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INSURGENT MOVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

Shehzad H. Qazi

Introduction

In its brief history of 64 years, Pakistan has already faced four prominent insurgent conflicts: Bengali nationalist-separatist rebellion in East Pakistan (1971), low-intensity Baloch nationalist insurgency (1948–present) with heightened conflict between 1974 and 1977, Muhajir nationalist insurgency in Karachi (1990–9), and now the Pakistani Taliban insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (2001–present). In addition, Pakistan faces some militant separatism in Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan. Out of these four, the most successful movement was that of the Bengali nationalists who were able to secure a separate homeland for themselves at the end of the civil war.

The outbreak of multiple insurgencies in Pakistan is not anomalous. This characteristic it shares with other states in its neighbourhood in South and Central Asia. Moreover, it also shares this phenomenon with other developing or under-developed countries of the world where state institutions are weak and armed conflict persists.

In this chapter I explore the current Pakistani Taliban insurgency and keep the focus geographically circumscribed to the tribal areas and KP. Moreover, I limit the attention to insurgent groups that are directly engaged in challenging or resisting the Pakistani state and its armed forces in this region, i.e. the Pakistani Taliban, Punjabi Taliban and al-Qaeda. It should be noted that I use the term Pakistani Taliban and Taliban interchangeably to refer to the same conglomeration of militant outfits.

The chapter begins with a brief history of the conflict, tracing the rise of the Pakistani Taliban to the participation of the Pashtun tribesmen in the fight against invading US and international forces in Afghanistan and the radicalization that subsequently took place as al-Qaeda re-settled within the tribal areas. The dynamics of the conflict are then discussed, followed by a survey of the actors involved in the insurgency, with special attention paid to strategic and tactical collaboration that takes place amongst them.

Next, the structure and organization of the Pakistani Taliban, especially Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is explained, with special emphasis on its decentralized nature. I then explain the insurgents’ military strategy and discuss observed trends in the tactics used by them. Here I highlight the influence al-Qaeda and Kashmiri groups have had. The chapter then analyses militant recruitment. The use of selective incentives, coercion and the ability to exploit grievances...
Figure 18.1 Pakistan.
against the state are three essential factors of the Taliban’s recruitment strategy. Finally, I make some observations about the nature of the Taliban’s governance, pointing out that social repression, political authoritarianism and economic predation are three major characteristics of Taliban rule. The provision of quick and swift justice, however, remains one area of service that has at times made the insurgents popular.

**Insurgent movements in Pakistan**

**Insurgency in FATA**

**Origins**

Several authors (Hussain 2008; Gul 2010b; Hussain 2010; Rana et al. 2010) have now narrated the rise of the Pakistani rebels and in this chapter the history is summarized only to provide a background for the subsequent analysis of the insurgency. Whereas the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (Student Movement of Pakistan) was officially established in 2007, its members had been involved in militancy against the US–NATO Forces and the Pakistan Army since 2002. Many leading figures of the Pakistani Taliban have also been active inside Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War, the 1990s Taliban movement, and the anti-US-NATO resistance militias of 2001. The origins of the Pakistani rebels can be traced from this period.

Following the US invasion and bombing of Afghanistan in 2001 the senior leadership of the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda escaped into Pakistan’s tribal areas to seek refuge. Along with them came hundreds of Afghan fighters and al-Qaeda’s Arab, Chechen, Uzbek, East Asian and Sudanese insurgents. According to Zahid Hussain ‘bin Laden’s men distributed millions of dollars among tribal elders in return for shelter’. Most of the two groups’ leadership and cadre escaped to South Waziristan where they were offered protection by the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe, who after two decades of engagement had become sympathetic towards both the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda (Hussain 2008; Rana et al. 2010).

By this time thousands of Pakistani Pashtun tribesmen had also gone to Afghanistan to fight the invading US and NATO forces. Nek Mohammad of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe and Abdullah Mehsud of the Saleemikhel Mehsud tribe were two notable fighters who would later also resist the Pakistan Army. Nek Mohammad was a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan War who like Abdullah Mehsud had also fought alongside the 1990s Afghan Taliban movement. Another Pashtun cleric, Sufi Mohammad, leader of the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (Movement for Enforcement of Shariah Law) took close to 10,000 young boys from Swat with him to Afghanistan to fight the invading forces in 2001. At least 3,000 of them were killed and the remaining captured inside Afghanistan or sent back to Pakistan (Hussain 2008; Abbas 2009).

