revoking of the FCR⁷¹ and pledged a package of development measures including education and employment opportunities for the tribal region (Raja Asghar, *Dawn*, 30 March 2008).

The Prime Minister came up with political policy guidelines to address the problem of terrorism and extremism through a "comprehensive strategy based on political engagement and economic development and backed by a credible military element" and a development package, but would use military force if it felt was necessary (*Dawn*, 4 April 2008).

In the follow-up to this decision, the government launched two different peace processes, aimed at tackling "militancy through negotiations"(Syed Irfan Raza, *Dawn*, 25 April 2008). The government however insisted that talks would be with Mehsud tribal elders only and not with militant leaders, especially Baitullah Mehsud, and all those elements involved in violent acts and militancy the government also blamed "Foreigners" for fomenting unrest in FATA, stating that these were indications of their presence in the area, as well as of support from abroad, although no specification or elaboration of the above were provided (Baqir Sajjad Syed, *Dawn*, 27 June 2008). Baitullah's⁷² declaration of a ceasefire ahead of the proposed 15 point draft agreement⁷³ however, was welcomed (Ismail Khan and Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 24 April 2008).

Nonetheless, Baitullah vowed to carry on fighting foreign forces and Afghan troops in Afghanistan, irrespective of the results of the talks at home⁷⁴ or the situation in the tribal areas(*The Daily Times*, 20 May 2008) Alamgir Bhattani,

⁷¹ Maulana Fazlur Rehamn of JUI however objected saying that the law was part of a tribal covenant that could not be simply cast away.

⁷² As regards his involvement in the Benazir killing, the PPP-led government said that he had denied involvement.

⁷³ Under the terms of this agreement the Mehsuds were halt all attacks on security forces, government officials and property and were not to challenge the writ of the government.

⁷⁴ However, he stated that he wanted to stop fighting the Pakistani army.

Dawn, 29 June 2008). The deal in Swat was reached on May 21, with the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan saying that the accord's workability would depend on the successful completion of its own negotiations. Also the deal, outcome of the first peace process could not be seen in isolation from these ongoing negotiations in South Waziristan, which formed the other peace process, according to the TTP. Conversely, the latter was also seen to impact upon the deal in Swat, since Fazlullah's group had joined the TTP (Daud Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 22 May 2008; Yusfazai 2008, *Newsline*, May). The NWFP government was authorized by the federal government to strike further deals for ensuring peace. The latter also called for the need to respect the peace agreements (*Dawn*, 20 June 2008).

The military played a supportive role to the government efforts. In a briefing on the security situation given to the Prime Minister and the leaders of all the ruling coalition partners, by the Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani in April 2008, the focus was on mutual confidence. The briefing showed that the military was taking the political leadership into confidence regarding its operations and would not take any significant decisions pertaining to the war on terror without the Parliament's consent (Ahmed Hassan, *Dawn*, 3 April 2008). While the government stated that military action alone could not be effective in fighting militancy, it did retain the right to use it if required. Military backing was provided to the draft agreement in South Waziristan (*Dawn* 25 April 2008). In June 2008, the government reiterated its 'carrot-and-stick' plan to tackle militancy. The chief of Army Staff (COAS) was made 'principal for application of military effect and given command of FC, law enforcement agencies and NWFP; authority was also reportedly vested in him to decide on the 'quantum, composition and positioning of military efforts' (Ifikhar A. Kha, *Dawn*, 26 June 2008).

On May 16, following peace talks, troops began pulling out of South Waziristan as troop withdrawal was a key precondition by the militants in the ongoing negotiations. The army however described it as a "readjustment and relocation of troops, "change in troop positions" (*Dawn*, 17 May 2008; Iqbal Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 19 May 2008).

The army also released militants in exchange for captured soldiers. In May, 12 soldiers were released by the militants in return for more than 30

militants (Alamgir Bhattani and Pazeer Gul, Dawn, 15 May 2008), and in another exchange, 8 soldiers were freed for 25 militants. The Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin, kidnapped by the Pakistani Taliban on February 11 in the Khyber Agency, was also released from the custody of the TTP after security forces released more than 50 militants (Ismail Khan, Dawn, 18 and 23 May, 2008).

The above peace processes and the subsequent deal in Swat came under criticism from both NATO and Afghanistan. The NATO and the US expressed concern at the terms of the agreement which did not include any guarantees from the militants against cross-border infiltration, also, those agreements would ease the military pressure on the Taliban to do as they please across the border in Afghanistan, while in return, in Pakistan they would provide guarantees of refraining from attacks on security forces or terrorist strikes. The number of attacks in Afghanistan had also risen after the peace talks, NATO said (*The Daily Times* 26 May 2008). In 2006 also, NATO had reported increased infiltration in Afghanistan from Pakistan after North Waziristan agreement in that year (*The News*, 28 October 2006) In Eastern Afghanistan, in April 2008, the attacks were 52% more than they were in April 2007—figures that reflect the ground level impact of the peace efforts (*The Hindu*, 22 May 2008). By June 2008; overall there was a 40% increase in violence in that area of Afghanistan, according to Robert Gates, the US secretary of Defense (*Dawn*, 27 June 2008). He also stated that despite the situation, no US troops would be sent to Pakistan, but the military presence of NATO would be enhanced on the Afghan side of the border (*Dawn*, 28 June 2008).

Afghanistan also expressed concern saying that all previous peace deals had broken down in violence and merely gave the militants time to regroup. Concerned with Batiullah's announcement, Kabul was sending a high level delegation to Pakistan (*The Daily Times*, 26 May 2008). The Afghan government⁷⁵ stated that Kabul had already informed Islamabad about its concern

⁷⁵ Afghan intelligence stated that the plot for an assassination attempt on President Karzai on 27 April 2008 was hatched in the tribal areas the militants involved in the plot were in contact with people in Bajaur, North Waziristan and Peshawar. However there was no evidence of Pakistani establishment's involvement. The Pakistan army said these allegations against the militants appeared baseless, and could not be validated (*The Hindu*, 1 May 2008)

over possible peace talks, adding that the militants were enemies of both nations, and that such talks would not benefit peace in both countries, as such talks and peace deals in the past had negative impacts for both neighbours (Dawn, 25 May 2008). However, Pakistan assured its neighbour that talks were held with “only peace-loving elements” as part of a multi-pronged strategy to fight extremism (Dawn, 7 June 2008).

The US also expressed its apprehension regarding the militancy in FATA. A May 2008 report by the Pentagon stated that the militants there posed a direct threat to the US (Anwar Iqbal *Dawn*, 3 and 16 May 2008). The Deputy Secretary of State, John D. Negroponte said that the capture of Baitullah Mehsud and the reduction in cross-border attacks inside Afghanistan (Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 22 May, 2008) was a “metric” of effective action in the tribal areas (Dawn, 27 June 2008). The US Secretary for Defense, Robert Gates, stated that “Pakistan’s failure” to put pressure on the Taliban in the border areas was a “concern” (*Dawn*, 27 June, 2008).

The Pakistani reactions were also reflective of uneasiness with the peace efforts. An editorial in the daily *The News* indicated that the peace talks were complete with glaring contradictions. “Experience suggests that whenever the government of the day gives such elements an inch they ask for a mile..... if the seven demands placed by the militants in Swat were admitted it would basically bring the situation on the ground back to square one in favour of the militants!” (*The News*, 20 May 2008). The efforts of both the government and the army spent in establishing contacts with the TTP through good offices of the *jirga*, and talks with two militant representatives, only resulted in the TTP branding the government as insincere. Also, “the government began negotiating even before fighters had laid down arms (Yusufzai 2008, *Newsline*, May).

Moreover, the Parliament had not prepared a comprehensive COIN strategy, and the reportedly, federal government displayed a lack of urgency in handling the situation in the tribal regions and in coping with a possible fallout of the peace agreements, more so in the situation as it developed in Peshwar in June 2008 (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 25 June 2008). However, on its part, the government promised an operation to crackdown on elements related to the militant organization Lashkar-i-Islam, led by Mangal Bag, whose activities had caused fears

that Peshawar would fall to the militants (*Dawn*, 25 June 2008). Experts were skeptical regarding the durability of the peace deals. For instance, days after Baitullah circulated pamphlets asking his forces to cease fire and halt all attacks, “threatening to hang violators in public”, terrorists bombed a police station in Malakand in NWFP, killing four persons and injuring 30 on April 25 (*Dawn*, 26 April 2008). Baitullah’s announcement also seemed reminiscent of his attitude at Sararogha 2005 where he was seen as having stopped harassment of Pakistani forces, but without a clear change in ideas. He had stated then “we understand fighting against Pakistani security forces did not help the Taliban at all. Pakistan has also realized that fighting tribal people is undermining it. Pakistan’s enemies are India, Northern Alliance, and Russia”(Heffelfinger (ed.)2005:282).

