

Military operations in FATA and PATA: implications for Pakistan

Zahid Ali Khan*

Introduction

Since 2001, the Pakistan Army has been involved in ensuring internal security and stability through tackling insurgency and militancy in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) of the country. FATA comprises seven agencies, i.e. Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan. PATA of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa includes the districts of Swat, upper and lower Dir, Buner and Shangla. Insurgency is one of the formidable challenges to the security, socio-political stability, and economic prosperity of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Army has resolved to bring changes in its orientation, motivation, thinking and strategy for the last ten years in order to face this challenge. In this regard, the Army has launched five major and some minor operations against the insurgents and terrorists. The terrorist activities of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Tehrik Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), the fundamental religious organizations and other foreign-related elements are matters of grave concern to Pakistan. These groups pose severe security challenges for Pakistan.

The Pakistan Army has used heavy ground and air weapons during the operations. That has also resulted in enormous collateral damage. The killing of innocent people, including women and children, the destruction of educational institutions as a result of these operations, together with the casualties inflicted by suicide attacks have wide ramifications on internal security. The domestic socio-political situation and the economic conditions FATA and PATA have been rendered fragile as a consequence of all this. The ultimate goal of such operations is to force the terrorists and insurgents out of their strongholds and to destroy their power and military infrastructure in order to stop them from launching future attacks and terrorist activities and to restore the writ of the government.

* The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

This paper would discuss the military operations conducted by Pakistan Army, with the assistance of the police and the frontier constabulary in the different parts of the country, particularly in PATA and FATA to highlight the strategic and tactical directives essential for the army and other security forces to be trained and equipped in a modern warfare manner, and to operate in an extremely tense, challenging and hostile environment. It would also seek to understand the costs of operations and their impact on the people's relationship with the state. Finally, the paper would attempt to analyze the political, economic and social implications of these operations on Pakistan.

Military operations by Pakistan Army

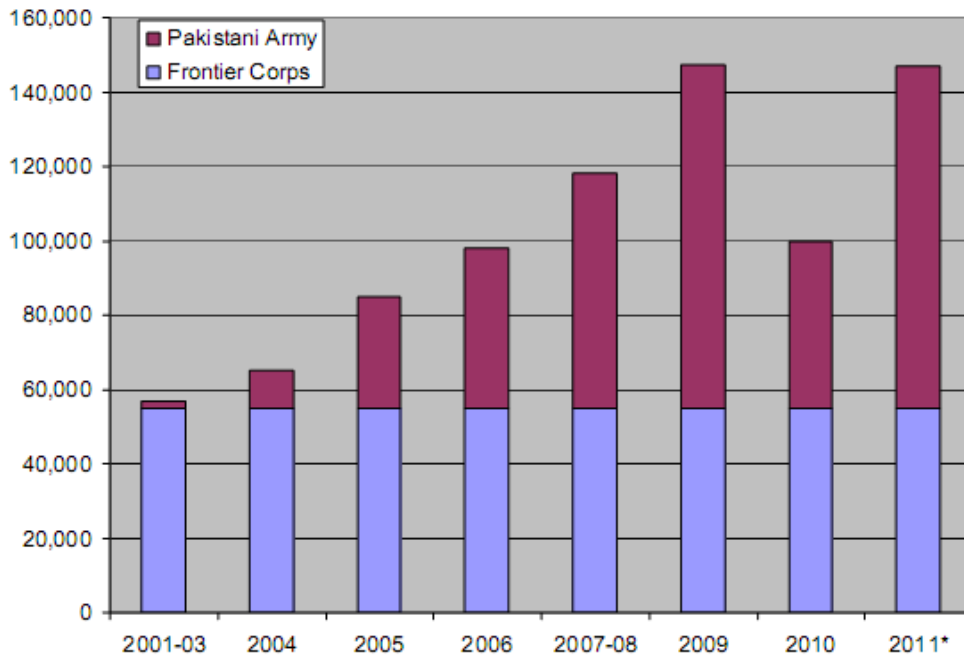
Pakistani forces have conducted at least five major military operations, along with numerous smaller operations, since 2001:

- Operation Enduring Freedom (2001–2002),
- Operation Al Mizan (2002–2006),
- Operation Zalzala (2008),
- Operations Sher Dil, Rah-e-Haq, and Rah-e-Rast (2007–2009), and
- Operation Rah-e-Nijat (2009–2010).