The rise of the Pakistan’s Pashtun tribal militants can be seen most discernibly from these two developments. To resist the US-led invasion and protect their co-ethnicst and fellow tribal members Pakistani Pashtun tribesmen began participating in militant activities inside Afghanistan. In addition to the individual radicalization of these tribesmen, a culture of militancy was cultivated – merely revived in some ways – inside FATA by the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters who were forced to flee there because of the US-led invasion. To organize an insurgency in Afghanistan Mullah Omar and Mullah Dadullah got in touch with tribal leaders in FATA in 2002 to recruit Pakistani tribesmen and madrassah students to fight in Afghanistan. According to Behuria (2007), the Afghan Taliban were interested in creating a Taliban chapter inside FATA to sustain the movement (Giustozzi 2007). Furthermore, al-Qaeda gave large sums of money to locals to lease their compounds for training camps and command and control centres within FATA. al-Qaeda also began recruiting local Pashtun tribesmen and paid each
S.H. Qazi

rebel around $250 a month (Hussain 2008). Whereas these two factors helped militarize and radicalize the locals, it was the 2002 invasion of the Pakistani Army to root out al-Qaeda that catalysed widespread militancy and helped create full-scale rebellion in FATA.

Under pressure from the US government, the Pakistan Army entered Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency and Shawal Valley in North Waziristan and South Waziristan in 2002 (initially with the permission of tribal elders) intending to capture or eliminate al-Qaeda operatives who were mainly foreigners. Pro-bin Laden sentiment was quite high in the tribal areas and the US invasion had caused intense anger amongst Pashtun tribesmen. Military action in South Waziristan thus turned the tribal elders hostile to the Army. They refused to hand over foreign fighters and the subsequent fight between the Pakistan Army and foreign al-Qaeda insurgents turned into a combat between the Pakistan Army and rebel tribesmen. The Army’s decision to impose collective punishment by demolishing the houses of defiant tribesmen and seizing their property increased anger. Many Waziri tribesmen had been active as guerrilla fighters in the Soviet-Afghan War and by this time many of these tribesmen had become members of Islamist organizations (Hussain 2008). Nek Mohammad was one such fighter, and soon after the invasion he mobilized armed resistance against the Pakistan Army. Heavy resistance also came from the Zali Khel clan of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe and later, as mentioned, by the Mehsud of South Waziristan. Civilian casualties increased anger within the larger public, creating support for the rebel movement (Hussain 2008; Kilcullen 2009).

The insurgency, which was initially limited to North and South Waziristan, then spread over the next few years to all of FATA. The Pakistan Army suffered casualties and desertions arising from the troops’ lack of training, low morale and ideological opposition to the war. Pakistan, at the time both unable and unwilling to execute a counterinsurgency in the tribal regions and lacking domestic support for the war, did not hold ground that was cleared and signed several ceasefire agreements with the militants between 2004 and 2009. This allowed militants to regroup and increase their control in the region (Hussain 2010; Abbas in Gartenstein-Ross and May 2010). Moreover, between 2002 and 2006 several local rebels groups had been formed in the seven agencies of FATA and Swat District. These rebels gathered in a secret meeting and on 13 December 2007 announced the formation of the umbrella group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan which would coordinate their activities against US and NATO forces in Afghanistan and the Pakistan Army in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Abbas 2009). By mid 2007 Swat District had also been taken over by the rebels and by early 2009 the insurgency had spread to Dir and Buner districts, which are merely 60 miles from Islamabad.

Dimensions of the conflict

The conflict in FATA is neither simply a tribal revolt nor a violent movement of criminals, thugs and the mafia. It is also not just a militant Islamist movement. The conflict features multiple actors and agendas and subsequently has multiple and often overlapping dimensions.