The TTP also vowed to avenge an American predator attack on a rebel hideout in Damadola, Bajaur (Anwarullah Kha, *Dawn*, 15 May 2008). Soon after, a suicide blast in Mardan, NWFP, was carried out as the act of revenge, increasing the total tally of those killed in militant related violence since the beginning of the year 2008 to more than 600 (Muhammad Iqbal, *Dawn*, 19 May 2008; Daud Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 19 May 2008). Another blast, by a remote-controlled bomb occurred in Bajaur on May 19, while the TTP claimed responsibility for the Mardan blast, but simultaneously, “hoped for a positive outcome” of the peace talks (*The Daily Times*, 20 May 2008). Nevertheless, violence in FATA did not completely subside. In June 2008 clashes occurred in Kurram agency, as the militants attacked a military convoy, security posts and a village (*Dawn*, 20 June 2008; Hussain Khan, *Dawn*, 21 June 2008). At Landi Kotal, the militants kidnapped guards from the Khassadar force after attacks on three check ports on the Peshwar-Torkham highway in Khyber (Ifrahim Shinwari, *Dawn*, 24 June 2008). Baitullah’s supporters captured Jandola after attacking the houses of peace committee members who were opposed to Baitullah (Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 25 June 2008). Killing 22 rival tribesmen, the TTP stated that any “meddling” by the government or security forces in this affair would lead to the peace deal suffering a “lasting damage” (Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 26 June 2008). Baitullah warned of attacks in Sindh and Punjab, and threatened a jihad by the militants against the Pakistan army if it helped the US to launch attacks inside the tribal areas (Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008). A gunbattle, the first after the signing

of the peace agreement, broke out in Swat between the security forces and the militants, with both blaming the other for the occurrence (Hameedullah Khan, *Dawn*, 25 June 2008). However, both the Taliban and the government pledged to protect the accord, though the Taliban accepted responsibility for the violence including the attacks on security personnel. It also blamed “some elements in the administration, military and anti state groups in the region” for “trying to sabotage the deal”(Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 27 June 2008).

The army responded to these attacks, including the use of helicopter gunships, tanks and APCs, while heavy fighting was reported in Kurram (*Dawn*, 20 June 2008; Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 25 June 2008). The focus was stated to be on the application of the “principle of minimum force and avoiding of collateral damage”, with lauching of “swift operations based on actionable intelligence” (Ifti Khar A. Khan, *Dawn*, 26 June 2008). Questions therefore arose regarding its strategy in these areas, including whether the moves for peace were going to prove dominant over its conventional approach. The main issue nonetheless, remained, pertaining to the army’s ability for COIN, and also, whether truly, “the army was neither equipped or trained for counter-insurgency warfare, and is now searching for other ways to resolve the issue” (Nawaz 2008:XXXiii).

2. Conventional Preparedness and LIC

Army has been trained and equipped to fight India, while the FC that is responsible for the tribal areas is under-trained, ill-equipped and in many case outgunned by their militant opponents” and that the armed forces had “deficiencies in structure, tactics, doctrine and flexibility”. This report, cited in *Dawn*, also mentioned that the deficiencies in the army’s capacity to conduct COIN operations were being addressed, but it would take three to five years before they were realised on the battlefield (Anwar Iqbal, *Dawn*, 3 May 2008).

Some deficiencies that need to be addressed encompass a wide spectrum “Internally, the army needs to re-orient its training and force structure, not only for coping with external threats but also to combat internal insurgencies, starting with the current situation in FATA and the NWFP. It needs specialized units and training in low-intensity fourth generation warfare and indoctrination of both, offices and soldiers, in the principles of such warfare, where ideas not weapons above matter “(Nawaz 2008:580).

However, Pakistan is no stranger to LIC. As Stephen Cohen (2005:104-05,122-123) pointed out: A special forces unit was established in 1959, with American assistance. The understanding of the role of such forces-proxy application of force at low and precisely calculated levels, the objective being to achieve some political effect, not a battlefield victory-did exist. The special forces became the cutting edge- though the army remained largely conventional-relying on tanks, guns and infantry. The requirement for this specialized role was an officer with good language skills, initiative, and political judgement. In fact, many officers, including Musharraf, did acquire a considerable expertise in this kind of warfare, and it expanded the kind of training and changed the career patterns for many of them. The importance attached to special forces had stemmed from the army's strategic innovation at the low end of force application – LIC⁷⁶, guerilla warfare and support for dissident ethnic and tribal groups in neighbouring states and Kashmir. For this kind of war to be fought, it required organizational innovation. Familiarity with the theory and practice of such a concept, then by itself could not deliver in the case of an internal challenge. Nor could the requirements be built up to the needful. However the deficiency could be found in the realm of strategy as well.

3. Strategic Unpreparedness

numerous moving targets from a moving vehicle” (Choen 1998:144) and “many of its (army's) difficulties can be attributed to another factor: bad strategy Pakistan's record in developing military strategy is atrocious” (Bennett Jones 2002:265).

Conventionally, the 1965 and 1971 wars with India were cases in point. Characterised by unpreparedness, over confidence and miscalculations, the army high command drifted toward a war without contemplating the consequences (Bennett Jones 2002: 265-267). While in 1965, amid other mistakes, was a “shockingly bad command at the higher levels and indifferent logistical planning” (Cloughley 2000:106). An assessment of the 1971 war stated “list of failures is

⁷⁶ Professional military journals of the army explored the concept of LIC in considerable detail. Several of the studies made on Algeria, Yugoslavia, North Vietnam and China Concluded that guerilla warfare was a strategic weapons” and a slow but sure and relatively inexpensive strategy. Maoist military doctrine was also appreciated (Cohen 2005:104).

long. Had nothing been done in the years 1965-71 to hone the skills of the Pakistan Army? It certainly seemed so” (Cloughley 2000:223).

At a strategic level, Kargil also revealed that Pakistan had failed to learn from its previous mistakes – once more, the generals did not think through the consequences of their actions. The high levels of distrust between the political and military elites hampered the planning process (Bennett Jones 2002:267).

If conventionally, the army failed to deliver, then questions could thus be raised regarding its capacity for strategy-making, let alone implementation, at the COIN level.

Similarities between the two levels did appear. While a lack of objective undermined soldiers’ morale, it also raised doubts regarding the government’s follow-up policy. At the end of Operation Zalzalā 2008, a senior officer commented that although the operation was following its objective, or Plan A, which was the eviction of militants from strongholds, there was no Plan B. This was in fact a continuation of the lack in contingency planning. In the same area of Spinkai Raghzai in November 2004 the military following the same Plan A evicted the militants, but a missing Plan B brought the Taliban back. Their reoccupation led to the January operation. Fears were expressed that army action might again be required in this area in late 2008 or early 2009 if Plan B were to remain elusive. Continuing the officer stated “This is what we should do: build more successes on the first success. That is what we are not doing” (Iqbal Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 21 May 2008).

One instance was also of the air strikes in Damadola. In the air strike in Rahimullah Damadola, Bajaur, on October 30, 2006, 80 militants were killed, reportedly by US fixed wing drones, though the Pakistan claimed credit (Anwarullah Khan, *Dawn* 31, October 2006; Yusufzai, *The News*, Zahid Hussain 2006, *Newsline*, November). The militants avenged this with a suicide strike on an army training base at Dargai, NWFP, killing 42 cadets (Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 9 November 2006; Muni(ed.) 2008:99). The air strike, again, in 2008 witnessed a similar reprisal. For many analysts, the wall was clear the army had not learnt lessons from its previous experiences (Ashraf 2008, *Terrorism Monitor*, 6(12), June 12, 2008).

The problems exhibited by a lack of foresight in all probability, had their origins in an incomplete understanding and appreciation of the insurgent situation in FATA. As Musharraf admitted, "their presence there (in the tribal areas) we did not take them very seriously, and in any case the magnitude of the threat was unknown. The truth dawned on us only gradually, with increased intelligence". It was only after casualties were suffered in Operation Kazha Punga that the "magnitude and seriousness of the threat" was highlighted. Not only did this operation confirm the presence of foreign terrorists but also "it confirmed, too, that they were receiving local assistance. Our men also learned, the hard way, just how disarmingly "innocent" this vicious enemy could be" (Musharraf 2006: 264-265).