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom aimed at overthrowing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and to capture its and Al Qaeda's prominent and key leaders was launched.. Because of Pakistan's strategic location and its historical involvement in Afghanistan, Washington pressured Islamabad to assist the war effort.¹ Pakistan made two extremely important contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom.

In the first place, it offered U.S. logistic and military support by providing ports and bases, together with sharing intelligence and immigration information, and capturing key Al Qaeda leaders.² Secondly, Pakistan deployed units from the regular Army, Special Services Group, the Frontier Corps and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate along its border with Afghanistan to conduct operations on infiltration routes between the two countries.

**Figure1: Pakistani forces deployed To the Pak-Afghan border
2001-2011**

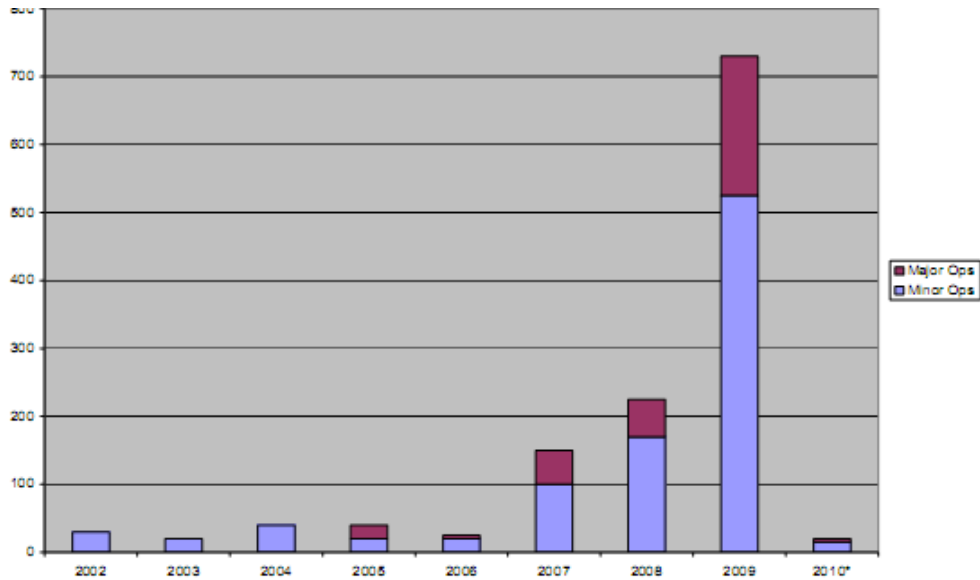


In December 2001, Pakistan employed a mixture of forces in Khyber and Kurram tribal agencies to support U.S. operations in Tora Bora.³ Pakistan played a major role in capturing many prominent Al Qaeda leaders and foreigners, including Abu Zubaydah, Ramzi bin al-Shibh and Sharib Ahmad.⁴

U.S. officials highly praised Pakistani contribution to this operation. Even so, Pakistan's role was rather limited: Washington did not ask Islamabad to target all, or even most, militant groups and leaders operating in and from Pakistan, including the important leaders of Afghan Taliban and its allies such as Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. America sought, instead, Pakistani assistance primarily in capturing or killing Al Qaeda leaders and the foreigners associated with its network, which was also in the best interest of Pakistan.⁵

Operation Enduring Freedom was partially successful in its prime objectives of overthrowing the Taliban regime and capturing some supporters of Al Qaeda. But, both the United States and Pakistan failed to capture key Al Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Among the militants who fled into Pakistan after the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan were Qaeda elements and some of its top leaders.

Figure 2: Operations conducted by Pakistani Army 2001-2011



TE: Roughly 89% of all operations during the period were conducted from 2007-2009. *2010 numbers are through -February.

