India's Approach to Counterinsurgency and the Naxalite Problem

By Sameer Lalwani

SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE in 1947, India has fought dozens of campaigns against four distinct and independent insurgencies on its soil—in Punjab, Kashmir, the Northeast, and the Maoist insurgents of central India—as well as one foreign campaign in Sri Lanka. While India has accumulated a wealth of counterinsurgency (COIN) experience that has varied in terms of terrain, insurgent goals, force structure(s), foreign involvement, and outcomes, most COIN scholars have focused on Western foreign incumbent experiences to the neglect of India and other indigenous incumbents.[1] Nevertheless, as both Iraq and Afghanistan move toward assuming greater responsibility for their internal security amidst continued insurgent activity, India's COIN strategies can offer important lessons for these states and others that resemble its highly federalized political system, developing economy, and still evolving democracy.

One analyst has argued that India has "one of the world's most successful records in fighting insurgencies," noting that "it has not yet lost a counterinsurgency campaign within the country."[2] This claim, however, is puzzling given the current struggles of the Indian government to curb a raging Maoist insurgency. Today, while the insurgencies of the Northeast and Kashmir are largely contained, if not under control, and the Punjab insurgency soundly defeated, India has been earnestly testing different COIN strategies to combat a growing Maoist threat throughout its center and east known generally as the Naxalite insurgency. Since resurging in the last decade, the Naxalite uprising has been described by Indian Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh as "a great national security threat" and the "biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country."[3] This article will briefly describe some of the lessons of success and failure that can be drawn from India's decades of COIN experience and their application in the current fight against the Naxalite insurgency.

India's Alternative Approach to COIN

Generally speaking, the Indian take on COIN appears to depart from the approach advocated by Western doctrine that promotes a population-centric strategy to win "hearts and minds."[4] Despite Indian official doctrine formally espousing this concept[5] and some contentions that India has always seen COIN as a "political rather than military problem,"[6] a closer look reveals that the Indian approach may be better characterized as a strategy of attrition[7] with the deployment of "raw state coercion"[8] and "enemy-centric" campaigns[9] to suffocate an insurgency through a "saturation of forces."[10] At

times it may involve the co-optation of elites to "buy-out" and contain an insurgency.[11] When the military has been deployed, it operates under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which includes "the power of the security forces to make preventative arrests, search premises without warrant, and shoot and kill civilians."[12]

In each major counterinsurgency campaign, the Indian state developed a number of innovative tactics and organizational capacities that yielded some success along with some negative fallout. During the Punjab campaign, India militarized the police and reversed their role with the military to harness local knowledge and legitimacy and lead kinetic operations.[13] As a result, the police structure remained highly militarized, bloated, inefficient, and incapable of investigative police work more than a decade later.[14] In Kashmir, the creation of a dedicated COIN force—the Rashtriya Rifles, integrating an army ethos into a paramilitary force especially equipped and trained to conduct counterinsurgency—achieved some success, but it ultimately had to be fully manned by army personnel and faced a number of operational and coordination problems with other forces.[15]

1　Indigenous incumbent is meant to distinguish states fighting insurgency on their own soil from foreign incumbents. One notable exception is a recent volume edited by Sumit Ganguly and David Fidler, *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

2　Rajesh Rajagopalan, "Force and Compromise: India's Counterinsurgency Grand Strategy," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 30:1 (2007).

3　Manmohan Singh, "PM's Speech at the Chief Minister's Meet on Naxalism," April 13, 2006; Manmohan Singh, "PM's Valedictory Address at the Seminar on the Occasion of Golden Jubilee of National Defence College," October 22, 2010.

4　For instance, see David J. Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); John Nagl, David Petraeus, James Amos, *U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Stephen Biddle, "The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual as Political Science and Political Praxis," *Perspectives on Politics* 6:2 (2008).

5　Lawrence Cline, "The Insurgency Environment in Northeast India," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17:2 (2006).