The operational knowledge against the Al Qaeda was gained mostly after the army had fought it, for "After all the military Operation against Al Qaeda, we have developed a fairly good picture of its characteristics"⁷⁷ (Musharraf 2006:270).

Further, the army strategy seemed to be focusing on not acting decisively within an area against the militants, but driving them out, only to find them taking shelter in another.⁷⁸ This seemed to be the rationale behind, what Musharraf called "a land-locked version of Douglas Mac Arthur's island hopping campaign in the Pacific during World War II". We had cleared two "islands" but our hopping was not finished" (Musharraf 2006:269). These "islands" indicated areas with heavy militant activity.

The conventional approach employing tanks, artillery and air power remained unable to operate against the insurgents, who were not in uniform, had local support, were well equipped for guerilla warfare and did not occupy fixed defences (Nawaz 2008:544). The army for long, favoured regular, conventional formations except for light patrol and police work in the tribal areas. With troops looking after responsibility in this area being special formations raised from local tribes, but officered by regular army officers, the army hardly played a direct role (Choen 1998:147-48). The army would however deploy quickly to deal with

⁷⁷ "The terrorists are very well trained in hit-and-run tactics and are adept at raids and ambushes. Most of their action are intense and swift. They are capable of putting up stiff, last man-last bullet resistance. They are equipped with sophisticated weapons and high tech communications, which they use efficiently for effective command and control".

⁷⁸ For instance, shifting of the militancy from the Wazir to the Mehsud areas (Musharraf 2006:269; International Crisis Group 2006, *Asia Report no. 125*, 11 December:)

threats, including tribal uprisings, by mobilizing both the military and paramilitary(Rizvi 2000:68).⁷⁹ The deployment of such local troops did cause serious military and political questions, as they would be fighting own kinsmen. Regardless of this, their presence was seen as locally more acceptable than that of regular units drawn from different provinces (Cohen 1998:147-148).

The issue of addressing the requirements was not completely met. Musharraf largely blamed the US for lack of supply of the needed resources, which he stated to be mainly in terms of night-flying and insufficient helicopters, and modern technology for intelligence gathering, surveillance, and target acquisition. As a result “The Pakistan Army had to scrounge from its own limited helicopter reserves from all over, and to commit its very precious helicopter gunships from its limited military operational reserves “(Musharraf 2006:266, 265-271).

The FC and other paramilitary troops were not equipped with armoured vehicles or personal protective armours. Even the funds supplied by the US were not spent in improving both defensive or fighting capability of the army and FC in the COIN mode. The ill-equipped forces, however, continued to be sent out in sweeps but since being vulnerable to mines and hidden attacks, their losses mounted. Suffering heavily, they were forced to regroup (Nawaz 2008:544-545). The very nature of these formations meant that they would be lightly equipped to ensure mobility and to suit their duties of patrolling the Afghan border and keeping peace among the warring tribes (Nawaz 2008:544). The FC was reported to be at the forefront of the actions against the militants in the Bara offensive of June 2008 (Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008). Though, in that case, hardly any resistance was faced by the troops (Ibrahim Shiniwari and Zulfiqar Ali *Dawn*, 30 June 2008).

These scouts, or as the paramilitary forces of each agency were called, thus stood “somewhere between the regular army and local police units, with some of the fire power of the former and the local contacts and mobility of the latter” (Cohen 1998: 149) Raised by the British to maintain law and order in the tribal areas, they were officered by the British army officers and after

⁷⁹ For instance in 1960 a smallscale Afghan-inspired invasion in 1960 in Bajaur elicited a heavy Pakistan army attack that routed the tribal insurgents (Nawaz 2008:366).

independence by the officers of the Pakistan army. They were also, on occasions supported by the Khassadars or militiamen recruited from local tribes (Hussain 2005:85).

However, improvements in addressing the needs were in sight, though not fully. By the end of May 2008, the army appeared better equipped and the troops relaxed. For the first time, more army vehicles were equipped with electronic jamming devices, to render ineffective IEDs and remote – controlled roadside bombs within a 100 metre radius, but this was not without demands for more (Iqbal Khattak, *The Daily Times* 21 May 2008).

Although Musharraf (2006:271) claimed that “I feel proud that our army officers have kept their troops fully motivated, ingraining in them the truth that they are dealing with anti-Pakistan elements, and their religion is not an issue in the conflict” in 2006, the Laddha surrender occurred in 2007. Nor did the resignations or incidents of insubordination stop. Not only the FC, even the elite SSG members⁸⁰ were involved. One way to deal with such a situation, beside disciplinary measures, was to post out of the terrain those Pashtun colonels who expressed reservations about the army operations (Muni(ed.) 2008:97). The high command, however, has begun to take notice as was evident when General Kayani visited the Spinkai Raghzai area to recognise the soldiers’ bravery during Operation Zalzal (Iqbal Khattak, *The Daily Times*, 21 May 2008).

Many more measures could have been inbuilt into the strategic considerations, but their incorporation would have implied the adoption of an altogether different course of action. That approach would have required the destruction of the insurgent forces in a given area, and their permanent isolation from the population, maintained by and with the population, and not enforced upon it. It also requires to work hand-in-hand with the political authorities (Nawaz 2008:580). According to the decisions taken in June 2008, regarding tackling the militancy, the tribal population was accorded roles for this purpose. The tribals were entrusted with expulsion of foreign fighters, and for stopping cross-border movements of militants from their areas. The tribals were held accountable for presence and actions of the latter, with relevant enforcement mechanisms

⁸⁰ Some of them refused to take part in the Lal Masjid Operation and were to face military court proceedings for their indisciplined behaviour (Ghafari Ali Khan and Muqqadam Kham 2007 2007, Herald, October:61)

'provision to back all agreements. However, breach of trust on the tribals' part would reportedly imply justification to the use of force by the military (Ifikhar A. Khan, *Dawn*, 26 June 2008). During the Bara offensive of June 2008 that followed, the administration was reportedly working on a plan to organize a force of three tribes to take action against the Laskhar-i-Islam (Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008).

There are however, not terse and precise rules that are required to be followed for attaining strategic success, as there is the "uncomfortable conclusion that for strategy, upon which wars are won and lost; there are no formulas for success" and the only education in this regard that a strategist can take is from historical experiences and one's own experience (Lonsdale 2007, *Defence Studies*, 7(1): 61). For the Pakistani military strategists involved in COIN, experience is not a problem. Surrounded as the army is by an adversary whose actions only expose the former's vulnerability (Bokhari 2007, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 45 (4): 16), the requirement is not in conventional terms but in a well-trained COIN force. For the strategists, however, it is more important to see the government to "fbak out of its prevaricating behaviour vis-à-vis the Islamists and break all ties with their radical militants even at the expense of finding another solution for the Kashmir issue" Nawaz 2008: 580). Also, it is necessary to see this COIN as "Pakistan's own war "(Ashraf 2008, *Terrorism monilar*;12(6) June 12).

Required also was the decisiveness regarding the use of force, if deemed necessary by July 2008, however, the military had not given up the option to use force if required. Importance appeared to be accorded to tackling the insurgency by the use of force. In a meeting in June 2008, Musharraf "told the army chief to confront terrorists with full force and with all available resources", as the military leadership "put militants on note that the security challenge they posed would be met with a firm hand"(Amir Wasim, *Dawn*, 28 June 2008). However, Gilani stated that the use of force was seen as a last resort to establish law and order. Nevertheless, his government would not allow anyone to challenge its writ, even if the former supported the peace deals (Mohammad Riaz, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008). Talks continued in Bajaur, Mohmand and Darra Adamkhel through tribal interlocutors, though Baituallah declared their suspension in end-June (Alamgir Bhattani, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008).

Nonetheless, in keeping with the strategy to deal militarily with the militancy as it created a crisis regarding the security of Peshwar, the security forces moved in on militants in end-June 2008. This was the follow-up to the government's assent to an operation against Lashkar-i-Islam, as stated earlier. Once more, a firepower-intensive conventional approach was followed. Militant hideouts in the Bara tehsil of Khyber agency were bombed by the artillery, Cobra helicopters carried out sorties throughout the first day of the operation, mortar shells were fired, and key positions were taken under control. Besides, tanks were also deployed at a paramilitary base. Two bunkers and three important bases were destroyed and houses of the Lashkar-i-Islam's leaders, including that of Mangal Bagh, were demolished. The crackdown was to continue till all pockets of resistance were eliminated, and the aim was to establish the government's writ at all costs. According to the Inspector-General of the FC, Major General Mohammad Alam Khattak, it was a combined operation "with the army on standby to assist the FC, with the troops using minimum force to avoid collateral damage; and as one government official stated, the purpose of this operation, including the application of firepower, was because the government and army "want to show the militants what is store for them"(Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 29 June 2008). However, the militants were reported to have fled to the Tirah Valley even before the operation began (Ibrahim Shinwari and Zulfiqar Ali, *Dawn*, 30 June 2008). However, the government stated that it would continue the operation till the objectives were achieved, and that it had full support of the local tribes in doing so (*Dawn*, 1 July 2008). The TTP, on the other hand, alleged that despite the peace agreements the government had launched operations in Swat, Khyber, Jandola and Darra Adam Khel, and in the situation the TTP could not keep agreements (Anwarullah Khan, *Dawn* 30 June 2008). It also vowed to avenge the killing of its colleagues and threatened a response with equal force against the military operation in the tribal areas"(Ibrahim Shiniwari, *Dawn*, 1 July 2008).