These terrorists and their allies attacked Pakistani military and paramilitary installations and U.S. bases on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.⁶ Consequently, Washington pressured Pakistan to launch an offensive against the foreign fighters in FATA. Operation Al Mizan comprised several smaller operations, such as Operation Kalosha II, which took place in South Waziristan. Pakistan deployed between 70,000 and 80,000 forces in FATA. The army conducted a major 13-day cordon-and-search operation across a 36-km area west of Wana that had come under the command of several Pakistani militants, including Nek Mohammad Wazir, Noor-ul-Islam, Haji Mohammad Sharif, Maulvi Abbas and Maulvi Abdul Aziz, who were suspected of harbouring foreign fighters.⁷

During the operation, Pakistan deployed the Frontier Corps and XI Corps, based out of Peshawar, under the command of Lieutenant-General Muhammad Safdar Hussain. President Musharraf also came to have a personal vendetta to conduct. In December 2003, Al Qaeda’s deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, issued a fatwa calling for Musharraf’s death, and South Waziristan-based militants tried to assassinate him on several occasions.⁸ On 26 March, General Safdar Hussain declared victory: “We have accomplished the mission that was given to us,” he announced.⁹

After the death of Nek Mohammed, Baitullah Mehsud emerged as the leader of the militants in South Waziristan. In February 2005, the government of Pakistan signed a peace deal with Baitullah Mehsud at Sararogha. According to the deal, the army agreed to remove troops from Mehsud's territory, compensate the militants for human and material losses, and deploy Frontier Corps personnel to the five forts there. The agreement virtually handed over control of the area to Mehsud.¹⁰ The peace was short-lived: in early 2006, Mehsud began orchestrating a suicide-bombing campaign in Pakistan, which persisted until his death in August 2009.¹¹

In autumn 2007, Baitullah Mehsud announced that the various local Taliban groups had united under his leadership and adopted the name Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In January 2008, Baitullah Mehsud's men captured Sararogha Fort in South Waziristan and killed many members of the Pakistani security forces.¹²

In the same month, the Pakistani army launched three major operations: Tri-Star against the Pakistan Taliban in FATA, of which Operation Zalzala ('Earthquake') in South Waziristan was the principal component. Zalzala aimed at clearing several areas held by forces loyal to Mehsud. The objective was not to target the groups who were engaged in wars in Afghanistan or Kashmir, but to capture or kill key elements in Mehsud's network who threatened the writ of the government. For the next several months, the army cleared most of the areas of Spinkai, a Mehsud stronghold, and occupied some villages and small towns.¹³

Operation Zalzala had cleared most parts of South Waziristan, and disrupted some planned suicide attacks. The army seized computers, weapons, improvised explosive devices and propaganda material. According to a report, security forces destroyed over 4,000 houses in South Waziristan in January alone. In addition, Operation Zalzala displaced roughly 200,000 locals, causing significant animosity.¹⁴

After limited success in the southern parts of FATA, Pakistani security forces began operations against militants elsewhere in the country. There was some cooperation among networks operating in northern parts of FATA and PATA; that is, those led by Faqir Mohammad, Mullah Fazlullah and Sufi Mohammad. Baitullah Mehsud provided some fighters and assistance to the insurgents in Bajaur and Swat as part of his strategy to better coordinate the insurgency through the Pakistan Taliban. A series of attacks on government agencies, including ISI, Frontier Corps and army personnel, motivated the army to retaliate.¹⁵

By early 2008, insurgent forces in Bajaur Agency led by Qari Zia Rahman, among others, had pushed government-armed local tribesmen (referred to as lashkars or levies) out of their checkpoints at Loe Sam. By June, more than half of the 72 checkpoints in Bajaur had been destroyed, and the civilian government had been disrupted through a major bank robbery and suicide bombings against officials. On 9 September 2008, soon after a security convoy was ambushed by local militants in Loe Sam, army and Frontier Corps units launched Operation Sher Dil (Lion Heart).¹⁶

The prime objective of Sher Dil operation was to target all the militant groups that threatened the security of Pakistan. By early December, over 1,000 militants and 63 security personnel had been killed. Pakistani forces found tunnel complexes used for hiding people and storing material such as weapons, ammunition, radio frequency lists, guerrilla-warfare manuals, propaganda and bomb-making instructions.¹⁷ After completing Operation Sher Dil, army and Frontier Corps forces moved to Mohmand Agency to conduct additional operations.

