

EDITED BY

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TALIBANISTAN

*Negotiating the Borders Between
Terror, Politics, and Religion*

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Pakistan's Counterinsurgency Strategy

Sameer Lalwani

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although Pakistan has not completely adopted the models, tactics, and best practices of counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine advocated by Western strategists, there is considerable evidence of movement in recent years toward a hybrid approach. Pakistan's security forces have historically employed a variety of tactics that include cooptation of militias, raiding, attrition, and sometimes population security, but they experienced repeated failures from 2001 to 2008. Though results of the more recent approach seem promising, prospects for long-term success remain unclear. A full conversion to "population-centric" COIN is unlikely—even with American assistance—because of its sheer difficulty, the prohibitive costs in money and manpower, organizational lags, and substantial trade-offs with Pakistani grand strategy and military doctrine. Triumphant expectations in late 2009 that Pakistan was turning a corner toward greater strategic cooperation with the West, based on its military campaigns in the tribal areas, should have been tempered by a closer analysis of Pakistani public opinion. These

data painted a more nuanced picture, in which increased support for efforts to combat some extremist militant groups were matched by rising anti-Americanism and opposition to U.S.-Pakistan cooperation. Thus Pakistan appears to be constrained to a "learning by doing" process, with incremental rather than revolutionary improvements in its approach to counterinsurgency.

INTRODUCTION

Though often recognized for its role in supporting insurgencies against its neighbors in the 1980s and 1990s, the Pakistani military is also no stranger to fighting insurgencies. Since the birth of the nation in 1947, Pakistan has faced insurgencies in nearly all of its provinces and conducted counterinsurgency campaigns varying in scale, strategy, tactics, and outcomes. And even though counterinsurgency is not part of official doctrine, military publications have regularly engaged in sustained analysis and reviews of counterinsurgency tactics and strategy.¹ The 1970–71 campaign in East Pakistan, which employed brutal tactics of collective punishment,² failed miserably to quell the insurgency and, coupled with Indian intervention, resulted in the new, independent state of Bangladesh. By contrast, the response to the separatist movement in Baluchistan in 1973–1977 (under the democratically elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) used similar methods³ but appeared to achieve moderate success. The Baluchi insurgency flares up every so often, most recently in 2005; the central government has answered with coercive force, heavy artillery, and airpower, compelling the insurgents into submission.

Pakistan's military has employed a variety of tactics in counterinsurgency campaigns. Operations against the most recent Baluchi uprising were best characterized as raiding—targeting insurgent strength and killing off militants. Significant firepower was employed with little regard for the collateral damage. By contrast, during the 1992–1995 campaign in Karachi to quell the urban insurgency led by the ethnic mobilization of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) against Sindhis, Pashtuns, and the Pakistani army,⁴ illiberal methods of sorting the population were commonly used. Through "cordon and search" operations, security forces attempted to coercively flush out and

separate militants (who were embedded within the population) from noncombatants. This approach—though costlier in time, resources, and manpower—improved targeting of militants with less harm to civilians. The crude sorting practices, however, still provoked hostile responses from the host population. An improvement on these methods was developed amid rising violence in Punjab in the early 1990s. The Pakistani government employed a new approach of community policing to generate human intelligence, in which militants were gradually separated out and eliminated from the population with far less collateral damage.⁵ Even though successful, the scale of this experiment was small and never achieved standing in military doctrine.

Since 2001, Pakistan has experienced a steady rise in militancy and insurgency in its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), with substantial infiltration into the adjacent settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), formerly the North-West Frontier Province. During this time, Pakistan's established approaches to managing, countering, and containing insurgency—especially the military actions—have come under heavy criticism from within Pakistan⁶ as well as from outside observers⁷ for their apparent failure.

This chapter reviews the recent history of Pakistani COIN operations, its divergence from Western doctrine and criticisms leveled against it, and adaptations that emerged during the campaigns in 2008–09. It also considers the role of public opinion in shaping and constraining these strategic choices. It concludes by evaluating the costs Pakistan has suffered despite these adaptations and the probability of further convergence to Western doctrine.

COUNTERING INSURGENCY SINCE 2002

Unrest in Pakistan's tribal areas began rising soon after the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. The remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership had been pushed up against the mountains of Tora Bora, but because of a shortage of forces⁸ and insufficient coordination between the U.S. and Pakistani militaries⁹ the insurgents narrowly escaped, bribing local guides to lead them through the mountains and harbor them in Pakistan's tribal areas.¹⁰ The militants soon began reconstituting and consolidating their power in those areas. Pakistan helped to

target and capture a number of al-Qaeda operatives, but it did not pursue most militant groups; it had dealt with and largely supported the Taliban for many years and believed it could work with local leaders in FATA to manage and contain the insurgents, while flushing out foreign fighters.¹¹ However, a combination of U.S. pressure and assassination attempts against Pakistan's president, General Pervez Musharraf, eventually propelled the Pakistani military to move against the militants.

For the first time in its fifty-five-year history, the regular Pakistani army (as opposed to local or paramilitary forces) was deployed into the tribal areas.¹² This was controversial, and certain actions, such as attempts to seal the border, actually generated local resistance.¹³ From 2002 to 2006, the military conducted roughly two dozen counterinsurgency operations in the tribal areas under the broad auspices of Operation Al-Mizan.¹⁴ The early operations were limited in scope and heavily dependent on Special Services Group (SSG)—Pakistan's special forces—to lead the operations mostly to target foreign fighters, including Operation Kazha Punga in June 2002, Operation Angoor Adda in October 2003, and the raid on Shin Warsak in January 2004.¹⁵

In March 2004, a section of the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) was dispatched to South Waziristan, where nearly all the tribes, but particularly the Ahmedzai Wazir, were actively or passively supporting displaced al-Qaeda members and their allies such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). While FC soldiers were attempting to cordon off and search a Taliban stronghold, the outer cordon was besieged by Waziri tribal fighters led by Pakistani Taliban commander Nek Muhammad. The military responded with Operation Kalosha, sending in seven to eight thousand troops to take on two thousand dug-in and heavily armed militants.¹⁶ Pakistan mounted a conventional offensive, deploying heavy artillery, helicopter gunships, and fighter-bombers to blanket the area with firepower. The result was a disaster. Poor planning and a lack of intelligence led to the deaths of about two hundred Pakistani security personnel and more than four hundred civilians, numerous FC desertions, and the displacement of fifty thousand locals, while the operation largely failed to damage the militants' power or capabilities.¹⁷ Moreover, the Pashtun honor code (*Pashtunwali*), which calls for the deaths of kinsmen to be avenged, compromised public support for the government and created more insurgents.¹⁸ Even before the Taliban's political assassination campaign

against local maliks, or leaders, the military deployment and the government's decision to replace knowledgeable local political agents, who historically had been helpful in influencing the tribes, contributed to a lack of intelligence on the ground.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Taliban militants were lionized for seeming to have forced the military to negotiate peace, in the Shakai Valley agreement, by the end of March 2004.