Nonetheless, on previous occasions, the government could not accomplish much when it came to controlling violence in the Khyber agency. "The Khyber Agency has also been destabilized due to intense fighting between Lashkar-i-Islam and Ansarul Islam. These two tribal based Islamic groups have been using heavy weapons to settle scores and the government has failed to stop the fighting

that affected life in Tirah Valley and Bara area throughout 2006 and 2007”(Yusufzai 2007, *Newsline*, 20(3):37).

Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of the operation would be (it was still in progress at the time of writing) or the pattern of its conduct would indicate regarding the COIN capabilities of the Pakistan army, the strategy would continue to play its role as a *crucial* determinant, if not the *Central* determinant. Future operations, if conducted, would once more warrant the creation, formulation and implementation of a relevant COIN strategy, but its contours would only be determined by the various factors outlined above. These would also, be the key elements that would either craft the strategy’s success, or again, lead to the conclusion that more needs to be done and well.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The increase in insurgency as a kind of conflict occurred mainly after the Cold War. During the Cold War, it shaped the form of war and warfare in a manner that was to set a precedent for the subsequent years. Post 9/11, Islamic insurgencies, aligned in one way or the other to the Al Qaeda, had a profound impact on the nature of insurgency itself, primarily by globalizing it. They also affected the COIN forces facing them, chiefly by determining the context of their operation of the latter.

After the end of the US-led coalition's Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Pakistan also became one country having to deal with an Al Qaeda inspired local insurgency. For Islamabad, however, it was only the beginning of a long-drawn, protracted conflict, which was to have implications not only for itself but for many other nations. The nature of the militancy became such that it could not brook ignorance but had to be dealt with a prompt response.

The pressure that the US applied on Pakistan to defeat the insurgency by far remained the most crucial factor that stirred the Pakistan army to take action as early as possible. Even if the US had its own reasons, at stake were decades-old relations, regarded as highly important if not altogether indispensable for Pakistan, and most importantly for the army and its needs—whether real or perceived. However, the fact remained that the War on Terror waged by Pakistan was that of the US. Despite statements and assertions made by the Pakistani establishment regarding the COIN as their “own war”, the truth was that the US continued to play the chief determinant. The US involvement, and the perception of fighting it was by the Pakistan army remained paramount in the calculations and actions of both actors—the military and the militants. From the military's point of view, national security and the militant challenge were concerns that warranted response, but holistically viewed, such a deteriorated situation arose due to Pakistan's alliance with US both in 2001 and after – to which the militants responded in kind.

The local Taliban (and the other groups) although, did have their own extremist-jihadist agenda and aims, the viewing of the Pakistani government and security forces as well as those who were supporting them—a category that included the tribals and other

locals as allies of the US who fought Washington's wars for it, determined their choice of action, and the branding of such people as enemies. The resort to terrorist activities and a guerilla warfare-based insurgency was largely the militants' way of dealing with those whom they considered as their opponents to re-establishing Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and possibly, Pakistan. The US, and an aligned Pakistan and its army, therefore, constituted prime targets.

Pakistan thus had to enunciate a COIN campaign on home ground, even if was for the US. Pakistan's COIN capabilities, at that point, were not commensurate to the challenge. Totally unprepared to prosecute a COIN campaign on its own soil, it even lacked the necessary foresight, organizational acumen and an innovative approach, besides a thorough understanding of the ways and means of utilising the present capabilities, conventional or unconventional, (in the place of a COIN only capacity), and in the most suitable manner. At the same time, inspite of its inabilities, Pakistan and most notably its army, could not retreat from the face of this challenge, for "barring the Balchistan insurgency in the 1970s, Pakistan's history has never witnessed such a staggering number of security officials slain in such a short span of time as in the tribal badlands of Waziristan. In fact, in many respects, say some analysts, the Waziristan insurgency has proven to be more vident and analysts, the lethal and has far exceeded its boundaries to manifest itself in far off places"(Ismail Khan, *Dawn*, 26 September 2008). Confronted with a challenge which was steadily attracting US attention and had thus become menacing both in relation to national security and the army's existence as an institution, the army realized the need to break out of this militant siege. Questions were being raised regarding the army's ability to defend the nation, plagued as it was with a string of constant attacks and assassinations, and failed attempts for the latter by the insurgents. As vulnerabilities came to light, focus shifted to the army's capabilities in even defending itself against a determined adversary.

The state of affairs that had come to pass, was therefore such that the army had to take concrete action, its capabilities or the lack thereof notwithstanding. The drive into FATA, to make matters worse, was attended by a host of difficulties, including among others, a hostile terrain, an equally hostile local population, an altogether different administrative structure and a tribal culture espousing own peculiarities. Added to these was a thoroughly self created problem regarding the lack of understanding of the adversary whom the army had come to confront, and possibly defeat.

Required then was a strategy capable of offsetting these disadvantages and of delivering victory, in consonance with the desired and accepted aims and objectives. It was this last factor that remained conspicuous by its absence. Never clarified or adequately defined, right till the end of the first half of the year 2008, the meaning of the word “success”, at least in this context, remained elusive. The aim for which the army was fighting an insurgency was never enunciated, so the implication of “success” could not be understood or appreciated. The army strategists were caught between the compulsions of an age-old state/army policy premised on a constant requirement, and availability, of an irregular force employing unconventional tactics, and the current need to take a forceful action against the very same elements. As a result, the aim of the Pakistan army’s COIN Strategy got lost in the misplaced attempts to straddle both horses.

There was never a decisiveness to the attitude of the military regarding the insurgents. The two choices remained as the elimination of the menace in an uncompromising manner, or contrarily, the working out of a solution whereby the militants nuisance value could be brought under control, a rapprochement reached, with ultimately the army once again assuming its position of the authority directing the future actions of these irregulars.

The army strategy remained highly tilted towards the latter choice though elements of the former were also not missing. The declarations made by the army from time to time pertaining to “once and for all” offensives, their disenchantment with any hopes of productive negotiations, and actions resulting in heavy fighting with the militants, all seemed to be appearing as the result of a thinking that favoured a decision. However, even if such a state of mind did exist, it proved to be only temporary, for in the long run it became prey to the requirements of the establishment’s *jehadi* policy.

The need to keep the religious right to its side was also apparent. Without the generous help of the mullahs, the availability of the *jehadi* fighters could not be secured. The move towards a strategy that could result in inflicting heavy losses on the adversary was thus obstructed. A displeased clergy, angered by such possible treatment of its militant “wards” could further step up the ante against the already beleaguered military. The choices of such actions ranged from political problems (by groups/parties like the MMA), to the creation of instability at a regional/national level, and worse, the carrying out of jihad in areas like Kashmir by itself or in conjunction with other Islamist groups.

The aim would be to shut out the military from such ventures, the army being then left to chalk out other strategies and means to fulfil its foreign policy agendas.

However, whether these groups could be able to do so on their own was simply not the issue. The question was the pressing need of the army to keep such elements in hand for employment at the shortest of notices, thus the attempts to keep them satisfied at all points of time.

The military led government of Pakistan and the democratic one as well, was perhaps mindful of this requirement, when it proclaimed its strategy of "carrot and stick". Among other considerations was the domestic compulsion to portray this war as Pakistan's own war, and not that of the US. The idea was also to prevent local alienation and burgeoning criticism of the establishment for slaughtering own people in the vain pursuit of the fulfillment of foreign policy goals of another country. It was for this purpose that the government favoured the separation of local and foreign elements, with the army to target the latter, and make peace with the former, to wean them away from militancy and thus end the conflict peacefully, and in the process earn domestic accolades. The democratically elected government of the present also appears to be following the same line of thought.