This operation was conducted by army against the Tehrik-e-Nifaze-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) militant group. The first phase of Operation Rah-e-Haq was started in November 2007 with the collaboration of local police in order to clear Swat Valley, but the militants gradually infiltrated into key cities. The second phase of operation began in July 2008 and continued throughout the year.¹⁸ The military operation was carried out in the Swat valley at the request of the provincial government and lasted for about three months, resulting in the death of 36 security personals, nine civilians and 615 activists.¹⁹

In January 2009, the army launched the third phase of Operation Rah-e-Haq, imposing 'shoot-on-sight' curfews in major cities in Swat. TNSM forces responded by destroying schools and started attacking security forces. The fighting ended in February as the result of an agreement between the government and the TNSM, popularly known as the Malakand Accord. By late April 2009, however, the militants had occupied shops and government buildings in Mingora, the capital city of Swat, and started moving forward into the neighbouring districts of Shangla and Buner. They also attacked police stations, frontier constabulary personnel, NGO offices, schools and set up their own checkpoints along the roads.²⁰

In May, 2009, the army launched Operation Rah-e-Rast in order to clear areas of Swat and capture or kill key leaders of Pakistani Taliban and other militant groups. A major offensive took place in the Mingora in the

last week of May, with the occupation of several nearby towns. On 30 May, the military had regained control of entire Mingora (though small pockets of resistance remained on the city's outskirts) and had destroyed concrete bunkers and confiscated arms, ammunition and explosives hidden in caves.²¹

The failure of Operation Zalzala in South Waziristan became increasingly apparent as Baitullah Mehsud and his TTP network escalated violence across the country in 2008 and 2009 from their base in South Waziristan. There were 2,148 terrorist, insurgent, and sectarian attacks in 2008 in Pakistan.²² Pakistan had several objectives during Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path of Salvation). The most significant was to secure key lines of communication (LOCs) and to weaken the TTP and its infrastructure in South Waziristan, including its stronghold within the Mehsud tribe, one of the largest Pashtun tribes in South Waziristan.

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In Operation Rah-e-Nijat, the Pakistan Army and Air Force conducted initial targeting operations in South Waziristan during summer 2009, with some assistance from the U.S. military and CIA. In the midst of escalating violence, the Pakistani military initiated ground operations in South Waziristan on October 17, 2009, with support from Pakistani helicopter gunships and fixed-wing aircraft.²³

The 11th Corps was in overall command, with three divisions: the 7th, based in Miramshah; the 9th, in Wana; and the 14th, forward deployed to Jandola. In addition, two Special Services Group battalions and two infantry brigades were deployed from the eastern border with India, as well as Frontier Corps and other units. Pakistan utilized armour units with main battle tanks, as well as infantry units that conducted foot patrols and were equipped with heavy artillery and mortars.

The main objective of these operations was to destroy the TTP strongholds at Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha. As one Pakistani official remarked: "The command and control structure of the Taliban exists in Sararogha, Makin and Laddah. It's going to be a tough fight for these places."²⁴ Pakistani ground units conducted search-and-clearance operations along several key places and roads in South Waziristan, such as

the Central Waziristan road and the road running through Ahmadwam and Ragha. By December 2009, Pakistani ground forces controlled most of Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha.²⁵ They had succeeded in disrupting TTP command and control system in the key Mehsud areas of South Waziristan.