First, the war has a significant tribal component. This conflict has featured strife between various tribes and the Pakistani state, inter/intra-tribal conflicts, and fighting between state-backed tribal militias and the rebels. For example, the Waziri and Mehsud tribes were both fighting the Pakistan Army since 2002. Nevertheless, in 2007 a rift happened between Baitullah Mehsud and Mullah Nazir, after which he and Hafiz Gul Bahadar split and formed the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban (Local Taliban Movement) in Waziristan. Their goal was ‘to defend the Wazir tribes interests in North and South Waziristan’ (Abbas 2009). Moreover, the Pakistani government has sponsored tribal militias and groups, such as that of Qari Zainuddin Mehsud and Haji Turkistan Bhittani, to fight the TTP (Nawaz 2009).
This pattern of conflict is by no means a new development. Ahmed’s (1983) work illuminates reasons and patterns of intra-tribal conflict, especially between the Wazir and Mehsud tribes. Moreover, Johnson and Mason (2008) have also pointed out, this region has seen several examples of charismatic religious leaders waging insurgencies against invading powers. Thus, they argue, the current insurgency is a mere contemporary manifestation of a historically recurrent pattern.

Second, the insurgency in FATA has a strong link to transnational Islamist militancy. Leaders and factions of the Afghan Taliban, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Hizb-I-Islami, Jalaluddin and Sirajuddin Haqqani and their Haqqani Network, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) operate out of FATA (2009c; Abbas 2009). Moreover, the Pakistani Taliban are allies of al-Qaeda and its fighters participate in the insurgency against the Pakistan Army. While the relationship between the locals of FATA and al-Qaeda dates back to the days of the Soviet-Afghan War (Rana et al. 2010) its presence in the tribal areas is also part of a global strategy to seek sanctuary in conflict zones, align with groups with long-standing grievances against their governments, and exploit those fissures to gain control (Kilcullen 2009).

Third, FATA features an extensive black economy and the insurgency, especially in Khyber and Bajaur, is heavily enmeshed with crime and criminal syndicates. Drug trafficking, gunrunning and illegal arms and ammunitions trade, foreign currency counterfeiting, car theft and ‘custom-free’ smuggling of goods are major illicit trades in the region. Smugglers and criminal gangs predominate the region and often attack NATO supply cargoes and steal the fuel, clothing and foodstuffs, selling them later on the black market (Gul 2010b). The Taliban have also been smuggling timber, weapons and narcotics (Rana et al. 2010). Many locals have also benefited by sheltering illegal foreign fighters and providing them with food at very high costs. Others have leased their houses and compounds to al-Qaeda to use them as training centres (Hussain 2008).

Fourth, the conflict in Kurram features an overlapping sectarian and inter-tribal dynamic, where the Shia Turi tribe is fighting the Sunni Banghash tribe. The Punjabi Taliban have intervened and attacked the Turi tribe and have long blocked off the tribe’s access to basic commodities. Similarly, Orakzai features Sunni–Shia violence as well, while Khyber features conflict between Deobandi Lashkar-e-Islami and Barelvi Ansarul Islam militias (Nawaz 2009).

Fifth, there is an element of class warfare to the militancy as well. The conflict has featured the rise to power of poor men belonging to lesser or minor lineages against the traditional control of powerful tribal elders. Profiles of many rebel leaders confirm this. For example, Baitullah Mehsud was a former bus conductor, Hakimullah Mehsud was a village madrassa drop out, Maulvi Omar sold perfumes on a vending cart, Mangal Bagh was a truck driver and small-time criminal involved in car-jacking, and Mullah Fazalullah operated ski lifts in Swat. The Soviet-Afghan War spurred this social movement that was reinforced by the US invasion of Afghanistan. Changes in political opportunities and access to resources (economic and military) allowed tribesmen to contest traditional tribal leadership. In FATA, the militants have assassinated over 600 elders to gain control of the political leadership (Nawaz 2009).

Finally, a Maoist/Communist aspect also appeared in the insurgency. Members of the Mazdoor Kissan Party (Peasants and Workers Party) have used violence to air grievances over unequal distribution of land (Nawaz 2009).

**Insurgent actors**

The tribal areas of Pakistan have become a global militant metropolis. The insurgents operating from and within FATA can be classified into four major groups. These include the Afghan
Taliban, the various groups of the Pakistani Taliban, foreign fighters (primarily al-Qaeda) and the Punjabi Taliban. Given the parameters of this chapter, I focus on the latter three.