The army, therefore, pursued this policy, but no clarity was accorded to the manner in which what carrot would be shown and what kind of stick wielded and when. Militarily, the army was confident of bringing its recalcitrant long time allies –turned-opponents to heel. Short-term operations executed periodically and targeting objectives of military value could fulfil this objective, whereby the militants, after suffering losses, would be brought to negotiations and once more to accept the army's overarching status. The preparedness for the implementation of such intentions was marked by a gross neglect of the army's abilities and capacities in this regard. Rather than evolving a strategy that could, after a sound understanding of the army's weaknesses related to COIN and in FATA devise means to tide over them, and focus on whatever strengths that could be employed in this regard, haste was allowed to take over the proceedings.

Unable to decide what level to leave the battered militancy at, the army rushed headlong with its belief that whatever plans it would make would emerge successful, no matter how hasty, adhoc, or hardly thought-out. Ill timed, arbitrary, and poorly conceived, the operations were a testament to the army's unbridled hurry to press on with whatever means it bound useful. Surgical strikes, bypassing of the civil administration, disinterest

in securing local tribal support were some consequences of the army's wild-boar-rush strategy.

Even the operations till date, were not executed well. The lack of understanding, coupled with an equal loss of foresight a characteristic of the Pakistani military culture, ensured that only failures would attend the military's endeavours. The unyielding militant opponents, spurred on a by determined command, left no stone unturned to make their engagements with the army highly costly for the latter. It was perhaps the continuing patronage by sections of the army/ISI that had enabled the militants to take advantage from leaked information. Besides, the knowledge of the army's, at least traditional, weak points would not have been all that unavailable for the militancy. Long-term association with the army, whether when fighting alongside the mujahoddeen, the Taliban or in general, or while receiving other kinds of support, implied that, unlike the army, they knew their opponents well. Besides, it was a foregone conclusion that the army had no defences against terror attacks, bolstered perhaps by the information that the army was not thinking in terms of protection or prevention anyway. Buttressed by their knowledge and mastery of the terrain, the support by locals, a prevalent anti-US, pro-jehadi feeling, and also their indispensability for the establishment's foreign policy agenda, the militants were not all that misplaced in their assumption that it would be they who would ultimately dominate.

In military terms also they had built up their capabilities. Thoroughly taking advantage of the army's existing and self imposed inabilities, they proved that they had become relatively able to operate on their own, unlike in the past, where army/ISI help was the chief determinant of their success. Moreover for long the techniques of guerilla war and unconventional tactics had been a preserve of these irregular fighters. This was more so the case with veterans, who could utilise their combat experience with the mujahiddeen/Taliban, and those tribal fighters, well equipped to do so, entrenched as they were in the subtleties of the tribal Pashtun way of war.

The guerilla warfare practiced by the insurgents especially tactics like hit-and-run strikes, besides acts of terrorism like suicide bombings exacted a severe toll on the Pakistani soldiers waging COIN. Since they were not habituated to COIN exercises, the soldiers bore the brunt of fighting a war they were not accustomed to. For them, the novelty of this war was as threatening as the 'insisi' enemy who struck without warning, and gave no respect to whatever was the level of readiness of the troops which it

relentlessly targeted. The army's strategic orientations ignored the fact that their soldiers could fight only conventional adversaries, or were trained only for dealing with lesser opposition, unlike the sophistication exhibited by hard core fighters. The strategy was therefore to send out soldiers in large numbers for a headlong clash with an enemy against whom many a soldier found himself outgunned and outwitted.

A host of other problems beset the troops engaged in combat. The strategy also did neither address these issues of shared ethnicity and religion, nor the major concern of troop security. Acts of terrorism continued unabated, with many of the soldiers being nearly regularly kidnapped, targeted, beheaded, or killed by explosions and suicide strikes. The only way the army came up with was exchanges with the militants for securing the release of those captured, even at the cost of disproportionate numbers. The consequent lowering of morale to deplorable levels was also related to the situation of the troops wherein they lacked suitable equipment and adequate defensive measures, the absence of which often led to occurrence of high casualties.

The strategy followed, once more betrayed a lack of foresight, as it did not take into account such possibilities occurring. For if it had, measures would have been incorporated right from the beginning to prevent such incidents from happening, as much as possible. The soldiers would have been trained, or at least prepared in a manner in which they would have been taught how to manage their ethnic and religious identities vis-à-vis the conflict. Even if such occurrences of unprofessional behaviour did take place, there would have been measures to deal with the situation to prevent further such happenings. Measures which would have gone beyond disciplinary actions and mere instructions by the officers, to address and solve not the superficial but the core issues, would have been resorted to. However, none of these attempts were visible, otherwise Laddha-like surrenders would not have occurred. The army, perhaps, had placed too much confidence in its corporate character, and in its professionalism as adequate safeguards against a decline in morale and motivation.

Had the strategy anticipated the probable tactics of the enemy, even when the army did not possess an operational knowledge regarding the militants, many such cases of troop losses could have been averted. It could not have been difficult for an army and intelligence agencies and even the ISI to do so, after all they had worked in tandem with these former clients for years, and to the extent of making strategies for them, fighting alongside and providing all kinds of material help and military guidance.

On the contrary, the army kept getting caught unawares. Even when an understanding of the adversary's characteristics did come to light as a result of military operations, it did little to change things. Throughout, no special effort's were directed in formulating responses to deal with the specific nature of the adversary's tactics.

The inability of troops regarding COIN being expressed on many occasions, the reluctance of many of them to fight, the non-performance till desired levels, as well as high casualties was forcing a rethink on part of the strategy. Mounting civilian casualties by the army and a flawed COIN campaign which alienated locals and could not defeat militants, led the army to change its strategic orientation. A maximalist, conventional, fire-power heavy approach was not delivering: the peace deals might.

Rather than focus on improvements on existing capabilities, learning lessons and building up a sound COIN force, the striking of peace deals was seen as a better way to gain the upper hand. This would be achieved by the healing of the mullah-military alliance, through pacification of the "aggrieved" clerics and their militant associates. This in turn would blunt the insurgency's edge, if not ending it altogether, thus doing away with any need for the Pakistan army to get embroiled in COIN. From the army perspective, the strategists had emerged with a win-win situation.

This plan too backfired. The only strategic use the deals served appeared to belong to the militants. While the insurgency was able to retain and build up more levels of power, the army was left in a weaker position. The army still remained ossified in its belief albeit mistaken, that such measures could bring the militants under control. It did not appreciate that the only sense that such a move could have in the parlance of a sound strategy was that it should have given the army and not the militants, time to rebuild, regroup and reenter the contest with enhanced capabilities. Actual experience proved the army was not looking in this direction. Neither peace deal saw the army accepting them as a breather and meeting its requirements. Operation Zalzala, January 2008, showed that even in early 2008 the army was fighting in the same conventional fire-power-heavy way, there was no building up of successes and no 'Plan B'. Even the Frontier Corps in the Bara offensive appeared to follow the pattern it had become accustomed to.

The strategy ultimately reflected a mindset which only sought to face challenges only as and when they arose rather than anticipating them in advance and making consequent preparations. Already caught on the wrong foot by having to wage COIN, the military kept on adding to its difficulties. The requirement of a sound aim was never seen

as important, and assumptions and actions remained guided by circumstances and their perception. Nor was the need felt for a decisive way out of the policy dilemma, to go ultimately in the army's favour. Following the conclusion of peace deals the army would revert back to operations as the militants kept issuing challenges and present problems. Whenever the army was able to militarily reach the high ground, it would give way to proposals for peace and ceasefires by the militants, who did so to gain time to build up own strengths. The army made no moves to build up its strengths, or successes, even when the latter was defined in purely military terms.

This haphazardness was bound to reflect in the strategy Oscillating between war and peace, military actions and peace deals, conquest and accommodation, it suffered from the result of the lack of interest, and efforts in determining what exactly the army wanted to achieve. Meeting challenges as they came, the army would either fight or make peace, leading to a lull in the situation but not in complete peace.

Militarily able to beat back the militants in quite a few engagements, the army did not achieve any breakthrough. Actions were swift but not decisive. No contingency plans or viable alternatives were kept ready to further arrest damages sustained and bring the deteriorating situation back under control, let alone minimise losses or to turn a seeming defeat into victory. Beaten troops would either retreat or surrender, without any thought to regrouping/reinforcements while victorious commanders would be at a loss to decide what to do after their wins.

This remained the state of things even if changes were made to the army's strategy in particular cases. These were not initiated by the army for it only took advantage of a change in circumstances. By supporting one section of the affairs while it itself played an inferior role in determining the outcome. Unable also to exploit the advantages of tribal *lashkars*, the army was left alone to wage its war, and without a sound strategy.