The forces also secured the control of other important places of TTP, key Lines of Communication in South Waziristan, including Sararogha, Makin, and Ladda. In addition, the Pakistan Army deployed seven combat brigades from the Indian border, to make up a total of 15 brigades to support operations in or near South Waziristan. The shift of some resources from the Indian border was notable, indicating that the Pakistan Army viewed the operation as strategically significant. By January 2010, Pakistani forces had almost cleared several villages in South Waziristan and seized heavy weaponry from the insurgents.²⁶

Implications for Pakistan

The military operations in FATA and Swat and the security of the western borders have over-stretched the Pakistan Army and led at times to chaotic situations in various parts of the country. The operations in the tribal areas have undermined the foundations of the social, political and economic structure of Pakistan in general, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular.

Social implications

The military operations by the Pakistan Army have resulted in strong resentment among many people against the army and the government. According to a survey conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS), about 18 per cent of Pakistani Madrassas have affiliations with Jihadi and sectarian organizations; about 80 per cent of the people are against military operations in tribal areas; and the 20 per cent of them consider the current insurgency a direct reaction to Pakistan's role in the War on Terror.²⁷ The military operations in FATA and PATA are being viewed by people of tribal areas as a threat to their ethnicity and identity. Moreover, the military intervention into tribal areas is perceived by tribal leaders as a threat to their authority and traditional tribal values.²⁸ The rise of Molvi Fazlullah in Swat is one example of such a perception.

In 2009, Pakistan faced a severe crisis of internally displacement persons (IDPs) when nearly three million people from PATA and FATA left their homes in the wake of increased hostilities between the military

and the insurgents. The crisis intensified in the summer of 2009 after the collapse of a peace deal between the government and militants in Swat. As a result, a mass movement of the people started from Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies in FATA.

By the end of April 2009, more than 550,000 people had registered as IDPs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The tense fighting in Bajaur Agency in October 2009 triggered another wave of displacement and forced another 50,000 people to leave their homes. At the end of December 2009, more than 250,000 civilians from Bajaur and 180,000 from Mohmand were registered as IDPs in Lower Dir and Nowshera.

By the end of 2009, the total number of IDPs from the South Waziristan area had reached around 428,000. The return of IDPs to their homes was another gigantic challenge. The fear of the militants and the poor economic conditions made the IDPs reluctant to return to their homes.

A full-fledged operation was launched against militants in Swat on May 6, 2009, which forced nearly 2.5 million people to migrate to camps in different cities of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Women and children suffered terribly.²⁹

Another adverse impact of the operations was the depriving of children, both boys and girls, from the right to education. Educational institutions in general and girls' schools in particular were attacked, bombed and destroyed by insurgents. Taliban were responsible for the destruction of 120 girls and 80 other schools in Swat Valley alone.³⁰ The terrorist and counter-terrorist attacks in the tribal areas have badly hampered the educational system in a part of the country which was already suffering from low literacy rate. Female education has suffered most as girls are not allowed by the militants to attend schools and colleges.³¹

October 2009 saw the launching of a second extensive military operation against militants in South Waziristan, resulting in the displacement of nearly 293,000 people. By the end of 2009, the total number of IDPs from the South Waziristan area had reached around 428,000. The return of IDPs to their homes was another gigantic challenge. The fear of the militants and the poor economic conditions made the IDPs reluctant to return to their homes.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) appealed for \$680 million in funds in order to overcome the crisis. In June 2009, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that 69,000 pregnant women were also among the population displaced as a result of the massive offensive against the militants in Swat and other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and were living in camps in extremely bad conditions.³² Despite the best efforts on the part of Pakistan to crush insurgency and militancy in FATA and PATA, Pakistan has been continuously blamed by Afghanistan for cross-border infiltration.³³

Psychological impact

The military operations have deeply disturbed the socio-psychological fabric of society. Consequently, the overall atmosphere remains tense. The violence has a direct psychological impact on the people of Pakistan in general and the people living in the conflict zones of PATA and FATA in particular. Their constant exposure to violence has engendered many psychological problems, in some cases in the form of serious mental illness. The horrific sounds of cannon shelling on militants hideouts by the army remains stark in the minds of people, especially women and children, who are suffering from continuing psychological problems and trauma.