6　Rajagopalan, "Force and Compromise: India's Counterinsurgency Grand Strategy."

7　Prem Mahadevan, "The Gill Doctrine: A Model for 21st Century Counterterrorism?" *Faultlines* 19 (2008); K.P.S. Gill, "Endgame in Punjab: 1988-1993," *Faultlines* 1 (1999); Namrata Goswami, "India's Counter-insurgency Experience: The 'Trust and Nurture' Strategy," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 20:1 (2009).

8　Paul Staniland, "Counterinsurgency is a Bloody, Costly Business," *Foreign Policy*, November 24, 2009.

9　Deepak Aneel Boyini, "Explaining Success and Failure: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and India," unpublished masters thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2010.

10　Anit Mukherjee, "India's Experiences with Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," in Sumit Ganguly ed., *Handbook of Asian Security Studies* (London: Routledge, 2010).

11　Anit Mukherjee, "Lessons from Another Insurgency," *New York Times*, May 4, 2006.

12　Sanjib Baruah, *Postfrontier Blues: Toward a New Policy Framework for Northeast India* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2007).

13　Mahadevan, "The Gill Doctrine: A Model for 21st Century Counterterrorism?"; C. Christine Fair, "Lessons from India's Experience in the Punjab, 1978-93," in Sumit Ganguly and David P. Fidler eds., *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

14　On subsequent police failures, see Arvind Verma and Srinagesh Gavirneni, "Measuring Police Efficiency in India: An Application of Data Envelopment Analysis," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 29:1 (2006); H.S. Sidhu and S.S. Bains, "Public Expenditure on Police Services in India: With Special Reference to Punjab," *The Indian Police Journal* 55:1 (2008); Pramod Kumar, *Community Policing Programme in Punjab: A Guide* (Chandigarh, India: Institute for Development and Communication, 2011).

15　Rajesh Rajagopalan, "Innovations in Counterinsurgency: The Indian Army's Rashtriya Rifles," *Contemporary South Asia* 31:1 (2004); Moeed Yusuf and Anit Mukherjee, "Counterinsurgency in Pakistan: Learning from India," AEI National Security Outlook, September 2007.

The co-optation and transformation of insurgents into local assets was a tactic employed both in Punjab (called "CATs," for Covert Apprehension Technique) and Kashmir (*ikhwanis*).[16] Turning insurgents was sometimes achieved through money[17] as well as abduction and torture,[18] but these tactics eventually led to new problems, such as increased criminal activity and corrupted security forces, for the respective governments.[19] Moreover, the highly kinetic approach of both campaigns entailed tremendous brutality, torture, disappearances, "encounter killings," and mass graves that created a litany of human rights investigations and public disaffection, and today continues to fuel simmering resentment and potentially violence.[20]

A slight variant of this approach—the buyout and political incorporation of insurgents—has enabled India to keep a lid on a whole host of insurgent separatist movements in the seven states of India's eastern extremity, India's Northeast, since 1956.[21] Yet while eliminating the prospect of separatism, it has perversely created spirals of insecurity, splinter groups (there are more than 100 distinct armed groups in the Northeast), and a dysfunctional insurgent political economy of violence, development aid, and interminable militia politics.[22]

Overall, the Indian strategy of coercion, co-optation, and containment has achieved moderate success in mitigating the threat to the state, and this is being applied today against the re-emergent Naxalite insurgency.

The Naxalite Insurgency

The Naxalites first emerged in 1967 in the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal and spread throughout the central states of Bihar, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh until it was violently suppressed by state and paramilitary forces by 1972. This militant left-wing movement fractured into more than 40 distinct groups, which began to remobilize, consolidate and become more active in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in

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the state of Andhra Pradesh.[23] Since 2004, with the merger of the two largest factions—the Peoples War Group and the Maoist Communist Center—to form the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M), violence has climbed dramatically, with 2,200 incidents and 1,200 killed in 2010 alone.[24]

It is estimated that Naxals have a presence in one-third of districts in India,[25] but with the strongest foothold in parts of seven states—West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The difference today is that this region also happens to sit atop tremendous iron ore, coal, and aluminum deposits as well as irrigation and hydroelectric potential.[26]