On the whole, the strategy failed on all counts Military victories, whenever gained, could not break the military might of the militants, and the peace deals only heightened perceptions of a military brazenly surrendering to the insurgents, leaving them free to act and dictate terms with impunity. Local support could not be garnered and popular alienation with military actions remained at a high level. On a more specific note, the strategy did not succeed in assessing correctly the ground situation in FATA, the terrain and the local tribal culture, beliefs and aspirations all factors crucial to a worthwhile conduct of the COIN campaign. The army, on its part, carried on as it would

in any other area, oblivious of peculiarities attending this counterinsurgency. Intelligence failures remained a continuous obstacle, but worse still was the failure in understanding that COIN operations require a substantial participation from the local people. This becomes indispensable to wean away support from the insurgents and thus render them vulnerable to COIN actions, but for the tribal people of FATA, fighting only brought hardships, and a growth in resentment as the army did nothing to soothe ruffled feathers, take them into confidence, assuage sentiments and above all, give them the importance due to any local populace in a COIN operation.

The summary of the Pakistan army's counterinsurgency strategy is as follows:

- A lack of purpose for waging COIN, mainly due to the perception of this war by many in the army as one fought on behalf of US-NATO rather than a war of the Pakistan army.
- Characterised by an absolute lack of foresight
- Aim of the strategy not clearly spelt out; reactive, and not a proactive strategy – dictated by circumstances
- Exhibited lack of initiative
- Momentum of military actions not sustained or utilised
- Did not incorporate understanding of specific situation FATA, hence no measures to deal with peculiarities
- No importance accorded to innovation
- Conventional means of warfare adopted
- Resort to peace measures proved to be detrimental, failed as fighting would commence with the end of each deal; strategic use, if any, thus not productive
- Not well thought out from the beginning, adhoc, no contingency measures, and not coherent
- Followed a beaten-track mindset consistently
- Not a war-winning strategy: strategy not employed as a means to tide over difficulties, but only exacerbated them in the long run.

The first hypothesis, that the strategy employed a conventional, firepower intensive maximalist approach is thus proved.

The second hypothesis, that the present strategy is unsuitable to a predominantly guerilla war approach by the militants can be examined further with the help of Ivan

Arreguin Toft's strategic interaction theory. The army's failure can be explained due to its conventional or a direct approach strategy in response to the militants' indirect strategy. Thus to win (the 'victory' is here defined as a significant reduction in militancy, if not complete annihilation, to the extent that the state position FATA and the Tensional security improve considerably), the Pakistan army would have to devise a strategy incumbent on achieving a similarity of approaches, in this case, an indirect one on part of the army, since the militants are not likely adopt a direct approach.

This is due primarily to the nature of the insurgents. They do not, and are unlikely to, possess army like arsenals or heavy vehicles like tanks etc. They are pere, not prepared for conventional warfare, similar to the mujahiddeen in Afghanistan. Besides stationary defences and conventional warfare would remove their present advantages. For the tribal-based militant formations, conventional war would anyway be difficult to wage.

Thus, the second hypothesis is also proved, pointing out the need for an indirect approach based strategy.

The nuances presented by other COIN theories as described in chapter I, also have an application in the above, as they could be inbuilt in the various base that would characterise the strategy's formulation. Of these, the Main points of focus would centre around (1) policy remaining vested in the civil government (2) civil-military cooperation(3) minimum use of force (4) firm and timely action (5)clear political aim (6) presence of an overall plan(7) necessary support from the population/securing of "hearts and minds"(8) Location, identification and eradication –as basis of the anti-militant operating (9) good intelligence, mobility, training, organization and cohesion(10) will to win.

Overall, lessons from the British COIN experiences appear as more valid in the Pakistani case, which till mid 2008, has been similar to the American approach. The Soviet innovations in their COIN practices in Afghanistan can also constitute a point of reference.

Implications

Two of Pakistan's neighbours are bound to feel the affects of the Pakistan army capitulating to the militants. Afghanistan is already caught in a cycle of violence that has seen an increase every time a peace deal got signed. The year 2008 does not appear

to be an exception, with escalation in violence already being reported. The Afghan government, already alarmed at the overtures of the Pakistani government, and the army towards the militancy can do little more than pressure Pakistan for decisive action. How far they succeed remains to be seen. Meanwhile, difficulties would arise in dealing with the cross-border insurgency from the Afghan side, more so if the country were to witness further acts of terror which do not appear to subside.

For India, a healed military-mullah-militant relationship only spells trouble. With increased infiltration attempts being reported in Jammu and Kashmir, in all probability at the behest of the Pakistan army, more incidents leading to violence and instability may occur. A combined military-militant venture could be in the offing, but in any case, terror strikes by Pakistan based jihadi groups cannot be ruled out. However, if the deals once more fail to deliver, the cause for concern would be less as “for India, the PPP-led government’s new resolve to crack down on militancy is of interest for how it may impact on banned Kashmir-linked jihadist groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Lashkar-e-Taiba”(Nirupama Subramanian, *The Hindu*, 3 July 2008). Yet, if in any case the militants are to win in the frequency of fighting that follows, or are able to indeed build capabilities on their own, they could launch their own style of jihad aimed at India, with or without army help. On every occasion, India needs to be on guard against a possible deterioration of the situation centred on the line of control, and seriously evaluate concerns from the standpoints of both national and internal security, and prepare to adequately address the impending threats.

For the US and its NATO allies, options for direct action inside Pakistan remain. On the present level. This could include cross-border strikes could continue to as well as missile attacks besides maintaining their focus on activities inside Afghanistan. However, US could favour an increase in its covert activities inside Pakistan, more so in FATA. In any case it would have to coordinate with the Pakistani government and refrain from unilateral action. Not trusting of the Pakistani establishment, the US strategy may shift to taking action involving issues like state sovereignty. It would, therefore, be more feasible to assist the Pakistan army in waging COIN in a variety of ways and enabling them to more effectively deal with their opponents. US ground involvement, could thus, remain in the background, and let the Pakistani troops handle the situation. As the RAND COIN study of 2008 states “US allies and international

organizations can provide capabilities that the US currently cannot” (Gompert et al 2008 *Rand COIN study*, report no.MG595/2-OSD).

Pakistan, would of course, bear the maximum brunt of a strengthened insurgency and a failed military. The security situation would emerge as a serious challenge, and conditions could go from bad to worse, if not from worse to worst. As the case stands, suicide bombings are still a continuing menace, as the June 2008 attack on the Danish embassy shows. Lal Masjid like clashes are also not a distant possibility. In a country where the major cities are regularly struck by militants, and a former premier is assassinated, the future only holds more destructive and threatening portents if the militancy continues to flourish.

The army would have to prevent such an occurrence. Its constant reiteration of the validity and utility of the peace deals may once more prove to be misguided. As in the past, the militants may not keep to their end of the bargain, or may unilaterally scrap the deal. The events of June 2008 are already beginning to point to this possibility with talks suspended. It remains to be seen how much the TTP would be able to convert its threats into reality, and whether it would actually do so. For how long this state of affairs continues, also is a matter of concern. For one, it would impact upon the government policy and army actions. The scenario that develops would play a significant role in determining the further course of events, and would shape the army's attitude to them. In any case, the existing conditions of the agreements are not very restrictive, and violence in Afghanistan may see new levels. The US's Afghanistan pressures may force the army into action on this occasion as well. As all the previous deals have resulted in renewed violence after becoming defunct, there would be no surprises if the same were to happen now. There are, on the contrary, very few reasons to believe that the converse would be true, for all reasons are premised on the uncontrolled nature of the insurgency, the goals it publicly espouses and its unwavering commitment to jihad both outside, and if need be, inside Pakistan. In any case the peace achieved has been only relative, and used to the hilt by the militant groups to further their agenda, and not to renounce violence for all times to come. The inclination for perceiving peace for the sake of peace has not been demonstrated. For the extremists, therefore a lull in fighting is a time that has to be gainfully employed.

The Pakistan army, could therefore in the future confront another violent challenge; and it may have to do so over if the TTP's threats' materialize, or the army

decides to extend the Khyber operations to other areas including Waziristan. One of the only option available to it would be to put an end to all relations with the militants-mullahs and break all ties, in order to tackle the insurgency with no policy constraints, along with this unavoidable impact upon strategy. In Pakistan's case, however, their appears to be an improbable course of action, if not altogether impossible. In facing a scenario where the levels of militant threat would become so high so as to render even any insignificant peace deal as impossible to conclude, the army would have to resort to military action alone. If such a situation does not arise, and the threat remains at a manageable level, even then it would be better to improvise on the kind of pacific measures, as peace deals have not worked in the past.