Depression, anxiety, nightmares and suicidal tendencies have been cited as some of the common symptoms, often following the loss of a home or a family member.³⁴ While feelings of insecurity, helplessness, fear and stress are common among displaced children and adults alike, the impact has been all the more on the mental health of children. A large number of children in Swat witnessed acts of violence by the militants, including the bombing of their schools and the murder of their family members and teachers. Many had developed depression and other psychological conditions and needed counselling.³⁵

According to the mental health programme of the Federal Ministry of Health, a majority of the children displaced in the wake of the military operations in FATA and PATA was aged between three months to 11 years and they complained of problems including depression, phobias, acute stress disorder, post-traumatic stress syndrome and insomnia.³⁶ Dr. Khalid Mufti, former President Pakistan Psychiatrist Society, in his report said that more than 54 per cent of people living in the conflict zone had shown symptoms of acute stress, post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, fear, anxiety, loss of appetite and sleep disturbance. Almost 60

per cent of the affectees are women and they are suffering from fear, panic and post- traumatic stress. The men, however, mostly suffer from depression. The total number of such psychological patients may actually be much more than 54 per cent, as many people in far-flung areas do not have access to medical centres.³⁷

Political implications

The administrative structure in FATA has been paralyzed, as has the institutional structure. A 'Political Agent' (civil servant) administers an agency of FATA, and is answerable to the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He establishes links with influential tribal elders known as Maliks. The Taliban have now made this administrative system ineffective and weak by killing several Maliks and continuously threatening the agency administrators.³⁸

The military operations in FATA and PATA have, nonetheless, raised many questions regarding the significance of ensuring the traditional judicial system for the civilian population. The tribal people have continuously demanded the security of their lives and properties. The government has, however, failed to secure the lives and properties of the people, and to provide them proper justice. At the same time, many criminal groups have emerged in these areas who indulge in crimes like theft, looting, robbing, plundering, kidnapping and killing of innocent people.

The people of FATA have been deprived of their political and social rights. The sense of political deprivation and lack of participation in decision making has created depression among the tribal people which, in turn, affects the government-to-people relationship. This prevailing situation in FATA goes in favour of Taliban who further exploit inherent structural weaknesses in the tribal political and administrative system in order to create divisions in the tribal society where some people have started perceiving them as their saviours.

This poses a direct challenge to the writ of the government. According to a research conducted by *BBC Urdu Service* and published in April 2009, the civilian government no longer exercised authority over 24 per cent areas of FATA and some volatile, poorly governed districts of the province, where the Taliban exercised direct or indirect control. Another 38 per cent of FATA and PATA were under government control. In many of the hard-hit districts of FATA and PATA, girls' schools, music shops,

police stations, military convoys and government buildings became the targets of Taliban attacks.³⁹

Poverty, injustice, a deteriorating law and order situation and widespread unemployment across the country, particularly, in FATA and PATA, have greatly contributed to the rise of militancy in Pakistan. In addition, a deteriorating law and order situation, especially in FATA and PATA, has created grave security concerns for the government. The independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has revealed shocking details about the increasing crime graph in the country. One of the recent HRCP reports, compiled from newspaper accounts, states that incidents such as robberies, ethnic riots and honour killings shot-up alarmingly by 21.34 per cent in the first six months of 2009 as compared to the same period the previous year. Crimes against women and children rose steeply with an 83 and 162 per cent increase, respectively, in the number of women and children killed in various incidents.⁴⁰

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Economic implications

Pakistan has suffered a total loss of \$ 45 billion due to military operations from September 2001 to 2009. That has had an adverse impact on the overall economy in the form of loss of direct foreign investment, flight of capital, closure of industries in conflict zones, loss in the tourism sector, in industry decline in exports, rise in inflation, and the loss in the agricultural field.

In the table below, almost all the indicators from fiscal year 2001-02 until June 2006-07 are satisfactory and encouraging except for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09. It is notable that despite the fact that foreign reserves increased from \$10.83 billion in 2007-08 to \$14.75 billion in October 2009, inflation has increased 21 per cent in 2008- 09 from 10.3 per cent in 2007-08. The sharp increase in foreign reserves is largely due to the IMF-approved loan of \$11.3 billion (November 2008), with a total of foreign loan exceeding \$ 50 billion.