While some parts of the left-wing movement in India are willing to partly or fully embrace parliamentary politics to address issues of class, inequality, and distribution, the hardcore Naxalites remain unwilling to countenance democratic politics and seek the violent overthrow of the state through a variety of tactics.[27] Although conventional accounts describe them as motivated by the broad economic deprivation and absence of the state in much of rural central India,[28] a more specific reason is resentment at the local exploitative power configurations—whether feudal landlords, land-expropriating state governments, or

16 Fair; Mukherjee, "Lessons from Another Insurgency."

17 Ibid.; Prem Mahadevan, "Counter Terrorism in the Indian Punjab: Assessing the 'Cat' System," *Faultlines* 18 (2007).

18 Joyce Pettigrew, "Parents and Their Children in Situations of Terror: Disappearances and Special Police Activity in Punjab," in Jeffrey A. Sluka ed., *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

19 Sidhu and Bains; Mukherjee, "Lessons from Another Insurgency."

20 On Punjab human rights violations, see Romesh Silva, Jasmine Marwaha, and Jeff Kligner, "Violent Deaths and Enforced Disappearances During Counterinsurgency in Punjab, India: A Preliminary Quantitative Analysis," A Joint Report by Benetech's Human Rights Data Analysis Group & Ensaaf, Inc., January 2009. On Kashmir mass graves, see Lydia Polgreen, "Mass Graves Hold Thousands, Kashmir Inquiry Finds," *New York Times*, August 22, 2011.

21 Cline.

22 Baruah.

23 P.V. Ramana, "India's Maoist Insurgency: Evolution, Current Trends, and Responses," in Michael Kugelman ed., *India's Contemporary Security Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011); Jennifer L. Oetken, "Counterinsurgency Against Naxalites in India," in Sumit Ganguly and David P. Fidler eds., *India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

24 These figures are from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Reports, Government of India.

25 Rahul Bedi estimates that Naxals have a presence in 20 of India's 29 states, or 223 of 603 administrative districts, roughly one-third of the country. See Rahul Bedi,

"State Told to Disband Militia Fighting Maoist Guerillas," *New Zealand Herald*, July 13, 2011.

26 J.K. Achuthan, "Tackling Maoists: The Andhra Paradigm," *Indian Defence Review* 25:2 (2010).

27 Naxalite insurgents have targeted "class enemies" (sometimes through beheadings), police and security forces, infrastructure such as police stations, schools, local government buildings, roads, power lines, railways, and economic targets like mining and energy infrastructure. They have been able to carry out these activities through the acquisition as well as indigenous production of a wide variety of weapons including automatic firearms, rocket launchers, and a whole host of mines for which they use to conduct IED attacks and small unit ambushes. See Ramana; Achuthan; Sudeep Chakravarti, "No End in Sight," *Seminar* 605 (2010). The Naxalites are also reported to provide public goods to local residents such as security, swift justice in "people's courts," education, irrigation, community kitchens, medical units, and minimum wage enforcement in part through extortion and taxation of local government offices, contractors, businessmen, and industrialists. See Bedi; Oetken; Chakravarti; Pratul Ahuja and Rajat Ganguly, "The Fire Within: Naxalite Insurgency Violence in India," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18:2 (2007).

28 For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report from 2006-07 states, "Naxalites typically operate in a vacuum created by inadequacy of administrative and political institutions, espouse local demands and take advantage of the prevalent disaffection, perceived injustice among the underprivileged and remote segments of population." Also see "India's Naxalites: A Spectre Haunting India," *Economist*, August 17, 2006; Vani K. Borooah, "Deprivation, Violence, and Conflict: An Analysis of Naxalite Activity in the Districts of India," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 2:2 (2008).

extractive corporations—that continue to dominate and suppress the lower castes and aboriginal tribes that reside in these areas and constitute the Naxalite support base.[29] The Naxalites, however, are a protean movement that has expertly exploited a variety of caste, ethnic, or sectarian cleavages in India.[30]

Unlike some of the ethno-sectarian insurgencies of recent years, the Naxalite insurgency—posturing itself as a "people's war"—comports more with classic COIN theory that was built on notions of competitive state building to address economic and governance deficiencies.[31] In step with their historical experience, however, the Indian state has generally favored a more kinetic approach to counterinsurgency over winning "hearts and minds."[32]