The Pakistani Taliban are a collection of roughly 40 al-Qaeda aligned militant groups based inside FATA. The largest of these groups is the umbrella organization, Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP), currently led by Hakimullah Mehsud. The TTP has provided training and operational guidance for several international terrorists, including Faisal Shahzad, the ‘Times Square bomber’, and Humam al-Balawi, who bombed a CIA outpost in Afghanistan in 2009 (Hussain 2010). Furthermore, the Pakistan Taliban can be divided into two groups: one that sees the war against Pakistan and its army as a primary pursuit, and participation in the war in Afghanistan as being secondary. The second group emphasizes fighting NATO and ISAF in Afghanistan and argues against fighting with the Pakistan Army. The second group is also closer to the Afghan Taliban, who have repeatedly urged the Pakistani Taliban to focus on the war against the United States inside Afghanistan and not the Pakistan Army. The Pakistan Taliban are a fractured movement and suffer from indiscipline, disagreement and rebel infighting (Abbas 2009). Moreover, like the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban are very localized and make decisions based on domestic interests.

A host of foreign fighters belonging to al-Qaeda or allied groups also operate out of Pakistan’s tribal areas. Leading members of al-Qaeda, including Ayman Al-Zawahiri and the interim leader Saef Al-Nidal reside in FATA (Mir 2011b). Other notable al-Qaeda leaders such as Abu Faraj al-Libi, Abu Lait el Libi, Abu Jihad al Masri, etc., have all either been killed or arrested in FATA (Gul 2010b; Rana et al. 2010). A large number of Arab, Chechen, Sudanese and some Uighur al-Qaeda militants also live and fight in this region. Moreover, the al-Qaeda-aligned Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) is another prominent foreign militant organization in the area. IMU operates alongside the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters (Abbas 2009).

Finally, various militant outfits that fought in Kashmir have located to the tribal areas since 2002 when the Musharraf regime curtailed Pakistani sponsorship of the insurgency. For many of the leaders and fighters this is a mere return, as their initial training and battlefield experience took place during the Soviet-Afghan War in either Afghanistan or Pakistan’s tribal areas (Rana et al. 2010). These groups, which include Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Harkatul-Jihad al Islami (HuJj), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Almi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Harkatul Mujahideen al-Alimi (HuM), amongst others, began referring to themselves collectively as the Punjabi Taliban. With relationships dating to the 1980s, these groups remain operationally aligned to al-Qaeda (Mullick 2010). For example, Ilyas Kashmiri, late

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**Table 18.1** Estimated strength of insurgents in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other areas of Pakistan (Qazi 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistani Taliban (all factions)</strong></td>
<td>&lt;40,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>20,000–25,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Waziristan</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Punjabi Taliban</strong></td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Fighters</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Arab, Uzbek, Tajik, Chechen, Uighur and Sudanese fighters)</td>
<td>&lt;3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,000–14,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>&lt;40,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>31,000–41,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Pakistani Taliban</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22,000–27,000</td>
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</table>
leader of HuJI and the 313 Brigade, worked with al-Qaeda and was purportedly its chief for global operations (Shahzad 2009). The Punjabi Taliban mostly carry out operations within Pakistan-proper.

**Organisation and structure**

The organisation of militant groups inside FATA can be best understood as a complex web of networks. This web includes the Afghan Taliban – itself composed of at least five major groups – al-Qaeda, IMU, Punjabi Taliban, Pakistani Taliban and various criminal syndicates. Whereas these organizations have their own structures, collaboration for purposes of strategic planning, propaganda and operations is a common feature. The structure of al-Qaeda and the various Kashmiri militant groups has been explained elsewhere (Mullick 2010) and here I focus on briefly explaining the complex structure and organization of the Pakistani Taliban.

As mentioned, the Pakistani Taliban is a conglomeration of roughly 40 militant outfits. Within the Pakistani Taliban, the largest alliance or umbrella group consisting of militants fighting Pakistan is the TTP. The TTP has created a hierarchical organizational structure, but lacks centralized control. It has a *shura* (parliament) that meets to plan tactics and discuss strategies and an *Amir* (president) who recommends and decides the overall strategy of the organization (Abbas 2009). The Taliban structure also features departments and officials with specialized tasks such as propaganda and training for bomb-making and suicide missions (Wolfe 2010). Given its decentralized nature, however, tactical decision-making is mostly undertaken by the participating militant groups and field commanders and is influenced by their own domestic political needs and considerations (Qazi 2011).