The Pakistani military followed this debacle by sending eighty thousand troops into the tribal areas in June 2004 to continue pursuing the fight in a similar "enemy-centric" fashion. During Operation Shakai Valley, the army employed a variety of tactics but particularly the use of heavy firepower—including the Pakistan Air Force's bombers and helicopter gunships—causing considerable collateral damage affecting civilians and their towns.²⁰ None of these operations sought population security or used enduring small units to patrol and gather intelligence. Nor did the military refrain from extensive use of airpower. It attempted to contain the militants in the tribal areas, but their cross-border raids into Afghanistan and infiltration into the NWFP continued unabated.²¹

Each high-intensity Pakistani military campaign was followed by a cease-fire and a short-lived peace agreement (in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008), rather than a sustainable political solution. This further empowered militant groups. The insurgents and the army simply regrouped after each cycle and prepared for the next fight. During these lulls in conflict, Taliban militants were able to install parallel governments²² in the tribal areas, enhancing their local credibility and authority.²³ The Pakistani military, after repeated failures and roughly seven hundred security force fatalities by the fall of 2006,²⁴ signed an agreement with the militants that it hoped would endure. But after the deadly raid on Islamabad's Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in the summer of 2007—when Pakistani special forces commandos removed radical Islamist leaders calling for sharia (Islamic law) and the overthrow of the Pakistani government, while inciting local violence—Taliban leaders abandoned the cease-fire and violence escalated.

Although initially concentrated in the Waziristan agencies, militant attacks spread to other agencies in FATA and parts of KP, and suicide bombings escalated. Besides the Red Mosque incident, the other major trigger for this contagion and escalation was the perceived civilian casualties and uptick in U.S. drone strikes.²⁵ The

Pakistani military launched a second round of operations beginning in September 2007 in the South Waziristan and Bajaur agencies of the FATA and the Swat Valley of NWFP, intending to rid the area of Taliban militants who had taken root there. But these operations seemed to only exacerbate violence, as combined terrorist, insurgent, and sectarian attacks rose to 2,148 incidents in 2009, an increase of 746 percent from 2005.²⁶ One analyst estimates that by early 2009 the Pakistani military had lost 70 percent of its battles with the Taliban.²⁷ This might be corroborated by the extremely high soldier-to-insurgent loss ratios that Army Chief of Staff General Ashfaq Kayani acknowledged.²⁸

The spread of militant violence from the Swat Valley through other parts of the Malakand Division of NWFP in spring 2009 revealed to both the Pakistani public and international audiences the continued failure of Pakistani counterinsurgency efforts. Although some tactical adaptations were beginning to emerge, army troops were still reported to be hunkering down in large encampments and lobbing heavy, destructive artillery shells from afar,²⁹ which appeared to harm the remaining civilians more than the militants.³⁰ In addition, the force deployed to the area did not appear to be of sufficient size for population security; this is generally believed to require a force-to-population ratio of 20:1,000.³¹ As the Pakistani approach to insurgency appeared to be floundering, however, a new intellectual movement on counterinsurgency—based on the U.S. military's lessons in Iraq and lengthy studies of past Western occupation campaigns—was gathering force and adherents.

THE RISE OF COIN AND ITS PRESCRIPTIONS

The U.S. lessons and change of strategy in Iraq—stemming from and emerging alongside a doctrinal review (U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24) and new intellectual movement based around counterinsurgency theory—produced a set of best practices now generally referred to as COIN doctrine.³² The goal of COIN, according to the U.S. government, is to achieve control by "build[ing] popular support for a government while marginalizing the insurgents: It is therefore fundamentally an armed political competition with the insurgents."³³

Western COIN doctrine calls for political solutions over military, population security over enemy targeting, ground forces over airpower, and small-unit rather than large-unit force deployments for missions (such as patrols, intelligence gathering, and development assistance). In essence, these practices expose troops to greater vulnerability to achieve more discriminatory use of force.³⁴ Beyond these tactics, a successful COIN campaign requires certain “best practices,” including unification of civilian and military structures; effective use of amnesty and rewards; construction and enforcement of border security; and development of local, perhaps indigenous, pacification capacities, which in the case of Pakistan would mean local militias, or *lashkars*.³⁵

Given the successes of this population-security model of counterinsurgency touted by such scholars as David Kilcullen and James Dobbins,³⁶ theories of international relations would generally predict that, in the interest of survival, other countries would emulate and adopt these best practices as they have other successful strategies of warfare.³⁷ As an ally of the United States, not only recently but also during the Cold War during which the United States closely studied and identified these best practices in COIN, Pakistan should have been most likely to adopt a Western model of population-security COIN.³⁸ And yet it has rarely done so, if ever.

PAKISTAN'S DISTINCTIVE APPROACH TO COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Pakistani military has thus far mostly conducted campaigns that run counter to all these prescriptions of Western COIN doctrine. This is primarily attributable to military doctrine rooted in persistent fear of a numerically superior Indian army threatening the Pakistani core. Most operations since 2002 relied nearly exclusively on overwhelming force with heavy artillery and aerial bombing to break the enemy.³⁹ In some instances, the military deliberately used heavy-handed tactics to “out-terrorize the terrorist,”⁴⁰ but pure coercion and collective punishment achieved little.

Though several Pakistan experts and analysts have articulated the various failures of the Pakistani military approach,⁴¹ Kilcullen

neatly summarizes the several interlinking shortfalls since 2002: (1) a nearly exclusive focus on enemy targeting and “high-value targets”; (2) overdependence on large-scale, multiunit forces rather than small, lithe patrol units dispersed among the population; (3) frequent defensive deployment of forces to static garrisons, check points, or asset tasks, inhibiting proactive missions; (4) the absence of maneuver room and a shortage of resources such as quick-reaction forces for flexible responses to contingencies; (5) overreliance on kinetic “direct-action” operations; and (6) underuse of the capacity and knowledge of local forces (i.e., the Frontier Corps and tribal *lashkars*).⁴²

The net result was rapid disappearance of whatever tactical gains the military had achieved. Fair and Jones write, “Pakistani operations were not sustained over time, but rather were marked by sweeps, searches and occasional bloody battles. None of these operations employed sufficient forces to hold territory.”⁴³

One might contend that the Pakistani military has in recent years modified its approach from outright raiding on insurgent positions, with little regard for civilians, to a more targeted strategy of clearing out the population to separate them from insurgents; this approach, however, still yields coercive dislocation, refugees, and simmering resentment. Moreover, raiding and coercive sorting can potentially exacerbate local grievances and in turn lead to more passive or active support of insurgents. Reports of insurgent infiltration and militant recruitment in refugee camps after the Swat and Bajaur campaigns suggest that coercive sorting operations designed to crudely separate the population and reduce collateral damage can still alienate the local people and thus be undermined by their unintended consequences.

