Pakistan's Counterinsurgency:
Military and Civilian Approach

Shahid Ahmad Afridi[*]

Abstract

Post 9/11 insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regions threatened the national security of Pakistan. This insurgency tested the ideological will of Pakistan and took a heavy toll on human life that includes civilian population and law enforcement personnel alike. In order to meet the challenges, Pakistan has launched different counterinsurgency operations which involved the combined efforts of military and civilian government. Pakistan Military conducted kinetic operations against the militants whereas the political government and civilians were expected to take on the non-kinetic aspects (Countering Violent Extremism) of counterinsurgency, which are de-radicalisation, legal aspects, governance and economic development initiatives. The Pakistan Military's operational concepts of 'Clear, Hold, Build and Transfer' have been practiced, however, further progress can be achieved through civilian and military cooperation. This paper examines how Pakistan Army and civilian government have played their roles in handling the insurgency, followed by identifying the loopholes in the strategic orientation of both the military and civilian leadership. It further analyses whether the military has shifted its conventional role of fighting to the counterinsurgency mode or not.

Keywords: Insurgency, Terrorism, Counterinsurgency, Military Approach, Civilian Approach, Military Operations, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

Introduction

The spate of terrorism and insurgency in Pakistan has brought colossal loss. More than 60,558 civilians and soldiers lost their lives to

---
[*]*The author is serving in the Pakistan Army as a Major and pursuing his Ph.D in International Relations from Peshawar University, Peshawar.*

insurgency related violence in Pakistan during 2003-2016 period[1].The economic losses incurred are around US$ 102.5 billion along with severe damage to its religious and cultural values.[2] Post 9/11, Pakistan has been involved in Counterinsurgency (CI) campaign in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The insurgency was at moderate pace until 2007 when Lal Masjid[3] military operation gave new impetus to the insurgency and drew the army and other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) into a protracted conflict with the insurgents. Moreover, the formation of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in December 2007 further intensified the insurgency, thereby attracting many militant groups under the umbrella of TTP[4]. The horrendous wave of terrorism shook the very foundation of Pakistan, and this internal security threat appeared existential and insurmountable.

However, before analysing the threat matrix and contributing variables which led Pakistan to embark on the formidable voyage of CI in FATA and PATA, it is imperative to know as how insurgency and CI are defined and understood. Insurgency is defined as an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.[5] The US Government's CI Guide and Joint Publications of All Services understand insurgency as "the organised use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge the political control of a region."[6] On the other hand, CI is a blend of

---

[1] South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP), "Pakistan Data Sheets: Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2016, "http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm

[2] ZailaHussain, "Cost of War on Terror for Pakistan Economy," Pakistan Economic Survey 2013-14, Ministry of Finance Pakistan, http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_11/Special%20Section_1.pdf

[3] Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) siege and further military operations in Islamabad to establish the writ of government in 2007.

[4] RahimullahYusufzai, "A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two-FATA excluding North and South Waziristan," Terrorism Monitor 7, no. 4 (March 3, 2009).

[5] Joint Publications 1-02, "Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," Washington: April, 2001: 130,268.

[6] "United States Government Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative," US Government Counterinsurgency Guide 2009:2, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/119629.pdf. Also see Joint

comprehensive military, political, paramilitary, psychological, civic and economic efforts to achieve success against any insurgency.[7] CI is about 'Winning Heart and Minds' of the population, rather than 'Shock and Awe'[8] of the destructive military force. CI marks a significant shift from eliminating the enemies towards seeking the support of population for political purpose and deeming the population as a meaningful variable, which would ultimately figure out the mission success or failure. It is more humane form of warfare.

The central research question in this paper is how Pakistan has achieved the significant gains in CI, which aspects of CI (civilian and military) have worked well and which aspects fall short of expectations. While determining the course of Pakistan's CI campaign, the question arises about the inhibiting factors of Pakistan's unified CI approach. Before 2009, Pakistan's leadership did not fully comprehend the growing nature of the threat. Resultantly, it was unable to garner appropriate national response and build an effective counter-insurgency narrative. Moreover, Pakistan Military was obliged by the gravity of challenge to shift its focus from conventional military operations to CI operations. In the ensuing scenario, Pakistan Army was tasked to undertake the kinetic operations but the non-kinetic corresponding measures of de-radicalisation, legal aspects of CI, governance, political-administrative reforms and rehabilitation were the responsibility of the respective political governments. Therefore, an endeavour is made to identify the course of military and civilian CI efforts while focusing on the factors, which served as implements.