The TTP’s current leader is Hakimullah Mehsud. Every tribal agency has a TTP commander and deputy commanders who are responsible for coordinating the resistance on behalf of the group. For example, Wali-ur-Rahman is the Agency Commander in South Waziristan, while Wali Mohammad is the local commander for the city of Wana in South Waziristan. At times, of course, there have been disagreements and commanders have split from the umbrella group, such as Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir. Major towns of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa such as Wana, Damadola, Bara area and Darra Adamkhel also feature TTP commanders. Furthermore, the agencies also feature Taliban groups that are anti-TTP, such as those of Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir, and Mangal Bagh’s Lashkar-e-Islami.

**Military strategy and tactics**

The strategy and tactics of the Pakistani Taliban mirror those of the Afghan rebels of the 1980s and the present-day neo-Taliban. As explained by Sial (Rana et al. 2010) the Taliban in FATA are using the classic ‘war of the flea’ model of guerrilla warfare to fight the Pakistan Army. Taliban fighters normally launch attacks on the Army in small bands of 15–20 fighters and quickly disperse within the populace (Gul 2010b). The strategy of the Taliban includes targeting the security forces, tribal elders, civilian administration, political parties and then civilians. Between January 2008 and June 2009 alone 254 security force personnel, 57 tribal elders and seven political party members were targeted. Militants seek out their support base within the people of FATA and also use them as human shields. They have regularly used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and landmine explosions to target security forces (Rana et al. 2010).

Furthermore, with the aid of the Kashmiri militant groups and al-Qaeda, the TTP has also launched several urban guerrilla attacks inside Pakistan. The main targets have been the government’s military and police security agencies. The most recent example was the attack launched
at PNS Mehran, Pakistan’s largest naval base, in Karachi (Mir 2011a). Guerrillas were able to engage Pakistani naval commandos in an overnight battle and wreak havoc at the base. Previously in 2009 the TTP had also attacked the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Pakistan Army. The siege lasted for around 24 hours.

Similar to the neo-Taliban in Afghanistan, suicide bombings have also become a very regular feature of the Taliban’s assault on Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Body Count (2011), 294 suicide bombings have taken place in Pakistan between November 2000 and April 2011 in which between 3,116 and 4,570 people have died. The targets of suicide attacks have been offices of security agencies, leaders and politicians, markets and hotels and restaurants frequented by foreigners.

As Gul (2010b) explains, suicide bombings are a new phenomenon in Pakistan and were introduced by al-Qaeda. Suicide attacks in Pakistan are a prominent example of al-Qaeda’s strong influence on the strategic and tactical thinking of the Pakistani Taliban as well as the Afghan Taliban. The larger strategy of the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda appears to be to cut domestic support for military action in FATA and raise the costs of occupation and fighting so that they can consolidate their control in the region.

Recruitment

While the Punjabi Taliban recruit most of their fighters through extended networks of seminars and presence in different Pakistani cities and villages (Mullick 2010), the Taliban recruits fighters from settled populations instead of madaris and from areas where it operates in FATA and KP. As I have detailed elsewhere (Qazi 2011), three main tactics are used by the Taliban to recruit fighters: access to selective incentives, coercion and exploiting grievances.

FATA is a tremendously underdeveloped part of Pakistan where poverty and unemployment are widespread and further exacerbated by the conflict (2009c; Rana et al. 2010). In such a situation, many recruits have joined due to the monetary compensation offered by the Taliban. In 2009 a foot soldier received approximately $180 a month (2009c). Moreover, similar to the Afghan case, joining the Pakistani Taliban provides access to social networks and this brings recruits a sense of validation, power and prestige. According to Imtiaz Gul, militants ‘prey on young unemployed men who have no prospects and no hope for education and work’. The Taliban scout these men and then approach them, inviting them for informal conversations. By offering them company, says Gul, they give the individual a sense of belonging to a peer group. The interaction is then used to convince the people to join the movement. Several have joined the Taliban because it brings political backing and clout (Gul 2010a).