Meanwhile, the nature of kinetic, “phase one,” enemy-centric operations that disregard the “hold” and “build” phases of counterinsurgency—combined with historically poor civil-military relations, weak civilian capacity, and a historical absence of governance in this region—has limited the role of civilians in the counterinsurgency campaigns of the past eight years. Even with signs of a shift toward greater civilian participation in Swat, there is little evidence that this is balanced with the military’s role or that it can be applied elsewhere, particularly in the FATA.

REASONS FOR DIVERGENCE: DIFFICULTIES, DRAWBACKS, AND COSTS

Pakistani deviation from COIN prescriptions can be attributed in large part to the great challenges involved in counterinsurgency. Manpower requirements notwithstanding, COIN is considered one of the most difficult operations to execute; it is extremely costly and time-intensive, and it can bog down even the most capable and sophisticated militaries in the world.⁴⁴ The tactical and organizational barriers are quite high for most modern militaries, particularly those in the developing world, where the relatively democratic and egalitarian social and political structures necessary for the success of a “hearts and minds” counterinsurgency are largely absent.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the process of transitioning to a COIN force can take years. Even after the U.S. military made doctrinal changes in response to the insurgency in Iraq, there was still a substantial time lag in actually adopting these practices. This organizational lag results in part from the need for a professional military to effectively “unlearn” what it has been trained to do, so it can then adopt the best practices of COIN.⁴⁶ It is therefore possible that the more professionally the military has trained for conventional warfare, the longer it takes to adapt. Not factoring in this organizational lag, should the Pakistani military exclusively dedicate itself to this purpose, one estimate of the time frame for retraining the Pakistani army and some irregular units for a population-security counterinsurgency campaign would still be two to five years.⁴⁷

The downside of focusing on COIN, however, is that it can force strategic trade-offs, such as weakening the conventional capabilities for which the military is primarily trained. Recent studies suggest that the Israel Defense Forces, after decades of counterinsurgency in the occupied territories, were underprepared for the partially conventional fight against Hezbollah in the 2006 Lebanon war.⁴⁸

The circumstances in Pakistan also provide explanations for its different approach. The Taliban insurgents have proved to be a much more formidable and committed opponent than either the Pakistani military or Western observers anticipated. The size of the insurgency—ranging from twenty to forty thousand, depending on the degree of Taliban unification—is quite large, and the diffusion of training and skills through

field manuals has enabled the militants to punch above the weight of simply the battle-hardened fighters. Taliban affiliates are most unified when fighting U.S. and Western forces, but they can also unite around Pakistani military incursions. They have sought greater institutionalization in recent years, adapted to counter new Pakistani tactics, and managed to weather a succession process following the death of Baitullah Mehsud, leader of the umbrella group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Among other factors that make any type of counterinsurgency campaign in Pakistan especially difficult: a high level of militant commitment, a long history of tribal autonomy and resistance to perceived efforts at centralized control (even those intended to improve development and governance), and the immensely challenging terrain of the tribal areas.⁴⁹

Because of the insurgency’s size and capacity, the Pakistani military is stretched thin in resources and manpower.⁵⁰ Even with sixty thousand troops stationed at a thousand posts along the border, the government has trouble controlling the area—that is, subduing militant training, cross-border raids into Afghanistan, and use of safe havens. The difficult mountainous terrain favors the insurgents,⁵¹ with more than twenty “frequented” passes and some three hundred “unfrequented” passes that the fighters can use.⁵² Though Pakistani forces can, in theory, be dispersed and deployed locally within the tribal areas in accordance with Western COIN doctrine, they remain surrounded by tribal networks and forces, and their lines of communication and supply depend on the goodwill of these groups.⁵³ Pakistan has often supplemented its regular army troops with local irregular forces, but their usefulness is constrained by limited skills and equipment.⁵⁴ Moreover, improving the abilities of these paramilitary fighters, or embedding them with regular troops, risks undermining the central government’s control, embroiling the troops in tribal battles, and potentially weakening the regular forces.

Finally, a Western-style COIN campaign would present Pakistan with a Catch-22. Because of its limited resources, Pakistan would require substantial U.S. and other Western assistance—military aid, training, and economic support—for a successful and enduring COIN campaign. However, as the U.S. role expanded and became more visible, Pakistan would face a stiffer public backlash, a steeper decline in the morale of its regular and irregular forces, and a more cohesive insurgency.⁵⁵

These obstacles to a purely “population-centric” COIN strategy helps explain why Pakistan has so far pursued low-intensity war with

ample use of heavy firepower. After the many failures of this approach from 2001 to 2008, the most recent operations, which incorporated some new tactics, show promising signs of improvement and moderate success even without fully adhering to classical COIN doctrine.

“LEARNING BY DOING”: RECENT ADAPTATIONS IN SWAT AND SOUTH WAZIRISTAN

Though the Pakistani military’s approach diverges from Western COIN prescriptions, this has not inhibited learning, improvement, and adaptation to a hybrid model that combines some of the COIN practices with refined indigenous methods. Through a process of “learning by doing,” the army addressed its failures of earlier years by raising troop levels, improving training, and “inoculating” troops for a very different type of battlefield.⁵⁶ The result has been dynamic incorporation of lessons learned from the field⁵⁷ and adoption of some U.S. military practices (some effective, but some counterproductive).⁵⁸ The COIN practices include deploying smaller and more dispersed units, patrolling to protect the population, and raising local police forces to sustain operational gains. And in recent years, more formal and advanced preparation for COIN has been incorporated into the curriculum of Pakistan military academies and training centers.⁵⁹

The Pakistani military still uses substantial airpower to soften up militant targets, but it has begun to combine this with more follow-on ground forces to disperse militants and secure the area for the local population. Likewise, the hybrid strategy accepts the need for a political solution rather than a purely coercive military one, employing both a “hearts and minds” campaign and a “divide and rule” approach. These innovations and adaptations were displayed in the recent campaigns in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan.

SWAT: OPERATION RAH-E-RAST (RIGHTEOUS PATH)

In Swat, beginning in April 2009, the deliberate innovation of the military was to actively clear out the population in order to better target insurgents and reduce collateral damage.⁶⁰ This allowed freer targeting

of insurgents, but it also risked a backlash from locals and a potential breeding ground for militant recruitment in refugee camps.⁶¹ However, in follow-on operations, the military, combined with some civilian efforts, shifted to a more population-centric approach by working to quickly resettle the internally displaced persons (IDPs), reestablish the writ of governance, and help people restart their lives with injections of economic support.⁶² The success of the operation and support for the central government’s jurisdiction will depend heavily on the success of IDP resettlement and substantive changes in governance and the justice system in the Swat Valley.