Threat Perception

The insurgency paradigm in Pakistan's FATA and PATA regions conforms to the theoretical paradigm of anarchism and reactionary

---

Publications, 2013, "Counterinsurgency," Chairman Joint Chief of staff Committee, 3-24, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_24.pdf.

[7] Department of Army, "Counterinsurgency. Field Manual (FM) 3-24/ Marine Corps War fighting Publication (MCWP)," 3-33.5, 2006, http://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24fd.pdf.

[8] Colleen Bell, "Civilianizing Warfare: Ways of War and Peace in Modern Counterinsurgency," *Journal of International Relations and Development,* vol.14, no. 3 (2011):310.

tradition approach, though TTP and other insurgent groups claim that their movement is based on theological foundation. On the contrary, they practically appear to believe in annihilation of political, legal and security institutions and display extremely intolerant behaviour towards others. In Pakistan, insurgent groups like TTP are perceived as anarchists [9] in nature with few exceptions like Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shareet-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) who bears more similarity to reactionary traditional insurgents. Neil argues that reactionary insurgents aspire to implement old Islamic political and social arrangements in accordance with their own beliefs and interpretations. They, too, display extreme intolerance to other schools of thought[10].

In the context of this growing threat, Pakistan was being considered as the epicentre of global terrorism for the 'foreseeable future.'[11] By and large, the number of insurgent groups in Pakistan soared to 60 militant outfits. [12] Most of these insurgents not only strove to overthrow the Pakistan government but they also aspire to be a part of global Jihad.[13] Director General (DG), Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) General Asim Bajwa argues that 'Insurgency on the western front is a reality and is a part of a threat matrix faced by our country.'[14] In this fundamental paradigm shift, Pakistan Army considered the internal conflict on the western front as a war of survival.[15]

---

[9] Raees, R B, "11 Corps Symposium," off air recording. Inter Services Public Relations. 16 April, 2012, (Lecture at Headquarter 11 Corps) Peshawar.

[10] Bard O' Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, (Brassey's, California, 1990).

[11] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla*, (London, Hurst &Co Publishers (Ltd), 2009).

[12] Pakistan Armed Forces, "List of 60 Terrorist Organizations declared terrorists by Government of Pakistan," April 26, 2016, Pakistan Defence News blog, http://pakarmedforces.com/2014/02/list-of-60-terrorist-organizations-declared-terrorists-by-government-of-pakistan.html

[13] Ahmed Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of Pakistan, Afghanistan and West* (New York, Penguin Group (USA), 2012):139,155.

[14] "New doctrine: Army identifies 'homegrown militancy' as biggest threat," *Express Tribune,* Pakistan, January 3, 2013 http://tribune.com.pk/story/488362/new-doctrine-army-identifies-homegrown-militancy-as-biggest-threat/

[15] Amir Mir, "The News, Pakistan Army must acquire a TV channel," December 16, 2013: Also see "New doctrine: Army identifies homegrown militancy as biggest threat," *Express Tribune*, January 3, 2013, http://tribune.com.pk/sto:ry/488362/new-doctrine-army-identifies-homegrown-militancy-as-biggest-threat

Besides, the sustenance of insurgency is not possible without the external monetary and ideological support. According to DG ISPR, General Bajwa, India is the main sponsor of terrorism and insurgency in Pakistan, especially in FATA region, claiming that proscribed outfits could not function on such a big scale without foreign funding[16] and assistance.

Pakistan's Civilian Counterinsurgency

CI at the core is fundamentally a war of ideas.[17] As there are no silver bullets for countering the insurgency, in 2009, Pakistan recognized the inevitability of combining the kinetic and non-kinetic measures to work out a more flexible and innovative CI approach.[18] Since then, the civilian and the political government rendered the strategic direction and orientation for the effective implementation of CI campaign. In the subsequent sub sections, the various Civilian aspects of CI have been deliberated upon.

National Internal Security Policy (NISP) and National Action Plan (NAP)

National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) established in 2009, is the central agency to coordinate and implement CI operations in Pakistan's divisive political culture. Under the patronage of NACTA, Pakistan's CI involves the accomplishment of military and civilian objectives as enshrined in the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) and National Action Plan (NAP), which qualified as Pakistan's doctrinal and strategic manuals. NISP was formulated by NACTA to map out a doctrinal and strategic framework to combat the insurgency and

---

[16] "India playing with fire by funding Taliban, says Pak Army", February 12, 2015, *Pakistan Today*, http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/02/12/national/india-playing-with-fire-by-funding-taliban-says-pak-army-2/ (accessed on 13 March 2015).