The Taliban have also abducted young boys to join their movement (2010b). According to Hussain (2010), in Swat alone anywhere from 1,200 to 1,500 children may have been taken by the Swat Taliban up until 2009. There are others who are coerced into joining through their associations with madaris which are frequented by the Taliban or affiliated with them (Hussain 2009). In Tank district militants forced school-age children to sign up for suicide bombing missions in early 2007 and also kidnapped 30 children for this purpose (Abbas 2009, 2010a). In Swat the Taliban asked locals to send a member of the household to join the militants as a means of showing political allegiance (Meo 2009).

Finally, genuine grievances against the Pakistani Army and state have also motivated tribesmen to join the Taliban. As several analysts have written, including Schofield in this volume (Chapter 26), the Pakistani Army has lacked a population-centric counterinsurgency strategy (Shah 2008). In 2009 alone at least 1,150 civilians were killed because of military operations (2009a). The Pakistan Army, untrained in counterinsurgency operations, has relied on a heavy
Insurgent movements in Pakistan

firepower and airpower-based approach (Kilcullen 2009), for example, during Operation Rah-e-Rast (Straight Path) in Swat (Khan 2009b). Moreover, collective punishment of tribes, economic blockades, mass and arbitrary arrests and detentions, extrajudicial executions and deliberate destruction of property have all occurred during the counterinsurgency campaigns, pushing the locals into the waiting arms of the Taliban (2010a, 2009b).

Aerial strikes from Pakistani helicopter gunships and CIA-operated Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAVs) have produced collateral damage, resulting in the deaths of innocent women and children (Abbas 2009; Nawaz 2009). According to the New American Foundation, between 2004 and 2010 158 UAV strikes have occurred, causing anywhere from 311 to 530 civilian casualties (2010d, 2010c). Over 700 civilians died in these strikes in 2009 alone (2010c). Apart from Taj (2010), most analysts agree that the backlash aided militant recruitment. Baitullah Mehsud highlighted this idea once, saying, ‘I spent three months trying to recruit and got only 10–15 persons. One U.S. attack and I got 150 volunteers!’ (Nawaz 2009). Many young men have joined the Taliban to avenge the deaths of their family members who were killed because of indiscriminate bombings by the Army (Latif 2009).

The Pakistani Taliban have also been able to recruit hundreds of young Pashtuns living in refugee camps after being displaced by intense clashes between them and the Pakistani military. Taliban militants reportedly regularly visit these camps and speak to small groups of youth to convince them to participate. Many have joined over frustration at the government because of the lack of basic human facilities in these camps, where people suffered from pneumonia and diarrhoea (Latif 2009).

It is also worth mentioning here that a flow of al-Qaeda recruits have either attempted to or successfully made their way to the tribal areas from Western countries. These have included Pakistanis arrested in the failed Barcelona terrorist plot in January 2009, the five young men from Washington, DC who were arrested in 2009, Najibullah Zazi and Faisal Shahzad. These men were not recruited directly by al-Qaeda, but themselves made the effort to seek out contacts with militant Islamists and ultimately travelled to Pakistan to obtain requisite training and instructions to carry out attacks. In all cases, the men have sought to join al-Qaeda and its affiliates because of their opposition to their home country’s military engagement in Afghanistan, Pakistan and/or Iraq. They have received training and operational guidance from the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda (Hussain 2010).

**Governance**

The Pakistani Taliban have instituted a system of governance that is politically authoritarian, socially repressive and economically predatory, and their control is largely premised on the use or threat of violence. Ironically, the one oft-quoted redeeming value is that the militants have been able to provide some judicial services when the Pakistani state has failed to.

The rule of the Pakistani Taliban is analogous to that of the 1990s Taliban in Afghanistan. They adhere to a literalist interpretation of Islam and enforce a very strict version of the Shariah law. The Taliban have banned listening to music, CDs and radio (apart from their FM stations) and viewing television and DVDs. The sale of these goods is also prohibited. Moreover, girls’ schools have been shut down, men are forced to grow beards and barbers are forbidden from shaving them, and women cannot move in public without covering their faces and without a male companion. Those who violate these rules have been disciplined through public floggings and sometimes executions. In Swat, for example, militants roaming the streets and using loudspeakers warned locals to abide by Islamic law or face dire consequences (Khan 2009a).
Like the current Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban have attacked NGO offices and workers. They oppose their presence, accusing them of spreading obscenities. For example, they have opposed polio vaccination drives (Gul 2010b).