At the tactical level, the military began to further incorporate advice from junior officers, which led to innovative use of forces and equipment on the battlefield. Before this, shifts in strategy and tactics had been promulgated from the top down, but with little positive effect. In the absence of established counterinsurgency doctrine or manuals, captains through colonels, who had drawn lessons from successful bottom-up experimentation in the Bajaur campaign (late 2008 to early 2009), were brought into the decision-making process.⁶³ Higher troop levels in Swat and use of combined air and ground maneuvers allowed the military to pursue and encircle insurgent forces, particularly foreign militants.⁶⁴ However, blocking forces made major blunders, failing to constrain local Taliban militants and to restrict outside combatants from entering Swat to join the fight. The military is reported to have made great use of dispersed forces,⁶⁵ including the SSG.⁶⁶ It also began building small bases within populated areas, enforcing curfews through small-unit patrols, and assisting with local aid.⁶⁷ After the “clear” phase (phase one), the military retained two divisions in Swat for the “hold” phase.⁶⁸ However, it is unclear how the troops are presently performing this role—whether they are patrolling and building confidence in the local communities, as they were doing immediately after phase one,⁶⁹ or remaining in close proximity for future punitive actions against a Taliban resurgence. As one of these divisions is mechanized, it is unlikely to be trained for the population-centric, risk-intensive missions of counterinsurgency.⁷⁰

The sustainability of the gains in Swat remains uncertain, especially with reports that Taliban strength was merely displaced, and that reinfiltration and attacks continue.⁷¹ After all, the Pakistani military declared victory in Swat once before, at the beginning of 2008, but the

insurgents were able to return and regain their power in the region.⁷² Consolidating success in Swat will remain contingent on the holding and building phases—reincorporating the two million IDPs while maintaining security, preventing Taliban reinfiltration, and working with civilian bureaucracies to “build” on the gains by addressing the economic and governance grievances that had provided openings for the Taliban takeover. This will be a challenge, given Pakistan’s limited resources, the attention focused on subsequent operations in South Waziristan, and the fallout from that campaign in neighboring tribal areas. Consolidation of gains will also be hampered by the Pakistani state’s structural problems, among them historically poor civil-military relations, cycles of political instability, and weak social and economic institutions.⁷³

Additionally, in the bigger picture, only cautious optimism for the approach employed in Swat is warranted because Swat may present more of an exception than a model for future operations. Success in the “more settled” Swat Valley may not be replicable in the tribal areas because of pronounced differences in environmental and structural conditions. Swat’s higher levels of development and infrastructure, population density, formal incorporation into the Pakistani state with political representation, and acceptance of central governance may better facilitate the consolidation of gains in Swat. This includes resettlement of IDPs, resumption of governance, reconstruction, establishment of local security forces, and demobilization of militants.⁷⁴

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: OPERATION RAH-E-NIJAT (PATH TO DELIVERANCE)

During the fall 2009 South Waziristan operation to dislodge the stronghold of TTP founded by Baitullah Mehsud, the Pakistani military followed on its successful maneuvers in Swat. It employed higher ratios of Peshawar-based regular army infantry in comparison to previous campaigns in the FATA, which relied heavily on the Frontier Corps. Though official military statements reported the deployment at thirty thousand troops, including two regular infantry divisions, some estimates inclusive of supporting troops placed the figure as high as sixty thousand.⁷⁵

Before the actual operation, the military took several steps to effectively shape the environment and target the region. In a major tactical maneuver, it sidelined powerful tribal-based militant groups led by Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur, whose resistance to previous operations in the FATA had foiled the Pakistani military’s ability to concentrate power against a specific set of targets.⁷⁶ Second, the military experimented with psychological operations, distributing leaflets supposedly from religious authorities and local tribes warning youths of “false jihad” and blaming foreign militants for bringing destruction to the tribal areas.⁷⁷ Third, Pakistani Special Forces began targeting known commanders and suspected militant bases in the spring of 2009 with airpower and helicopter strikes to soften them.⁷⁸

These steps all indicated a more sophisticated understanding of the enemy, but they remained part of a phase one “clear” operation. This approach did not necessarily bear much resemblance to COIN except in force-to-population ratios, but because it formed only the front end of what is expected to be a long campaign, the jury is still out on whether lessons of COIN are being incorporated into Pakistani military doctrine and practice.

After significant pummeling of suspected Mehsud encampments with artillery and airpower,⁷⁹ army ground forces advanced slowly and methodically toward Taliban strongholds along three axes in a section of South Waziristan.⁸⁰ Further tactical adjustments in the operation included seizing the high ground to control valleys and employing effective route clearance to limit damage from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁸¹ The military also received operational intelligence support, with data collected by unmanned U.S. aerial vehicles, to help with navigation and targeting.⁸² After seven weeks of ground fighting, the Pakistani government declared a tactical success but quickly added that the campaign would continue in other parts of the tribal areas where violence had resurfaced.⁸³

As in the case with Swat, the outcome in Waziristan will depend heavily on the operation’s material impact on the militants and the population (something still being examined), as well as future actions by the Pakistani military and government to consolidate these tactical gains. Analysts believe the Mehsud camp of the Pakistani Taliban, which has been targeting the Pakistani state, may have been dislodged from its bases and disrupted, but it may be far from being

dismantled. (Baitullah Mehsud was killed by a reported U.S. drone strike in August 2009; his successor, Hakimullah Mehsud, is believed to have died following a January 2010 air strike, though the TTP has denied it.) It was estimated that the TTP had ten to fifteen thousand militants, including a thousand to fifteen hundred foreign (primarily Uzbek) fighters,⁸⁴ but the army offensive encountered only a few isolated pockets of intense resistance early, even in the Uzbek stronghold of Kaniguram.⁸⁵ With resistance melting away and only six hundred Taliban militants having been reported killed, this suggests that most TTP fighters dispersed early or during the fighting, or that they relocated to maintain operational capabilities. The rash of suicide bombings throughout Pakistan that claimed a thousand lives in 2009, the continued bombings—thirty-seven were conducted in the five months since the operations in South Waziristan began—and the flare-up of violence in neighboring tribal agencies seem to support the theory of continuing capability.⁸⁶

The conclusion then is that the Mehsud camp may have been dealt a blow and lost its operational base, but the displaced militants have already resumed operations against soft targets. One retired Pakistani brigadier general has voiced his belief that the TTP will be able to regroup and resume hit-and-run tactics in South Waziristan.⁸⁷ And some former Pakistani generals and analysts contend that military operations in the tribal region are far from over, and that other agencies, once deemed stable in early 2009, might fall again to Taliban control.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, a number of factors that remain unknown could unfavorably tip the balance and, in combination, determine the outcome in South Waziristan. One is the Taliban's ability to retreat into neighboring Afghan or Pakistani provinces or districts, avoiding immediate battle so the militants can return to fight again. In fact, raids launched from Eastern Afghanistan into Bajaur Agency and upper Dir became a major concern for Pakistan in 2011. Another concern is the limits of the Pakistani military presence in the tribal areas during the "hold" phase, due to scarce resources,⁸⁹ as well as possible tribal backlash that could collapse the fragile treaties that have kept other TTP affiliates neutral. A big question is the impact of South Waziristan's IDPs on the region in terms of resettlement, resentments and potential militant recruitment, and pathways for militant reinfiltration; this also applies to IDPs

from Bajaur and Swat, an issue that has not been fully addressed.⁹⁰ Another unknown is the impact of retaliatory suicide bombings on the willingness of the government, the military, and the public to press the South Waziristan campaign further.⁹¹ Finally, there is the choice of endgame for the tribal region, in part dependent on the previous factor of political will. Should there be a return to tribal autonomy managed by political agents, as Pakistani analysts seem to prefer,⁹² or the much more difficult project of development, new governance, and greater political enfranchisement, which for historical and cultural reasons could engender even more resistance?⁹³

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION

Though the Pakistani military seems to have adapted during its confrontations with militants in 2009, Pakistani public opinion has not demonstrably shifted in tandem, as some have claimed, and may force the state and military in different directions. Even with increasing popular support for combating certain militant extremists who threaten Pakistan's security, there has not been a substantial, corresponding shift in attitudes toward cooperation with the United States or alignment with its strategic vision for the region. The trends and role of public opinion need to be examined to assess potential support for or constraints on future counterinsurgency campaigns.