[17] Tariq Pervez, "Challenges of establishing a rehabilitation program in Pakistan," Terrorist Rehabilitation and Counter-Radicalisation: New Approaches to Counter-terrorism, ed., Rohan Gunaratna, Jolene Jeral and Lawrence Rubin, (New York: Routledge, 2011): 122

[18] "The challenges of counter radicalisation in Pakistan," United States Institute of Peace, May 9, 2012, http://www.usip.org/publications/the-challengescountering-radicalisation-in-pakistan

terrorism; it was based on the idea of integration of all national efforts and included three elements- dialogue, isolation and deterrence.[19] In the series of security reformation strategies, NACTA evolved five tiers of National Security Strategy in 2013 [20] to dismantle, contain, prevent, educate and reintegrate. However, the most important milestone in Pakistan CI overall doctrinal approach was NAP, which was laid in 2014, and re-articulated the contents of NISP.[21]

While keeping supervision on the progress of NAP, the head of NACTA, Ghani [22] argues that education reforms are missing from NAP objectives and priorities. Our education system is not robust enough to accommodate the 2.2 million students of Madrassas. Moreover, 35 thousand madrassas cannot be shut down across the country. [23] In addition, there are other areas where robust actions and comprehensive planning is required: in the broad domain of Counter Violent Extremism (CVE), FATA reforms, criminal Justice system, building national counter narrative and Madrassas reforms.

De-radicalisation Initiatives

Pakistan's first de-radicalisation programmeme was launched in September 2009, after completion of operation *Raah-e-Raast* (The Righteous Path) against Pakistani Taliban in Swat. Most of the militants caught during the operation were teenagers who were trained as suicide

---

[19] Civil-Military Relations, "National Internal Security," PILDAT Policy, 2014, http: // www. pildat.org/ Publications/publication /CMR/NationalInternalSecurtiyPolicyAnAnalysis.pdf (accessed on 2 August 2015).

[20]Zahid Gishkori, "National Security: New Policy draws on Chinese, Malaysian Models," *Express Tribune*, July 6, 2013, http: // tribune.com.pk/story/573222/national-security-new-policy-draws-on-chinese-malaysian-models/ . Also see Peer Muhammad, "Counterterrorism," *Express Tribune*, July 7 2015, http://tribune.com.pk/story/ 573573/counterterrorism-focus-on-a-workable-plan-says-mushahid/

[21]Mateen Haider, "Nawaz constitutes special committee to implement National Action Plan," *Dawn* , December 26, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1153290

[22] Interview of Ehsan Ghani in Dusra Rukh TV Talk show (PM Not Serious about NACTA) –April 9, 2016, *Dawn TV*, http ://www .daily motion .com/video / x43bxxs_dusra-rukh-pm- not-serious- about-nacta-9th-april-2016_newstab_embed

[23] Ibid.

bombers.[24] A need was felt to introduce an insurgent rehabilitation programmeme.[25] Civilians with cooperation of Army run six main de-radicalisation programmes throughout the country: namely, *Sabaoon (Morning Light), Mashaal (Candle, Lamp), Rastoon (Returning Back), Sparlay (Spring), Nawa-e-Sahar (New Morning, New Beginning) and Heila (Hope).*[26] The Swat de-radicalisation programmeme comprises *Sabaoon* for the militants (12-18 years), *Rastoon* (19-25 years) and *Mishal* centres (for the family of militants to create awareness about care and monitoring the rehabilitated individuals).[27] The programmeme is run through private-public partnership. A representative body of local civil society and non-governmental organization, Hum Pakistan Foundation is primarily responsible for managing the affairs of the largest rehabilitation centre *(Sabaoon).* Since 2009, *Sabaoon* has rehabilitated around 200 militants,[28] while the *Rastoon* has rehabilitated 1196 militants.[29] Rest of other de-radicalisation centres are operating on a relatively small scale.