Table-1: Economic indicators

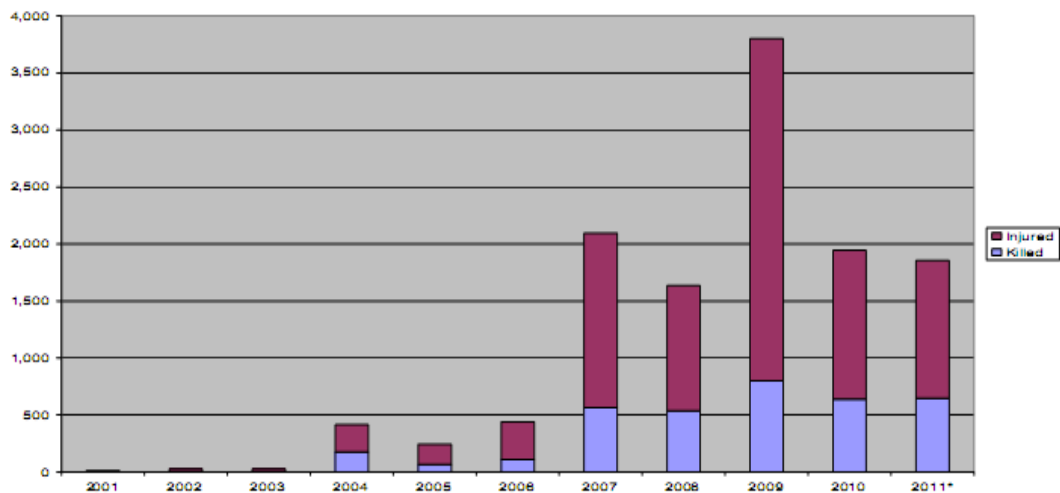
Indicators	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Export Billion \$	9.13	11.16	12.31	14.39	16.47	17.01	19.22	6.1
Import Billion \$	10.34	12.22	15.59	20.6	28.58	30.54	39.96	10.6
Trade Balance Billion\$	1.2	1.06	3.28	6.21	12.11	13.53	20.74	4.5
FDI Million \$	484.7	798	949.4	1524	3521	5125	5152.80	621.8
Foreign Investment Million \$	475	820	922	16677	3872	8417	5193	910.1
Worker Remittance Billion \$	2.39	4.24	3.872	4.17	4.6	5.49	6.5	3.09
Forex Reserves Billion\$	6.43	10.72	12.33	12.61	13.14	15.18	10.83	14.27
Exchange Rate	61	57.7	57.92	59.66	60.16	60.5	71	83.5
GDP	3.60%	5.10%	6.40%	8.40%	6.60%	7.00%	5.8%	5.80%
Inflation	3.40%	3.30%	3.90%	9.30%	8%	7.90%	10.3%	12.5%

Source: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) www. Brecorder

Security implications

Pakistan has suffered a tragic loss of life due to violence and turbulence across the country. The years 2001-2011 have witnessed growing number of casualties. The military operations have had a major impact on Pakistan's security, with terrorism inside Pakistan increasing twofold. According to a Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) security report, in the year 2006, 657 terrorist attacks, including 41 of a sectarian nature, occurred, leaving 907 people dead and 1,543 others injured.⁴¹ The report states that Pakistan faced 60 suicide attacks (mostly targeted at security forces) during 2007, which killed at least 770 and wounded another 1,574 persons. The report shows a visible increase in suicide attacks after the Lal Masjid operation in 2007.⁴²

Figure 3: Pakistan military casualties 2001-2011



Source: The Pak Institute for Peace Studies.