Before 2007, little publicized polling work was done in Pakistan outside of the Pew Global Attitudes survey and domestic Pakistani polls. Although public opinion from 2002 to 2006 was trending toward greater moderation in beliefs⁹⁴ and support for the United States—including a spike in favorability after U.S. relief efforts in response to the October 2005 earthquake—views were still extremely negative. U.S. favorability only once crossed the 25 percent threshold, while unfavorable opinions trumped favorables by approximately a 3:1 ratio. In 2004, 41 percent of those surveyed said they believed suicide bombing was at least sometimes justified, and in 2005 52 percent of the sample reported confidence in al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.⁹⁵

More recent polling by a variety of outlets has analyzed a broader range of Pakistani public opinion on more focused subjects. From late 2006 to 2009, the Pakistani public had largely dismissed the Taliban

threat and opposed the military's cooperation with and participation in the U.S.-led war on terrorism.⁹⁶ Threat perceptions of extremist groups, particularly the Taliban, steadily grew and hardened over the decade, but Pakistanis were divided on the best course of action and remained "at best ambivalent about armed responses against the militants ravaging the country."⁹⁷ From mid-2007 until the spring of 2009, public support for peace deals with militants rose to a majority of Pakistanis, declining only after the operations in Swat Valley. During this same time span, perhaps owing to the repeated failures of military campaigns in 2002–2006, a majority of Pakistanis also opposed army operations against militants. But as the peace deals were broken and Taliban militants encroached into more settled areas such as Swat, public opinion began to turn.

Polls in the spring and summer of 2009 appeared to reveal a marked shift in public attitudes, with greater support for military action and declining support for peace deals. But it remained uncertain whether this shift would endure, given the potential consequences of unfolding military operations. After the operations in Swat, a poll by Al Jazeera and Gallup Pakistan revealed yet another turn, with renewed support for dialogue with militants over military action (43 percent versus 41 percent). However, this directly conflicted with the findings of an International Republican Institute poll from around the same time that suggested rising support for military operations in Malakand Division (i.e., Swat and its surrounding areas) and declining support for peace deals.

Additionally, these polls found escalating hostility toward the United States. Not only did support for cooperation drop sharply (from 37 percent in March 2009 to 18 percent in July 2009),⁹⁸ but more worrisome, a perception was emerging that the United States posed the greatest threat to Pakistan. At a staggering 59 percent, the figure for the United States more than doubled those of India (18 percent) and the Pakistani Taliban (11 percent) combined.⁹⁹

As the South Waziristan operation was in its first few weeks, another Gallup Pakistan poll revealed even more mixed results. A slim majority in late October 2009 supported military action, but slightly more believed it would worsen the situation (37 percent) than bring peace (36 percent). Blame for the deteriorating situation in Waziristan was attributed somewhat evenly among the Taliban (25 percent), the Pakistani government

(31 percent), and the United States (36 percent). Similarly, opinions on ownership of the war were divided, with 37 percent believing it to be Pakistan's war, 39 percent saying it was America's war, and 22 percent believing both had a shared stake in the outcome.¹⁰⁰

Recent statistical analysis of Pakistani public opinion reveals something more striking: public sentiment in support of militant groups cannot be explained simply by poverty, religion, or democracy. Rather, it depends on a more sophisticated strategic calculation of the usefulness of particular militant groups in different theaters for different objectives.¹⁰¹ Though greatly in need of further study and replication, the implication of this evidence is that support for militants may not be easily sapped by a single social policy agenda, and that it could take years to change the perceived costs and benefits of these strategic choices.

The Pakistani military deftly navigated public opinion by waiting for a proximate cause—the militant assault on the army's general headquarters in October 2009—before publicly launching its ground offensive in South Waziristan.¹⁰² In this instance, it was able to marshal public support and cast the offensive as one in defense of the Pakistani state rather than on behalf of the United States. But the Pakistani government will not always have such a public relations opportunity. Presently, Pakistani military operations are opposed by a plurality of residents in North and South Waziristan,¹⁰³ which means they would encounter resistance from the population in mobilizing support and collecting human intelligence, thus contributing to the government's hesitation to expand operations here. Moreover, increased popular support for the Pakistani state does not translate to more support for the United States, or change the tide of anti-U.S. public opinion in Pakistan. For instance, a 2011 survey in FATA shows continued support for Pakistani military presence and offensives, but not if combined with or supported by the United States or other external actors.¹⁰⁴ Even if a structural turn in Pakistani public opinion on counterterrorism issues emerges,¹⁰⁵ rising anti-American sentiment could prevent the Pakistani military from adopting a shared set of counterinsurgency practices, an improved training program,¹⁰⁶ and a broader strategic outlook on combating both the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban networks—all of which may be necessary to consolidate its gains against militants in the region.

CONCLUSIONS

Though the Pakistani military has a mixed record of success and failure, its approach to counterinsurgency has generally diverged from the recently ascendant set of prescriptions and best practices. Commonly referred to by Western analysts as COIN doctrine, these prescriptions emphasize population security and political solutions, winning the hearts and minds of the people with more controlled and discriminatory use of force. Pakistan's departure from this approach stems from strategic and doctrinal priorities, resource constraints, level of difficulty, and potential drawbacks and trade-offs, all of which make COIN a less attractive option.

Despite this divergence, the Pakistani military has demonstrated substantial learning and adaptation, and its approach to countering insurgency in the tribal areas has changed over the past decade. After establishing mechanisms and practices to learn from previous mistakes, the military has modified a number of its tactics against the Taliban, both on and off the battlefield, to improve its chances of success. Some of these lessons and adaptations were drawn from elements of COIN doctrine, particularly during the Swat operation, resulting in a hybrid model incorporating Western prescriptions and the military's own approach.