A similar de-radicalisation programmeme was launched in Punjab and is designed and modelled on the pattern of Swat's *Sabaoon* center. It started by incorporating 350 militants in the first phase in an effort to de-radicalize the de-tracked and brainwashed youth. The programme is

---

[24] Jason Burke, "Fighting Terrorism: Do De-radicalisation Camps Really Work," *Guardian*, June 9, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/09/terrorism-do-deradicalisationcamps-work

[25] Hassan Abbas, "The Roots of Radicalisation in Pakistan," *South Asia Journal,* issue no. 9, summer (2013), http://southasiajournal.net/the-roots-of-radicalisation-inpakistan/

[26] Mohammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial, and Abdul Basit, "Dynamics of Taliban insurgency in FATA," Islamabad, Pakistan Institutes of Peace Studies, 2010. Also see Shehzad H Qazi 2013, "A War without Bombs: Civil Society Initiatives against Radicalisation in Pakistan," Policy Brief no. 60, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, February, www. ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_CounterDeradicalisation_2_14.pdf.

[27] Muhammad Amir Rana, "Swat De-radicalisation Model: Prospects for Rehabilitating," Conflict and Peace Studies, vol. 4, no. 2, April-June 2011, 5- 13.

[28] Shehzad H, Qazi, "A War without Bombs: Civil Society Initiatives Against Radicalisation in Pakistan," Policy Brief no. 60, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, February 2013,

[29] Rehabilitation and integration: 47 ex-militants freed after they receive vocational training," *Express Tribune*, October 13, 2013, http://tribune.com.pk/story/617202/rehabilitation-integration-47-ex-militantsfreed-after-receiving-vocational-training/

based on influencing ideological beliefs and behavioural modification pattern.[30] The Punjab rehabilitation programmeme focused on ex-militants of groups like *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT, Army of the Pure), *Jaish-e-Muhammad* (*JeM, Muhammad's* Army) and anti-Shia militant groups such as *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (*LeJ,* Army of *Jhangvi*) and *Sipah-e-Sahaba* Pakistan (SSP).[31] The programmeme was designed on a multi-pronged strategy of prevention, rehabilitation and after-care. It had three modules: psychological assessment, religious rehabilitation and vocational training.[32] Three batches of around 311 participants completed the training.[33]

Madrassa Reforms

Madrassas and mosques are the main constituencies of religio-political parties, some of these, with radicalized background and sectarian militant organisations. The general perception is that the sectarian organisations and religio-political parties manipulate by using the tool of madrassas for their own interests. Some of the madrassas, reportedly, are receiving funds from countries in the Middle East through illegal means. It is very important to curtail the money laundering and illegal flow of money. In 2008, President Pervez Musharraf introduced the Madrassa Regulation Ordinance. He based it on the 2002 Ordinance to bring madrassas under regulation and state supervision.[34] The purpose to register madrassas with the government was to introduce a curriculum, which does not preach militancy, hate speech and sectarianism.

---

[30]Asad Ullah Khan, "Radicalisation: A Dilemma of Pakistan," Issue Brief, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, August 19, 2015, 3-4.

[31]Zill-e-Huma Rafique and Mughees Ahmed, "De-Radicalisation and Rehabilitation Efforts: Analysis of Anti-terrorism Activities in Pakistan," International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, vol. 2, issues, February (2013): 115-124, https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/48/134/270/ 3

[32]Ibid.

[33] Saba Noor, "From Radicalisation to De-Radicalisation: The Case of Pakistan," Counter Terrorists Trends and Analysis (CTTA), vol. 5, issue 8, August 2013, http://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CTTA-August13.pdf

[34]"Madrassa Education: 2014 Challenges, Reforms and Possibilities," Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, March 14, 2015, http://www.Youthparliament,pk/downloads/CR/educationandyouthaffairsstandingc ommitteereport. Pdf.

In 2010, Pakistan People's Party-led coalition government signed an agreement with the *Ittehad-e-Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Pakistan* (ITMP), an umbrella organization of madrassas oversight boards.[35] The agreement carried provisions to recognize the five ITMP madrassas boards and link them to the Ministry of Education through an Act of Parliament.[36] In return, the agreement prohibited madrassas from publishing literature that promotes militancy or sectarianism and teach a more inclusive curriculum. However, the agreement could not be presented to the Parliament for legislation due to bureaucratic bottlenecks. [37] The madrassas registration and bringing them under the direct control of government institutions is a test of the state's resolve to overcome the challenge of radicalisation and religious extremism.