Moreover, the government would have to adopt a comprehensive approach going beyond mere announcement, incorporating, educational economic and political measures as part of a larger development plan for FATA to eradicate the insurgency from its roots. It could also replace colonial era systems with those that can integrate FATA with the rest of the country, or at least put in place such structures that can, by their nature, aid and not hamper government actions in the area. The army too, would have to pay more attention to local tribal customs and beliefs and any plan of action must be in keeping with them so as not to generate hostility.

The army's strategy and its implementation would therefore have to be such that it does not impede government plans or structures for the area, especially those related to the delivery of justice, social service and security to the tribespeople. The primary aim would be to bet sell the war on terror to the people, by instituting relevant mechanisms and attempts to build a consensus, by bringing in all the key players and stakeholders on board to formulate a concerted and coordinated plan.

The army's strategy formulation, would first of all require a clear enunciation of victory and a line drawn regarding the army's relationship with the militancy. The scope of military action would have to be unambiguous as well, but the retention of a jihad policy would continue to create hurdles, taking the strategy all the more hostage. The army in an event where its COIN capabilities remain in the same state that evoke pathos, would again find itself on the back foot. The army's actions would continue to be only a repetition of previous experiences. Moreover, there would be no break from the army's proverbial record of not heeding newer ideas and not learning lessons. Nor

would be visible a consideration to the fact that when pressed by adverse circumstances, a different approach could be tried

An indirect approach that seeks to level the field with their unconventional opponents would be a feasible option. Not focussing solely on the already battered and COIN unsuitable FC and other paramilitary organisations, it would be better to go along with the policy of using whatever capabilities they do possess, although with reservations. The FC could prove to be useful only for Bara-like operations, where resistance was minimum and severe clashes did not take place. Tribal *lashkars* could be employed in a more organized manner, and they could be trained to work alongside army and paramilitary units. As indigenous forces, they would be better suited in terms of popular relations, terrain unconventional tactics, mobility, and in their traditional role as light infantry. The army would provide overall direction, and use heavy firepower only as and when required. In the Bara offensive also, despite army assertions regarding minimum force, the display (and application) of firepower has been similar to the assessment made by Thomas Mockaitis, as stated in chapter I. It also points to the problem faced by a conventional military, not prepared for a COIN role, to apply the principle of minimum force and the Pakistan army may not be an exception. However, the approach would have to be cautiously applied, with full understanding of its implications. Participation should be elicited from as many tribes as possible to prevent an outbreak of resentment in the form of intra-tribal war. In all the army, the local administration, *lashkars* and *jirgas* should all work in a concerted and coherent manner guided by a sound and well conceived strategy, and one free from its past defects.

This was not the first time that the Pakistan army was called into quell an insurgency, and yet, over the years its COIN capabilities continued to remain deficient. Even when these deficiencies are not removed, Pakistan would have to take a stand against the militancy and the threats it imposes. If Pakistan does not deal with its domestic threats in a suitable manner, then its existing problems will only multiply further. The problems it would have to deal with would, for one, continue to centre around responding to US requirements regarding the War on Terror as after all, Pakistan was fighting, at the time of writing, Washington's war against the Al Qaeda-Taliban. However, Pakistan's own policy orientations could in all likelihood, persist with their blowback. These policy choices besides assisting US, also include supporting militancy in neighbouring countries. The latter may lead to a point where the militants

could turn against the Pakistani state and the army, with their support to US-or even the lack of it notwithstanding. Although this appears as a likely possibility for the future, its seeds may already be sown. For Pakistan, it could then find itself fighting its own war on terror this time genuine. However, in such an event, its own policy choices which among others continue to incorporate military and other support to militants-Taliban, would be the cause for such a state of affairs.

The military, in all likelihood, would be pressed into service to deal with the situation. Regardless of the reasons, and the basic causes, for which it would fight, the use of the army would remain the government's option, whether past the government/army did try to manage its own policy requirements vis-à-vis, those of the US, as was evident in the case of concluding peace deals (to which the US was opposed), but in the long run, the US factor over shadowed all such attempts. Military action, which the US preferred, had to be resorted to though the militant action also presented reasons for doing so. The June 2008 meeting appeared to take note of the fact that despite all attempts at making peace the military option could not be totally abandoned on the other hand, it may prove to be the only fusible available. The meeting thus empowered the military to deal with the insurgency and did take steps towards an approach that sought to bring in the tribals into the situation as actors, but with the military retaining the upper hand; whatever arrangements that follow as time passes, would have to keep the option for military use open. In practically all in which case previous cases, the military had to be sent in by the leadership to deal with the deteriorated situation. The future, may not present different scenarios, and if history continues to repeat it self-as became the case with defending Pashawar in 2008, where the military had to put on a show of force, the criticism notwithstanding, then the military may have to actually act, in true sense of the term.

Its attempts to regain peace might be preceded by those of war military action could prove decisive, whether intended or not. In this eventuality, the Pakistani army strategists could only hope that when it comes to shouldering this burden those in command would not be cowering under their dilemmas and historic vacillation. In the matter of leading the military they would not be undergoing those sentiments as once did Lord Curzon, when he stated (cited in Warren 2000:32):

“No patchwork scheme -and all our present recent schemes, blockades, allowances, etc. are mere patchwork-will settle the Waziristan problem. Not until the military steamroller has passed over the country from end to end, will there be peace. But I do not want to be the person to start that machine”.

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APPENDIX I
PAKISTAN ARMY – CORPS HEADQUARTERS (HQ)
CORPS

HQ

Mangla	I Corps 1 Armoured Division 1 Mechanised Division 1 Infantry Division 1 Armoured Brigade
Multan	II Corps 1 Armoured Division 1 Mechanised Division
Sialkot	IV Corps 2 Infantry Division 1 Armoured Division 2 Infantry Brigades
Karachi	V Corps 2 Infantry Divisions 2 Armoured Brigades 1 Infantry Brigade
Rawalpindi	X Corps 3 Infantry Divisions FCNA 1 Armoured Brigade 2 Infantry Brigades
Peshawar	XI Corps 2 Infantry Division
Quetta	XII Corps 2 Infantry Divisions
Gujranwala	XXX Corps 2 Infantry Divisions 1 Armoured Brigade 1 Mechanised Brigade
Pannu Aquil	XXXI Corps 2 Infantry Divisions 1 Armoured Brigade 1 Mechanised Brigade
Gilgit	Force Commander Northern Areas

APPENDIX II

PAKISTAN ARMY, THE ISI, AND MILITARY RELATIONS WITH THE MUJAHIDDEEN AND TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN

“Death by a thousand cuts-this is the time honoured tactic of the guerilla army against a large conventional force. In Afghanistan, it was the only way to bring the Soviet bear to its knees; the only way to defeat a superpower on the battlefield with ill-trained, ill-disciplined and ill-equipped tribesmen, whose only asset was an unconquerable fighting sprit welded to a warrior tradition. Ambushes, assassinations, attacks on supply convoys, bridges, pipelines and airfields, with the avoidance of set piece battles; these are history’s proven techniques for the guerilla. For four years, from 1983-1987, it was my task to plan and coordinate these activities”. Brigadier Mohammad Yusaf, Director, Afghan Bureau, ISI 1983-1987, *Bear Trap:Afghanistan’s Untold story*, p.1.

for Pakistan and its army, military relations with the mujahiddeen extended to many aspects. In the North and South Waziristan agencies, camps were activated to carry out military training for opponents of the Daud regime in Afghanistan in the 1970s, who were easily accommodated in the tribal areas (Hussain 2005:79). The ISI and the Frontier Constabulary that patrolled the border began intelligence Operations in Afghanistan and the border region while supporting the young rebel exiles (Nawaz 2008:368). The FC was given the responsibility to organize and train the latter, with Brigadier (later Major General) Naseerullah Babar, the Inspector-General of the FC, being entrusted with the overall responsibility of the operation (Hussain 2005:79). Hekmatyar and Ahmadshah Massud were among the first Afghan Islamists to receive training from the Pakistani military from late 1973 (Hussain 2005:Najumi 2002:128). To keep the Afghan project secret, the trainees were enlisted as FC trainees. The FC, ISI and the SSG jointly handled the training. Between 1973 and 1977, the Pakistani military reportedly trained around 500 anti-Daud Afghan Islamista (Hussain 2005:79). For instance, in the Cherat Army camp near Peshwar, the Afghan Islamists received courses and military training “dressed in the uniforms of Babar’s Frontier Corps-ostensibly as Pakistanis from the tribal areas”(Nojumi 2002:128).