It is important to note that Pakistan's adaptations during the 2009 military operations were not a full-fledged doctrinal shift, but modifications in low-intensity conflict.¹⁰⁷ Whether due to constraints or by choice, the Pakistani approach to counterinsurgency retains many vestiges of conventional warfare. The nature of the military's equipment and force structure often yields tactical choices such as heavy use of airpower.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, until a formal institution or counterinsurgency training school is created, this approach to warfare will not fully change among the junior or senior officer corps. Since tactics derive from strategy, so long as Pakistan diverges from U.S. strategic aims in the region it will likely employ a different set of political tactics such as "divide and rule" in the tribal areas, much to the frustration of Western leaders and analysts.¹⁰⁹

Pakistan's caution at fully converting to Western COIN—or quickly turning to take on militants in North Waziristan, as many analysts hoped—stems from the heavy cost since 2002, including thirty thousand people killed in the last four years¹¹⁰ and an estimated net loss of \$28 billion to Pakistan's economy during the war on terrorism.¹¹¹ Since beginning these operations, the Pakistan army has suffered

nearly thirteen thousand casualties, which includes more than three thousand killed and more than seven hundred permanently wounded—the equivalent of two brigades of personnel. However, owing to the unusually high ratio of officers killed in this fight (one for every sixteen enlisted men), this is perceived to be tantamount to the loss of two divisions' worth of operational capacity.¹¹²

The neutrality agreements with some militant groups in the region (particularly those of Nazir and Gul Bahadur), created specifically to prevent them from opposing military operations in South Waziristan, do not constitute an enduring alignment or effective cooptation, but rather a sequenced strategic choice by both sides. Whereas the agreements will likely prove untenable in the medium to long run, given their incongruence with other Pakistani state objectives in the region, the government has shown no signs of foreclosing on these side deals in the near term. Meanwhile, the government hesitates to confront the militant networks that remain active in Afghanistan but seem to pose less of an immediate threat to the Pakistani state.¹¹³ Overall, Pakistan's reluctance to confront the entire stock of radical militant networks within its borders is not uniquely a function of capabilities (both military and governance) or political will, but a mix of both that cannot be neatly separated.¹¹⁴

The Pakistani military has long experience contending with insurgencies throughout the country, as well as managing militant and insurgent groups on its borders since the 1980s. This vast indigenous knowledge, coupled with the military's doctrinal and strategic preferences, seems to inform Pakistan's path of counterinsurgency—an approach that is improving, absorbing lessons, and adapting, and one that ultimately may achieve degrees of success even as it departs from Western formulas.

Notes

1. These debates dating back to at least the 1990s are prominent in a number of Pakistan's service and strategic journals, including *Pakistan Army Journal*, *Pakistan Defence Review*, *National Defence University Journal*. Additionally, the *Pakistan Army Green Book* from 2002 specifically focused on "Low-Intensity Conflict."

2. "Pakistan: The Ravaging of Golden Bengal," *Time*, Aug. 2, 1971.
3. See Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "No Sign Until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4, Spring 2008, p. 76.
4. See Paul Staniland, "Cities on Fire: Social Mobilization, State Policy, and Urban Insurgency," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 12, December 2010.
5. C. Christine Fair, *Urban Battle Fields of South Asia: Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan* (RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2004).
6. See Khalid Aziz, "Need for a Counterinsurgency Strategy," *News International*, June 15, 2008; Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "Analyzing Domestic Terrorism as a Threat to Pakistan's Security and the Policy Response," *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Summer 2009, p. 61; Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan's Continued Failure to Adopt a Counterinsurgency Strategy," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 2009.
7. David J. Kilcullen, "Terrain, Tribes, and Terrorists: Pakistan, 2006–2008," Brookings Counterinsurgency and Pakistan Paper Series, No. 3, Sept. 10, 2009; Seth G. Jones, "Pakistan's Dangerous Game," *Survival*, Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring 2007.
8. Peter Krause, "The Last Good Chance: A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora," *Security Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, October 2008, pp. 644–84.
9. Fair and Jones argue that there was a convergence of interests over targeting al-Qaeda and meaningful cooperation between the U.S. and Pakistani forces. See C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, "Pakistan's War Within," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 6, December 2009, pp. 161–88. However, Cloughley argues that the Tora Bora operation was not coordinated with the Pakistani military, despite U.S. claims, so it could not seal the border. Upon hearing about the operation through the press, the army deployed five thousand troops from the XI Corps within three days, although they could hardly seal such a long border. The failure of strategies on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border over the past few years has been partly attributed to this continued lack of coordination. Brian Cloughley, *War, Coups, and Terror: Pakistan's Army in Years of Turmoil* (Skyhorse, New York, 2009), pp. 187–88. This charge of failure to coordinate is echoed in Carey Schofield, *Inside the Pakistan Army* (Biteback, London, 2011), pp. 132–33.
10. Shuja Nawaz, "FATA—A Most Dangerous Place: Meeting the Challenge of Militancy and Terror in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan," Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, January 2009.
11. Fair and Jones, December 2009, pp. 167–68; Imtiaz Gul, *The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan's Lawless Frontier* (Penguin Books, New York, 2011), p. 13; Schofield, 2011, p. 134.
12. Kilcullen, 2009, p. 9.
13. Schofield, 2011, p. 143.
14. Fair and Jones, December 2009, p. 168.
15. Schofield, 2011, pp. 138–51.
16. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (Penguin, New York, 2008). Schofield, 2011, pp. 152–56; Gul, 2011, pp. 21–31.
17. This account is largely drawn from Nawaz, "FATA—A Most Dangerous Place," p. 25; Fair and Jones, "Pakistan's War Within," pp. 168–69; and Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*. Fatality figures are from South Asia Terrorism Portal.
18. Nicholas Schmidle, *To Live or to Perish Forever* (Holt, New York, 2009), pp. 50–51; Johnson and Mason, *International Security*, Spring 2008.
19. Nawaz, "FATA—A Most Dangerous Place," pp. 9–11.
20. For greater descriptions of these operations, see Fair and Jones, December 2009; Schofield, 2011, 156–60.
21. Rashid, 2008.
22. These governance institutions may not have filled every role of the state, but they included a degree of legitimate force, dispute arbitration, taxation, and conscription.
23. Fair and Jones, December 2009, p. 172.
24. This unofficial figure was reported by Shaun Gregory, "Pakistan on Edge," OpenDemocracy.net, Sept. 24, 2006. This corresponds closely with data reported by South Asia Terrorism Portal, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>.
25. Gul, 2011, pp. 96, 135–37.
26. Fair and Jones, December 2009, p. 174.
27. An anonymous American analyst is cited. "Pakistan and the Taliban: A Real Offensive or a Phony War?" *Economist*, Apr. 30, 2009.
28. Gul, 2011, p. 127.
29. Rashid, "Pakistan's Continued Failure to Adopt a Counterinsurgency Strategy," March 2009.
30. Richard A. Opiel Jr. and Pir Zubair Shah, "In Pakistan, Radio Amplifies Terror of Taliban," *New York Times*, Jan. 25, 2009.
31. See quote from Gen. David Petraeus and FM 3–24 in Peter Krause, "Troop Levels in Stability Operations: What We Don't Know," MIT Audit of the Conventional Wisdom, February 2007; James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters*, Vol. 25, Winter 1995–96, pp. 59–69.
32. For evidence of this intellectual movement, see John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Praeger, Westport, CT, 2002); David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford University Press, 2009); Stephen Biddle, "The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual as Political Science and Political Praxis," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 2008; Thomas Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008* (Penguin, New York, 2009); U.S. Army Field Manual 3–24.
33. U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, 2009.
34. Biddle, "The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual." The dominant counterinsurgency approach—"clear-hold-build"—is described in Army Field Manual 3–24, pp. 5–18.
35. A report prepared for the U.S. defense secretary by RAND, drawing on the lessons of COIN from British, French, and U.S. experiences during the past fifty years, offers several practices and techniques that have been proposed for the