Pakistan Protection Act 2014

Pakistan's National Assembly passed the anti-terror Pakistan Protection Bill in July 2014. The bill rendered the Pakistani security forces with additional powers to fight terrorism. It empowered Pakistani security forces with additional powers; to arrest suspects and search houses without search warrants. [38] Several civil society and human rights organisations fear that such a sweeping body-of-law will turn Pakistan into a police state. Pakistan's history is replete with examples where such laws have been abused to victimize the opponents. Therefore, there is a fear that, in the future, the authorities can use this bill for their own vested purposes as well. However, the situation, being extra ordinary,

---

[35] Kaja Borchgrevink, "Pakistan's Madrasas: Moderation or Militancy: The madrrassa debate and the reform process," NOREF Report, June 9, 2011, http: // www. Peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/d6f77 e0632a20fcf1ae1ad65041acdc7.pdf

[36] The five madrassa boards in Pakistan include: 1) Tanzeem-ul-MadaarisAhl-eSunnatWal-Jamaat of the Barelvi school of thought; 2) Wafaq-ul-Madaaris AlArabia of Deobandis; 3) Wafaq-ul-Madaaris of Ahl-e-Hadith; 4) Rabta-ulMadaaris Al-Islamia of Jmaat-e-Islami; 5) and, Wafaq-ul-Madaaris Al-Shia of Shia school of thought.

[37] Syed Irfan Raza, "Accord for introducing contemporary subjects in madrassas signed," Dawn , October 8, 2010, http://www.dawn.com/news/569392/accord-for-introducing-contemporarysubjects-in-madressahs-signed.

[38] Irfan Haider, "Protection of Pakistan Bill 2014 approved in NA," Dawn , July 2, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1116529

demands extra ordinary remedies. This is why the bill has been enacted as a special set of laws for two years.

Pakistan Army's Counterinsurgency Strategy

As far as Pakistan Army's CI operational strategy is concerned, it seems unequivocal and systematic: Clear, Hold, Build and Transfer. The 'Clear' and 'Hold' phases of operations have been relatively easier, however, 'Build' and 'Transfer' aspects have been arduous and daunting. According to Khan, the rule of law has been established in whole of KP while in FATA, an area of 1,373 square kms (total 27,000 Sq Km) is yet to be cleared. Militants' activities are restricted to sporadic infiltration across the border and use of improvised explosive devices.[39] Among the 'Build' phase, which is the shared responsibility of military and political government alike, Pakistan Army has contributed a great deal to the establishment and management of de-radicalisation centres. In this context, it is noteworthy that Pakistan military, in collaboration with the civilian government, is accomplishing the urbanized policing role, de-radicalisation, information operations, psychological operations, maintaining the Temporarily Displaced People (TDPs) and establishment of special courts. Similarly, military operations being conducted by Pakistan Army with untold odds denied the geographical space to the insurgents and provided the space for the civilians to play their part.

Military Operations

Since 9/11, the Pakistan Army has conducted more than 1087 military operations, including 323 major and 766 minor operations[40] against the Pakistani Taliban. Some of the grand scale operations are as under:[41]

---

[39]Ismail Khan, "Fight against militancy: where we stand today," *Dawn News*, January 1, 2016, http://www.dawn.com/news/1229965
[40] Lieutenant General Khalid Rabbani, "Speech presented on 30 April on Youm-e-Shuhada in 11 Corps Headquarters,' Peshawar, ISPR April 30, 2012.
[41] Interview of Colonel Nadeem Anwar, Deputy Director Inter Services Public Relations, and Headquarters 11 Corps Peshawar on June 17, 2015. Also See Kashif Abbasi, "*Chronology of military operations*,June 16, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1112980. Also see Seth G. Jones, C. Christine Fair, 2010, 'Counterinsurgency in Pakistan', RAND Corporation, Santa Moniaca.

- Operation Enduring Freedom (2001–2002)
- Operation *Al Mizan (The Equilibrium)* (2002–2006)
- Operation *Zalzala (Earthquake) (2008*)
- Operation Tri-Star (2008)
- Operation Black Thunderstorm districts (2009)
- Operation *SherDil (Lion's Heart)* (2008)
- Operations *Rah-e-Haq* (The Path of Faith) *1, II and III* (2007-2009)
- Operation *Raah-e-Raast* (The Righteous Path) (2009)
- Operation *Brekhna* (Light) *I and II* (2009)
- Operation *Raah-e-Nijat* (Path of Redemption) (2009–2010)
- Operation *Koh-e-suffaid* (The White Mountain*)* (2011)
- Operations *Khyber-1, Khyber II,* (2014-2015*)*
- Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*[42] (The Sharpening blow of The Sword of Prophet-Mohammad (PBUH) (2014-2016)