Furthermore, they have instituted a reign of terror in the region. Upon gaining control of a region, the Taliban tell locals to stop negotiations with the government, cease organizing anti-Taliban jirgas and militias, and aid the Taliban in implanting Shariah. Violators are threatened with death, and in this manner the Taliban have killed hundreds of tribal leaders to eliminate opposition to their rule. Hundreds of men and one woman have also been accused or suspected of being spies, and publicly executed (Gul 2010b; Rana et al. 2010).

The Taliban have, however, been adept at providing judicial services and in places created law and order. They have established Islamic courts and centres for dispute resolution and provision of justice. Locals do come to these courts to settle family and social disputes. In places disputes between the Taliban and the locals over taxation have been referred to these courts (Khan 2009a; Rana et al. 2010).

Finally, the Taliban have undertaken predatory economic practices. From 2006 they began raising taxes in North Waziristan and also forcefully collected donations for ‘Islam and jihad’ the annual mandatory zakat (alms). The Swat Taliban levied jiziya (protection tax) on minority communities, while in other places the Taliban levied fines on people disobeying their laws. For example, fining people for listening to music after it was banned or men for not having beards. The Taliban have also taxed property and businesses, collected tolls, and extorted money from truck drivers. While in Swat the Taliban controlled emerald mines and timber forests, in FATA they have taken over mills of business people and private lands and orchards (Abbas 2009; Rana et al. 2010; Roul 2009).

**Conclusion**

This case study has aimed to survey seven major facets of the insurgency in Pakistan. While acknowledging that the current insurgency is inexorably linked to the social, political, ideological and economic changes that were brought about by the Soviet-Afghan War and when the tribal areas and populace became heavily involved in the insurgency (Rana et al. 2010), I trace the rise of the Pakistani Taliban to more recent political upheavals. It was the tribesmen’s participation in the latest Afghan war and their rekindling of relations with al-Qaeda that catalysed the birth of the Pakistani Taliban. As mentioned, the impact of al-Qaeda and Taliban on the Pakistani militants is very influential. Al-Qaeda is active in assisting the Taliban strategically and operationally, especially in carrying out terrorist attacks in Pakistan-proper, while the Afghan Taliban remain an inspiration in terms of governance and strategy for guerrilla warfare inside FATA.

Furthermore, the chapter has explored the various dynamics of the insurgency. It must be stressed that the conflict features a variety of factors, including tribal warfare, transnational militancy, crime, sectarian violence, class war, and some elements of Maoism. Similarly, a plethora of actors are involved in the fighting. Moreover, the Pakistani Taliban is far from monolithic. The movement is decentralized, features tens of leaders and at times suffers from infighting and fissures.

Lastly, in investigating recruitment tactics one finds that the Taliban have taken advantage of FATA’s underdevelopment and impoverishment and have used selective incentives to recruit young men, i.e. offering them financial incentives for joining and allowing them to access social networks that bring them clout and power. Moreover, coercion – abduction or forceful conscription – remains a regularly utilized tool. Genuine grievances against the abusive behaviour of the Pakistan Army have also motivated tribesmen to join the insurgency, whether to seek revenge or protection.
Insurgent movements in Pakistan

It is important to note that whereas the insurgency in Pakistan’s tribal areas has been underway for close to a decade, before 2010 literature on the conflict was sparse. Only over the past year have four new books appeared on the topic: Gul (2010b), Hussain (2010), (Rana et al. 2010) and Shahzad (2011). Still, however, three of these are journalistic accounts. Like the Afghan insurgency, much of the knowledge of the insurgency in Pakistan comes from NGO and think-tank reports and other journalistic contributions. Academic literature on the topic is thin and existing literature leaves much to be desired. An extensive study of the Pakistani Taliban and the various aspects of the insurgency, one that draws on existing literature on insurgencies and insurgent movements, such as the work published in this volume, is yet to be produced.

Recommended readings


References