- U.S. campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2006).
36. David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 7; James Dobbins, "Your COIN Is No Good Here," *Foreign Affairs*, Oct. 26, 2010, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66949/james-dobbins/your-coin-is-no-good-here>.
 37. See Kenneth Waltz, *A Theory of International Politics* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1979), p. 127.
 38. One retired Lt. General in the Pakistan Army acknowledged that Pakistan had access to and reviewed U.S. Army COIN doctrine in the 1970s but did not find it useful or applicable. Author interview, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Oct. 22, 2011.
 39. Rashid, 2009; Rashid, 2008.
 40. Haider Ali Hussein Mullick, *Pakistan's Security Paradox: Countering and Fomenting Insurgencies* (Joint Special Operations University Press, Hurlburt Field, FL, 2009).
 41. See Fair and Jones, December 2009; Rashid, 2009; Moeed Yusuf and Anit Mukherjee, "Counterinsurgency in Pakistan: Learning from India," *AEI National Security Outlook*, September 2007; Stephen P. Cohen and Shuja Nawaz, "Mastering Counterinsurgency: A Workshop Report," Brookings Counterinsurgency and Pakistan Paper Series, July 7, 2009; and Haider Ali Hussein Mullick, *Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban: A Joint Action Agenda for the United States & Pakistan*, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, August 2009.
 42. Kilcullen, 2009.
 43. Fair and Jones, "Pakistan's War Within," December 2009, p. 172.
 44. Biddle, 2008.
 45. Daniel Byman, "Friends Like These," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 2006.
 46. Austin Long, "Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence: The U.S. Military and Counterinsurgency Doctrine, 1960–1970 and 2003–2006," RAND Counterinsurgency Study, No. 6, 2008.
 47. Sameer Lalwani, *Pakistani Capabilities for a Counterinsurgency Campaign: A Net Assessment*, Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Publication, New America Foundation, September 2009.
 48. Avi Kober, "The Israel Defense Forces in the Second Lebanon War: Why the Poor Performance?" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2008; Matt M. Mathews, "We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War," Long War Series Occasional Paper 26, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008.
 49. See Kilcullen, 2009; Johnson and Mason, 2008; Nawaz, 2009; Lalwani, 2009.
 50. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, February 2003.
 51. Johnson and Mason, 2008.
 52. "Afghanistan, Pakistan: The Battlespace of the Border," Stratfor Intelligence, 2008.
 53. However, this is beginning to change in recent years.
 54. Lalwani, 2009.
 55. Stephen P. Cohen and Shuja Nawaz, "Mastering Counterinsurgency: A Workshop Report," Brookings Counterinsurgency and Pakistan Paper Series, July 7, 2009. The cumulative "learning by doing" process was also confirmed by a personal interview with Major General (Ret.) Mahmud Durrani, former Pakistani ambassador to the United States, December 2009.
 56. Mullick, August 2009; Durrani, 2009.
 57. Kilcullen, 2009, p. 13. For instance, Kilcullen explains how Pakistan began to model some U.S. techniques in Iraq and Afghanistan using high-value targeting, "sting" operations, and air-assault raids based on intelligence rather than patrolling and population security.
 58. Shuja Nawaz, "Learning by Doing: The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency," *Atlantic Council*, February 2011.
 59. Durrani, 2009.
 60. "Taliban Finds Fertile Recruiting Ground in Pakistan's Tribal Refugee Camps," *U.S. News & World Report*, Feb. 9, 2009.
 61. Durrani, 2009.
 62. Mullick describes how commanders bucked field manuals by using soldiers to help local people escape before the use of heavy artillery, combining intelligence sources to improve targeting, and deploying tanks in urban areas to target snipers. See Mullick, August 2009, pp. 21–22.
 63. Durrani, 2009.
 64. Brian Cloughley, "Insurrection, Terrorism, and the Pakistan Army," Pakistan Security Research Unit Brief, No. 53, Dec. 10, 2009.
 65. Mullick, August 2009.
 66. Frederick Kagan, "The Two-Front War," *Weekly Standard*, Nov. 9, 2009.
 67. Mullick argues that they established small bases within the population, enforced curfews, and supported local government, but it is not clear this has endured. See Mullick, August 2009, p. 21.
 68. Though by no means conclusive, recent quantitative analysis of counterinsurgency has suggested that a higher level of mechanization leads to a lower rate of counterinsurgency success. See Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson III, "Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization*, Vol. 63, Winter 2009, pp. 67–106.
 69. Jane Perlez and Pir Zubair Shah, "Landowners Still in Exile from Unstable Pakistan Area," *New York Times*, July 28, 2009; Salman Masood, "Provincial Politician Is Slain in Pakistan," *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 2009.
 70. Amin Ahmed, "Army Claims Success in Swat Operation: Militancy Almost Wiped Out," *Dawn*, Jan. 17, 2008.
 71. On civil-military relations, see Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ayesha Siddiqi, *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (Pluto Press, London, 2007). On political instability cycles, see Paul Staniland, "The Poisoned Chalice: Military Culture, Contentious Politics, and Cycles of Regime Change in Pakistan," MIT Working Paper, 2009. On economic institutions, see Omar Noman, *Economic and Social Progress in Asia: Why Pakistan Did Not Become a Tiger*