Generally, these Military operations have undermined the will and the operational capability of the insurgents by destroying their physical infrastructure. The first major operation by Pakistan military against the militants in Pakistan was Operation *Al-Mizan* from 2002-2006.The soldiers deployed for this operation in FATA were around 70,000-80,000. Currently, the deployed force has been increased to around 170,000 soldiers in whole of FATA and KP[43]. Kanwal cites the figure to be 150,000 troops.[44] Operation *Al-Mizan* comprised of several smaller operations, such as Operation *Kalosha* II. Later on, Operation *Zalzala* and operation Tri-Star were launched in South Waziristan Agency in January 2008 against Baitullah Mehsud and his supporters. In April 2009, Operation Black Thunderstorm was launched in Swat, Mingora, Buner, Shangla and lower Dir, which remained under heavy

---

[42] Joint military offensive being conducted by the Pakistan Armed Forces against various militant groups, including the TTP, East Turkestan Islamic Movement, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jundallah Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Al-Qaeda, and Haqqani network. The military operation in NWA was initiated on June 15, 2014.

[43] Anwar Iqbal, "Drone issue to be discussed during army chief's US visit," *Dawn News*, October 30, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1141259.

[44] Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges: Will the Military Cope?," Issue Brief, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, http://www.ipcs.org/issue-brief/pakistan/ pakistans-internal-security-challenges-will-the-military-cope-230.html

influence of Taliban and continued till June 2009 with the aim to retake the Taliban controlled areas. In Bajaur Agency, Operation *Sher Dil* was started in August 2008 and continued till February 2009. On July 4, 2011, Pakistan Army launched *Koh-e-Sufaid* in central and lower Kurram Agency against the sectarian militancy.[45]

Similarly, Operation *Brekhna* I and II were launched in Mohamand Agency in 2009 against the TTP militants. Additionally, Operation *Raah-e-Nijat* was carried out on June 19, 2009, against the *Mehsud* faction of the Pakistani Taliban in FATA's South Waziristan agency.[46] Army cleared the area from the militant possession in four to five months time. Similarly, Operation *Raah-e-Raast* was carried out on May 11, 2009 against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat in KP's Malakand Division. In four months, military restored the writ of the state in Swat district and the adjoining area.[47]

Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* was launched on June 15, 2014 against local and foreign militants in FATA's North Waziristan Agency (NWA). The operation was launched after the failed peace talks between Taliban and government.[48] Pakistan Army cleared NWA from militants' presence along with destroying Improvised Explosive Device (IED) factories and militants' command and control structure.[49] Meanwhile, Operation *Khyber*-1 was launched on October 17, 2014, against the militant group, *Lashkar-i-Islam* in Khyber Agency.[50]

The methodology of Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* is more or less similar to the Operation Black Thunderstorm, Operation *Raah-e-Raast* and

---

[45] Mariam Shah, "Comparing Pakistan's Past Military Operations with Operation Zarb-e-Azb,"PKKH.tv, http://defence.pk/threads/comparing-pakistan-past-military-operations-with-operation-zarb-e-azb-pkkh-tv.328771/
[46] Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit, "Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA," (Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Islamabad, 2010):238.
[47]Ibid., 239.
[48] "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: All terrorists being hit, says Gen Raheel," *Express Tribune*, January 17, 2015, http://tribune.com.pk/story/823149/operation-zarb-e-azb-all-terrorists-being-hitsays-gen-raheel/.
[49]Mateen Haider, "80pc of Miramshah cleared, army says," *Dawn* (Islamabad), Pakistan, July 10, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/1118087
[50] "Army launches, "Khyber One operation," Nation (Lahore), October 18, 2014, http://nation.com.pk/national/18-Oct-2014/army-launches-khyber-one-operation 5

Operation *Sher Dil*. In all these operations, aerial support came first followed by the advancement of ground troops. This helped the ground forces to move in the area with force and effectiveness. Locals were evacuated from the area, after which the Army bombed Taliban positions using heavy artillery, jets and helicopters. After softening their positions, the military moved in with ground forces. DG ISPR, Major General Asim Bajwa stated[51] that "*Operation Zarb-e-Azb* is the biggest and most well-coordinated operation ever conducted against terrorists" and it is considered as a 'war of survival'. However, among all the major operations, Operation *Raah-e-Raast* was the most successful operation to date against militants in the sense that it effectively removed them from Swat, ensuring the return of displaced people back to their homes.