In the period 1978-1988, anti-government forces of Afghanistan were harboured in clandestine military camps in various parts of the NWFP, Balochistan and FATA. Some Pakistani bases used for training and facilitating in cursions into Afghanistan were

located close to the Durand Line in Chitral, Zhob and in Fata in Miramshah, Parachinar (Kurram), Warsak and Spinwam (Hussain 2005:107). Several resistance training camps for the mujahiddeen were also added to the already functioning guerilla bases within Pakistani territory. In the tribal areas, these camps were located in Bajaur, Razmak (South Waziristan), Parachinar, Miramshah, Mir Ali and Ghazlmai (North Waziristan), and Mohmand (Hussain 2005:108).

These areas were selected due to their geostrategic utility, as they bordered Afghan provinces. Miramshah and Parachinar remained the two most strategic points on the Pakistani side of the border, from where the ISI assisted the mujahiddeen groups to launch operations in the Khost area of Paktia from late 1978 (Hussain 2005:108). Pakistan army's logistic and advisory support proved decisive in the fall of Khost bordering North Waziristan and Kurram on 31 March 1991 (Hussain 2005:151).

The ISI's assistance also led to the establishment of a large training camp for Hel cadres near Peshwar. Pakistani support to the resistance let the CIA to observe in September 1979 that the 'insurgent tribesmen' were expanding 'their areas of operation in the eastern provinces, currently the scene of the heaviest fighting' (Hussain 2005:108). ISI officers were closely involved in planning and directing operations (Najumi 2002:128; Hussain 2005:252).

Many US-trained Pakistani military officers served as instructors or trainers at the operational level in the Afghan jihad (1978-88), supplementing also the ISI's instructors in training members of the Islamist groups. (Like those in Kashmir), in the fundamentals of guerilla warfare (Hussain 2005:123, 184). In the case of Afghanistan, around 80,000 mujahiddeen were reported to have been trained in Pakistan mainly by Pakistani officers between the period 1982-1987. (Dorransoro 2005:209; Nawaz: 2008:375). The ISI also selected regular Pakistani army officers, mainly Pashtuns fluent in the local languages, detached them from regular duty to conduct operations inside Afghanistan (Hussain 2005:198; Nawaz 2008:375). Those officers were infiltrated into Afghanistan to guide the mujahiddeen and help them use unfamiliar weapon systems effectively. Such soldiers were under strict instructions not to reveal their identity, and if captured, Pakistan was to deny that they were from the Pakistan army (Nawaz 2008:375; Yousaf and Adkin 1992:114). According to Brigadier Yousaf, "we at ISI were sending Pakistanis military personnel into Afghanistan from 1981 through to 1986. I know, because it was part of my job to select the individuals, and brief them as to their tasks.... I must make it clear,

however, that the men we sent into Afghanistan were not spics, they were soldiers from the Pakistan Army, serving with the Afghan Bureau of the ISI. Their mission was to accompany Mujaddeen on special operations, they acted as advisers, assisting the commander in carrying out his task. The assignment could range from flowing up an oil pipeline or mounting a rocket attack on an airfield to laying an ambush”(Yousaf and Adkin 1992:113).

Serving with the mujahiddeen led to gaining of skills related to guerilla warfare by the Pakistani soldiers for “besides giving assistance in the form of military hardware and instructors, hundreds of Pakistani regular servicemen gained extensive experience in providing tactical advice, and in waging low-intensity warfare by participating in guerilla hit-and run operations with the Afghan opposition. In this respect, officers and men of the SSG took the lead”(Hussain 2005:116). Actual involvement thus complemented the training imparted in camps to the mujahiddeen by the FC, ISI and the SSG (Hussain 2005:183). By early 1980, the ISI had become the most important branch of the Pakistani military which held the overall responsibility for operations involving use of arms, alongwith the coordination and implementation of the anti-soviet guerilla camps which included the administering of the Jihad infrastructure and implementation of the war strategy on the ground (Hussain 2005:116-117). The ISI bolstered its efforts by including SSG personnel to help guide the operations in Afghanistan (Hussain 2005:252).

The focus, however, remained on the conduct of guerilla warfare. “How we might enhance their effectiveness as guerillas”(Yousaf and Adkin 1992:43) remained the pivotal task for the ISI vis-à-vis the mujahiddeen. Brigadier Yousaf, who throughout his time in the ISI “was concerned with formulating and implementing a military strategy to defeat the Soviets”(Yousaf and Adkin 1992:2) wrote of his role as “I was now cast in the role of overall guerilla leader (Yousaf and Adkin 1992:64; Nojumi 2002:128), and of his task as “I had to fight a guerilla war of a thousand cuts”(ibid:77). According to him, the scope and scale of what the army sought to achieve was determined by the “question of deciding on the guerilla strategy for the war, attaining the means, the money and arms and training countless thousands of mujahiddeen in the tactics and techniques of a guerilla battlefield”(ibid:127).

Pakistan’s military involvement however, was not limited to the mujahiddeen alone. The Taliban were also in receipt of Pakistani assistance in various ways. Though Pakistan denied officially any role in the support of the Taliban, its Senior army officers

and fureavertats privately acknowledged it (Hussain 2005:185). The military intelligence of Pakistan became instrumental providing advice and logistical backing for the formation of the Taliban's organizational infrastructure, including their military apparatus, from the summer of 1994 (Hussain 2005:185). Pakistani military personnel from the ISI and the FC served with the Taliban from the onset (Hussain 2005:185; Maley(ed.)1998:43-71) with the FC operating across the Durand Line (Julian Borger, the Hindu, 17 August 2007).

Combat operations were meticulously planned by Pakistani advisors for the Taliban (Hussain 2005:222). Combat support to the Taliban included provision of artillery support, as at Spin Boldak (Cloughley) 2000:294-397; Hussain 2005:191; Maley(ed.):1998:45-46). Substantial assistance came from the XI Corps at Peshwar, which also constituted as the primary support and logistical base for the Taliban (Hussain 2005:203). Army supply was sourced from army depots (Cloughley 2000:395). The Army's intelligence apparatus in connivance with the military operations Directorate of the General Staff-coopted numerous army officers in providing crucial logistical support, giving "military effectives to the tribal Pashtuns, who till then had fought like a rabble' without an effective and disciplined leadership"(Hussain 2005:204). The post of DGMO at the army, General Headquarters at Rawalpindi, was then held by Musharraf (Hussain 2005:229). The Pashtun grid in the army high command eventually played a major role in determining the high levels of support to the Taliban (Maley (ed.)1998:86).

Besides the provision of most of the technical services by the army officers to the Taliban, (incorporating logistics, medical support, ordinance, combat planning and intelligence), the Pakistan army also provided its own manpower to assist the Taliban, as "Pakistani servicemen dressed in Afghan clothing remained indistinguishable from the Taliban during the conduct of tactical and staff Operations"(Hussain 2005:204). Pashtun officers were involved in covert operations on the ground and in longer term intelligence gathering and strategic planning (Maley(ed.). 1998:86). Often disguised as Taliban members, regular Pakistani troops fought against the opposition (Gunaratna 2002:43).

The Taliban remained highly dependent upon the ISI for its military strategy (Darronsoro 2005:327). The organisation was also tasked with providing manpower, drawn from madrassas in Pakistan to augment the ranks of the Taliban. For instance, in their engagement with Ismail Khan, the Taliban called for greater numbers from Pakistan,

and “Pakistan’s ISI discreetly shepherded this flow, making sure all the new recruits were properly armed and somewhat trained”(Tanner 2002:282).

Regarding a training, both the military and the ISI were involved. Primarily, it was a responsibility given to the FC and other paramilitary organizations like the Sibi Scouts (Nejumi 2002:132). Several sites in Afghanistan, including the Head, Quarters of the former Afghan army’s 7th Infantry Division near Kabul reportedly served as office-cum-training centers for Pakistani military instructors attached to the Taliban (Hussain 2005:217). Besides training, the ISI also provided weapons and funding (Shultz and Dew 2006:181), and replenished material losses (Gunaratna 2002:42-43). Weapon dumps inside Afghanistan were also made available to the Taliban (Nawaz 2008:479).

Altogether “without strategic advice, logistics and manpower Afghan territory under its control”(Gunaratna 2002:43).

Pakistan’s role was thus “fundamental rather than incidental to the rise of the movement as a military power”(Maley (ed.)1998:71).