- (Oxford University Press, 1997); John R. Schmidt, "The Unraveling of Pakistan," *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 3, June–July 2009.
74. Durrani, 2009.
 75. Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Assessing the Progress of Pakistan's South Waziristan Offensive," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 2, No. 12, December 2009.
 76. Durrani, 2009; Cloughley, 2009, p. 19.
 77. Cloughley, 2009, p. 20.
 78. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 79. Yusufzai, 2009; Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari, "New Strategies in Pakistan's Counter-Insurgency Operation in South Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation), Vol. 7, No. 37, Dec. 3, 2009; one analyst in close contact with Pakistani military general headquarters estimated there were initially more than 140 targets slated for air strikes.
 80. Frederick Kagan, Reza Jan, and Charlie Szrom, "The War in Waziristan: Operation Rah-e-Nijat—Phase 1 Analysis," *Critical Threats Report*, Nov. 18, 2009; Kagan, Jan, and Szrom, "The War in Waziristan: Week 1 Analysis of Operation Rah-e-Nijat," *Critical Threats Report*, Oct. 26, 2009.
 81. Kagan et al., Oct. 26, 2009.
 82. Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Quietly Speeds Aid to Pakistan to Fight Taliban," *New York Times*, Oct. 28, 2009.
 83. BBC News, "Pakistan Taliban Offensive in S. Waziristan to 'Go On,'" Dec. 12, 2009.
 84. Imtiaz Ali, "Military Victory in South Waziristan or Beginning of a Long War?" *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation), Vol. 7, No. 38, Dec. 15, 2009.
 85. Yusufzai, 2009.
 86. *Ibid.*; Alex Rodriguez, "Pakistan Taliban Regrouping Outside Waziristan," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 26, 2009; Saeed Shah, "Big Pakistan Offensive Has Failed to Nab Any Taliban Leaders," *McClatchy Newspapers*, Nov. 24, 2009. For updated data on suicide bombings and fatalities, see South Asia Terrorism Portal, "Suicide Attacks in Pakistan" database.
 87. Javed Hussain, quoted in Shah, 2009.
 88. Durrani, 2009; interview with a Pakistani analyst.
 89. Resources emphasized by Durrani, 2009.
 90. "Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA," International Crisis Group Report, No. 178, Oct. 21, 2009; Lt. Gen. Talat Masood, "Pakistan's Military Examines Its Options in North Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation), Vol. 8, No. 5, Feb. 4, 2010.
 91. Reports suggest support is already declining to 51 percent. See Yusufzai, 2009; "Most Pakistanis Back War Against Militants," Reuters, Nov. 4, 2009.
 92. Durrani, 2009; Johnson and Mason, 2008.
 93. Johnson and Mason, 2008.
 94. This includes views on extremist positions as Pew categorizes it, including support for suicide bombing and terrorism.
 95. Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Key Indicators Database."
 96. Syed Farooq Hasnat, "Pakistan's Strategic Interests, Afghanistan and the Fluctuating U.S. Strategy," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 1, Fall/Winter 2009, pp. 141–55.
 97. C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 1, Fall/Winter 2009, pp. 39–55.
 98. "Survey of Pakistan Public Opinion," International Republican Institute, Oct. 1, 2009.
 99. "Pakistan: State of the Nation," Al Jazeera/Gallup Pakistan Survey, Aug. 13, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2009/08/2009888238994769.html>.
 100. "Military Action in Waziristan: Opinion Poll," Gilani Poll/Gallup Pakistan, Nov. 3, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/03-11-09.pdf>. This finding was supported by other polls that found Pakistanis blaming the United States for instability in terrorism. In 2007, 73 percent of Pakistanis blamed the United States for unrest in South Asia (see Ijaz Shafi Gilani, *The Voice of the People*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 81), and in 2009 31 percent held U.S. agencies responsible for terrorist activities in Pakistan. See "30 Years of Polling on Crimes, Violence, Terrorism & Social Evils, 1980–2010," Pakistan Gallup and Gilani, Jan. 6, 2011, p. 46.
 101. Jacob N. Shapiro and C. Christine Fair, "Understanding Support for Islamist Militancy in Pakistan," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Winter 2009/10, pp. 79–118.
 102. Ali, 2009.
 103. Naveed Ahmad Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: 2011, Volume V*, Islamabad: Community Appraisal & Motivation Program, February 2012, p. 84.
 104. Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: 2011*, pp. 74, 76, 78, 85–86.
 105. A recent poll shows that even though Pakistani concern over terrorism remains high, economic issues still trump. When asked to identify the number one problem in Pakistan, 43 percent said inflation and 20 percent said unemployment, while 32 percent said terrorism. See "Economic Issues Perceived to Be Number One Problem of Pakistan," Gilani Poll/Gallup Pakistan, Feb. 15, 2010, <http://www.gallup.com.pk/Polls/15-02-10.pdf>.
 106. As mentioned earlier, U.S. training of Pakistani forces for counterinsurgency has largely been limited to the Frontier Corps and not the regular army. This chapter suggests that public sentiment constrains the degree of public cooperation with the United States that the Pakistani military can embrace.
 107. Even the recent changes in training and curriculum fall more under the concept "learning by doing" than a doctrinal shift. See Nawaz, 2011.
 108. Fair and Jones, December 2009, p. 181.
 109. Moeed Yusuf, "Rational Institutional Design, Perverse Incentives, and the US-Pakistan Partnership in post-9/11," *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2009.
 110. "A Great Deal of Ruin in a Nation," *Economist*, Mar. 31, 2011.
 111. This figure is cited by Lt. Gen. Talat Masood, "Pakistan's Military Examines its Options in North Waziristan," *Terrorism Monitor* (Jamestown Foundation), Vol. 8, No. 5, Feb. 4, 2010. The figure was produced by Pakistani economist Dr. Shahid Hasan Siddiqui (chairman and chief executive, Research Institute

of Islamic Banking and Finance, Karachi; fellow, Institute of Bankers, Pakistan; and fellow, Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, London), who estimates the total cost to the Pakistani economy due to depressed growth rates has been \$40 billion minus the \$12 billion in aid provided by the United States. More important than the estimate itself, which may be credibly challenged by others, is the perceived costliness of the venture by the Pakistani strategic establishment, including respected generals such as Talat Masood.

112. Wajahat S. Khan, "The Ghosts That Haunt Kiyani," *Friday Times*, Vol. 23, No. 37, Oct. 28, 2011; Khalid Aziz, "Endgame in Afghanistan," *Dawn*, Sept. 30, 2011. Both authors come to this conclusion and Khan explains the rationale—with roughly 10 officers per battalion (nine hundred soldiers) and nine battalions to a division, the loss of 194 officers amounts to decapitation of nineteen battalions or two divisions.
113. See Masood, "Pakistan Military Examines Its Options," 2010.
114. Fair and Jones conclude similarly.

SEVEN

CIA Drone Strikes and the Taliban

Peter Bergen and Jennifer Rowland

ON JULY 1, 2012, a missile launched from a U.S. drone struck a house in Pakistan's remote tribal agency of North Waziristan, killing eight suspected militants, most of whom were loyal to the Pakistani Taliban commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur. Bahadur had reportedly overseen multiple attacks against NATO troops in Afghanistan.

Although the CIA drone war against al-Qaeda is well known and is even, on occasion, publicly acknowledged by senior Obama administration officials, the strike against Bahadur's fighters was part of a lesser-known campaign to target Pakistani militants who were generally unlikely to pose a threat to the U.S. homeland—an expansion of the drone program that occurred during the administration of President Barack Obama.¹

In 2004, President George W. Bush authorized for the first time the covert lethal use of drones inside Pakistani territory. Forty-five drone strikes took place in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) during Bush's tenure, but when Obama took office in January 2009, the drone program began to ramp up quickly, accelerating from an average of one strike every forty days to one every four days by mid-2011.