The military training for the postmodern conflict demands different levels of preparation. It needs special training, battle expertise and career specialization.[52] Nawaz argues that Pakistan army's units undergo one year extensive pre-training for CI operations. The Directorate of Training and Evaluation in General Head Quarters (GHQ) critically evaluates this pre-training. Whereas officers who rotate out of CI operational environment are tasked to undertake 'train the trainee programmes'[53]. Moreover, Pakistan Military operates in home territory while recognizing cultural and social norms of various insurgent' areas. Though, Pakistan Military has some natural limitations like guarding 2400 long, inhospitable and mountainous borders belt with Afghanistan, which militants infiltrate from across the border through the unfrequented routes. Regarding robust border control, Lieutenant General Nasser Khan Janjua said that 'efforts were afoot to dig a deep trench to secure the long and porous border with Afghanistan'[54]. Therefore, encirclement of insurgents becomes difficult in Pakistan's geographical environment, because it is not an island like the Great Britain or Sri Lanka where encirclement of insurgents would choke the

---

[51]Mariam Shah, "Comparing Pakistan's Past Military Operations with Operation Zarb-e-Azb," PKKH.tv.

[52] Terry Terriff, Aaron Karp and Regina Karp, eds., *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict: Debating Fourth Generation Warfare* (Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2008): 303 (reprinted in paperback 2009).

[53] Shuja Nawaz, "Learning by Doing, The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency," 2011.

[54] "Security issues: Pakistan to dig trench on Afghan border," *Express Tribune*, May 29, 2014.

insurgency. Overall, the Pakistan military's kinetic operations, information operations, and significant participation in the non-kinetic roles with the civilian government have been approached with professional focus and dedication.

Analytical Perspective

The insurgents and terrorists effectively held various safe havens like geographical, social, virtual and ideological in Pakistan. They have geographically controlled the ungoverned space of FATA very effectively. However, since 2009 the number of large scale military operations like *Raah-e-Raast, Raah-e-Nijat and Zarb-e-Azb* dismantled the militants' infrastructure and sanctuaries. Militants fled away to Afghanistan to find new sanctuaries and, financial and psychological support. According to Mir, Mullah Fazlullah is also being sheltered by the Afghan militants in the Kunar Province.[55]

Moreover, socially speaking, the militants of TTP have deep tribal connections and ethnic ties, which render the physical space and social accommodation among a particular section of Pakistan society. It is also believed that TTP and the other terrorists groups operating in FATA have sympathizers in strategic backyards in Southern Punjab and Karachi. Moreover, the virtual sanctuary or strategic hinterland of internet also enables financial, moral, and personnel support to the insurgents.[56] Before the onset of *Zarb-e-Azb* operation in North Waziristan Agency (NWA), TTP established official website making effective use of virtual safe havens.[57] It is noteworthy that in the absence of any strategic directional approach by the state machinery, all these enabling factors caused the protraction of insurgency.

While in cognizance of the greater threat, General Raheel Sharif underlined that 'effectiveness of CI efforts would be undermined if

---

[55] Amir Mir, "Pakistan warns Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network," *News*, April 17, 2014.

[56] David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux", Survival, vol. 48, no. 4, (Winter 2006-07) , 111-DOI 10.1080/ 00396330601062790.

[57] Editorial, "Taliban's Narrative," *News*, April 07, 2014, http://www.dawn.com/news/ 1098178, (accessed on 7 December 2015).

collaboration between civilian and military agencies is not improved.[58] Gul also opines that "civilians must play the larger role and let military do surgical and tactical fights."[59] Nawaz stipulated that civilian side will have to take comprehensive programme for de-weaponization and de-radicalisation with incentives of monetary benefits and employment.[60]

In the same context, Saleem adds that war have to be fought at distinct layers: military operations by Pakistan Army; rest of the battling theatres of ideas and ideologies within the folds of the civil society, clergy and government.[61] It is important to highlight that the civilian (non-kinetic) role in CI is measured in accordance with the cultural and security dynamics of different regions. International practitioners and theorists assert that civilian aspect of CI is 75 to 80 per cent, while Galula[62] and Mao Ze Dong[63] described CI as "20 per cent military and 80 per cent political". Similarly, Saleem, while describing the kinetic role in Pakistan's CI case, argues that CI is 33 per cent whereas the non-kinetic role is around 66 per cent.[64]