The year 2008 saw 2,148 terrorist attacks, which caused 2,267 fatalities and injuries to another 4,558.⁴³ The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in its annual report indicated that there were at least 67 suicide attacks across Pakistan that killed 973 people and injured 2,318.⁴⁴

According to a source of the investigation agencies, the total number of suicide blasts in Pakistan since 2002 rose to 140 (till December 21, 2008), while 56 suicide blasts occurred in 2007.⁴⁵ According to the "Pakistan Security Report 2009" published by PIPS in the year 2009, 2,586 terrorist, insurgent and sectarian incidents were reported that killed 3,021 people and injured 7,334.⁴⁶

Table-2: Fatalities in direct attacks on Pakistan armed forces: 2001-2011

Years	No. of Incidents	Killed	Injured
2001	1	2	25
2002	0	0	0
2003	0	0	0
2004	14	33	38
2005	9	3	17
2006	42	128	190

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2007	77	304	427
2008	59	214	252
2009	80	327	952
2010	98	149	365
2011*	43	162	316
Total	423	1322	2582

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal, May 15, 2011.

Terrorist attacks staged in Pakistan have killed over 35,000 people, 5,000 of which are law enforcement personnel. Between 2001 and May 15, 2011, 423 incidents took place in which the armed forces were directly targeted, accounting for at least 1,322 security forces personnel killed, and another 2,582 injured. This data includes the fatalities that occurred as a result of direct attacks either on a military camp, a police check post or a security forces convoy. Overall fatalities among the security forces, including a range of other terrorist incidents in which the security forces were not the primary target, stood at 3,631 over the same period.

Conclusion

Prior to 2001, Pakistan had a limited experience in counterinsurgency operations. Its performance during Operation Al Mizan, especially in South Waziristan, demonstrated serious deficiencies in conducting cordon-and-search operations and holding territory. By Operations Sher Dil, Rah-e-Rast, and Rah-e-Nijat, Pakistan's performance had somewhat improved. The Frontier Corps and the Army were in a better position to clear territory, integrate operations with local tribes, and add a development component. Pakistan's federal and provincial bureaucracies have, however, failed to provide adequate assistance to internally displaced persons. Moreover, the failure on the part of the government to provide immediate relief assistance to the affected people in the war zones of FATA and PATA has, in turn, created antipathy between the people and the government. The sense of political deprivation and lack of participation in decision making has further widened the gulf between the government and the people. This prevailing situation in FATA goes in favour of the militants who exploit inherent structural weaknesses in the tribal political and administrative system in order to create divisions in the tribal society where some have started perceiving Taliban as their saviours.

The operations in PATA and FATA have undermined the very foundations of the social, political and economic structure of the country. The military operations are being viewed by the people of the tribal areas as a threat to their traditional tribal values and their identity. Poverty, injustice, a deteriorating law and order situation, and widespread unemployment across the country, particularly in FATA and PATA, have contributed a great deal to the rise of militancy and insurgency in Pakistan. The urgent evacuations of several villages due to military operations in FATA and PATA compelled many farmers to abandon their livestock. Besides, the destruction of educational institutions by terrorists and insurgents in FATA and PATA has deprived thousands of boys and girls of access of education.

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The military operations have deeply disturbed the socio-psychological fabric of society. Consequently, the overall atmosphere remains tense. The violence has a direct psychological impact on the people of Pakistan in general and the people living in the conflict zones of PATA and FATA in particular. Depression, anxiety, nightmares, and suicidal tendencies have been some of the common indicators.

Pakistan has continued to pay a heavy price in both economic and security terms. The ongoing military operations have also had an adverse impact on the economic condition of the country. That includes the loss of livelihood, decrease in foreign investment, the destruction of infrastructure, capital flight, decline in growth rates, low revenue and the deterioration of overall economic system. In addition to all that, the operations have cost thousands of human lives of both civilians and security forces. Spreading terror, attacking military convoys, destroying public properties, especially schools, and kidnapping and looting have been regular features

Pakistan has suffered a tragic loss of life amid raging violence and turbulence across the country. Since 2001, each year has witnessed a growing number of casualties due to terrorist violence. The military operations have had a major impact on Pakistan's security. Between 2001 and May 15, 2011, 423 incidents occurred in which the armed forces were

directly targeted, accounting for at least 1,322 security personnel killed, and another 2,582 injured.

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