Pakistan military, like most of the contemporary militaries, is trained on the conventional military pattern. It still needs to meet conventional military threats but there is need to add more effective CI to the Pakistan Army's existing strategic culture, operations, doctrine and strategy. It also holds true that rigid organisational structure and constant threat of Indian aggression has blighted Pakistan's effort in adapting to CIapproach. Ascertaining the difficulties that modern military faces in

---

[58] Baqir S Syed, "Army voices concern over NAP's poor enforcement"*Dawn News*, November 11, 2015, http://www.dawn.com/news/1218911 ,

[59] Imtiaz Gul, "Challenges facing the counter-terror drive," *Express Tribune*, Opinion, 2016, http:// tribune.com.pk / story/1022399 / challenges-facing-the-counter-terror-drive

[60] Shuja Nawaz, "Learning by Doing, The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency,"2011.

[61] Farrukh Saleem, "Unity of Effort," *News*, June 22, 2014.

[62] David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice," Praeger Security International, West Port, 1964.

[63] Colleen Bell, "Civilianizing warfare: ways of war and peace in modern counterinsurgency," Colleen Bell Journal of International Relations and Development, vol. 14, no. 3, 2011, 313.

[64] Farrukh Saleem, ''33 versus 66, Pak Discussion, Pakistan Discussion Forum, July 14, 2014, http://www.pakdiscussion.com/forum/showthread.php/127033-33-versus-66-Dr-Farrukh-Saleem-14th-JUly-0214

such conflicts, Kilcullen argues that "soldiers and commanding officers at the lower chain of command may need to adapt themselves to a form of 'political warfare' in which perception and media picture matter more than battlefield success." [65] Nawaz acknowledges that in post-2009 environment, Pakistan Military has learnt the mechanics of CI mostly in the manner of 'learning by doing' meanwhile bringing some innovations in the process to deal with the postmodern insurgency.[66]

After briefly examining the Pakistan's military and civilian effort in CI, the natural deductions that flow out of the process is that Pakistan Army has demonstrated its military superiority, resilience and determination to conduct successful military and security operations. However, military successes, widespread and satisfying as they may be, have only tactical implications and cannot guarantee sustained peace. The lasting and defining role in CI is to be played by civilians and political cadres. Similarly, NACTA, being a supreme civilian CI body, needs to play a defining role and to be led from the front in the CI campaign. It must garner the desirable support from political actors, media houses, academics, clerics and civil society to frame a narrative and CVE module that holds social, religious and national acceptability in countering the war on ideological and theological front, the militants' turf. In the line of directives issued by NAP, Pakistan military role is confined to 20 per cent, which includes kinetic operations and establishment of military courts. However, rest of the remaining 18 points (80 per cent of NAP's agenda) fall in the domain of the civilian government.

Conclusion

Undeniably, combined and well-knit civilian-military effort is needed for organizing various logical lines of operations like governance, developmental initiatives, political reforms, rehabilitation and security efforts to support the CI initiatives and strategy.[67] Before 2009, Pakistan

---

[65] David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency Redux,"survival, vol. 48, no. 4, 2006-07, 123, DOI 10.1080/ 00396330601062790.

[66] Shuja Nawaz, "Learning by Doing, The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency," 2011.

[67] Joshua White, "Brookings Applying CI Principles in Pakistan's Frontier," Candidate, Brookings CI and Pakistan Paper Series, no. 2, Johns Hopkins School of

Military and civilian agencies were working in isolation, which often led to overlapping and disjointed effort. Nonetheless, in the post Operation *Raah-e-Raast* scenario, the vacuum has decreased and trust has increased multifold between military and civilians and reasonably collaborated CI efforts have been set into motion.

More importantly, the deprivation and grievances of people is providing fertile ground to traditional reactionary insurgents, who incite spiritual sentiments of population to take up arms against the state. Moreover, the dwindling educational opportunities have further deepened the crises as education has become expensive in schools but free in Madrassas. Therefore, unemployed and impressionable youth would easily be susceptible to militants' propaganda in those nurseries.

Over and above, for any CI campaign, the singularity of leadership and robust command structures are indispensable factors in CI as no parallel command mechanisms or de-centralised leadership would be able to engineer the simultaneity and interdependency of kinetic and non-kinetic operations. Efforts would be needed to bridge the trust-deficit between the army, intelligence institutions and the federal and provincial governments in order to ensure effective implementation of the civilian and military strategy in letter and spirit.

Advanced International Studies and Research Fellow, Institute for Global Engagement.