There appears to be an explicit awareness that the Western COIN model may not be the right fit for India. One Indian military analyst and practitioner praised the Andhra Pradesh approach for its "enemy-centric" character, an anathema in current Western COIN discourse.[33] Another well-regarded Indian analyst defended a kinetic focus and derided the hearts and minds "myth" by recalling that even Sir Gerald Templar regarded it as "that nauseating phrase I think I invented."[34] Moreover, a well-known defense journalist wrote that a population-centric approach "has proved to be flawed."[35]

Indian State Response to the Naxalites
State Strategies

Given India's federalist structure, the onus for responding to the rising Naxalite threat has fallen upon individual states, although with substantial federal support during the past five years.[36] The hardest hit states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh—where roughly half of Naxalite activity is concentrated and continues to escalate—have raced to scale up the manpower of their state and local police forces, while being supplemented with about 40 battalions of central paramilitary forces.[37] Meanwhile, states such as Bihar and West Bengal have also seen a rise in violence in recent years as their police manpower has declined or held steady. The composition of police is another variable that may adversely affect outcomes. The police forces of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa are composed of a much higher percentage of paramilitary forces (as opposed to civil police) relative to the Indian average, potentially rendering them less locally knowledgeable or legitimate.[38]

Central and state governments have been criticized for their paramilitary forces' shortfalls in size, antiquated organizational structure and age profile, inadequate training (for instance, only firing 20 rounds per year), and most importantly the absence of coordination or a coherent strategy.[39]

The Limits of Indian Responses

True to its past history, the Indian central and state governments' COIN responses have been heavily kinetic, disregarding local public perceptions. One Indian commentator wrote, "exceeding Maoist rebels they accuse of brutality, the police, paramilitary and Salwa Judum recruits continue to freely kill unarmed

men and women. It has wrecked any short- to medium-term hope of winning tribals and forest dwellers back to the fold of the state."[40] With the launch of additional major sweep operations and expansion of commando units, collateral damage of civilians caught in the crossfire and through retribution is expected to rise.[41] Violence, whether premeditated or spontaneous, "can be completely indiscriminate, leading to the burning of the homes of innocents and their torture, maiming, rape, and death."[42]

While there have been centralized efforts to coordinate the use of force and economic development, these have largely faltered due to poor coordination, misutilization, and co-optation by local elites and corporations.[43] The Indian government has repeatedly set up unified commands to better coordinate the use of central paramilitary forces, state armed (paramilitary) police, and state local or civil police, but these have been riddled with problems and at times hindered local innovation.[44] A major attempt was launched with Operation Green Hunt in late 2009, a massive search-and-destroy operation meant to clear out the Naxalite strongholds in the forests of central India. The fissures of this unified command, however, were exposed when a company of central paramilitary forces short on local police support and intelligence were ambushed and more than 80 killed after being tracked for three days by Naxalite insurgents.[45]

29 Nandani Sundar, "At War With Oneself: Constructing Naxalism as India's Biggest Security Threat," in Michael Kugelman, *India's Contemporary Security Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011); Manoj Mate and Adnan Naseemullah, "State Security and Elite Capture: The Implementation of Antiterrorist Legislation in India," *Journal of Human Rights* 9 (2010).

30 Kirpal S. Dhillon, "Police and Terrorism," in P.J. Alexander ed., *Policing India in the New Millennium* (Mumbai, India: Allied Publishers, 2002).

31 Biddle; Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual as Political Science and Political Praxis," *Perspectives on Politics* 6:2 (2008).

32 Ramana; Bedi.

33 Boyini.

34 Ajai Sahni, "India's Maoists and the Dreamscape of 'Solutions,'" South Asia Terrorism Portal, February 2010.

35 Praveen Swami, "Anti-Maoist War in Serious Trouble," *Hindu*, August 10, 2011.

36 The minister of Home Affairs recently announced that there are currently 71 battalions of Central Paramilitary Forces deployed in the Naxalite-affected region. See "P. Chidambaram Inaugurates DGPs/IGPs Conference," Press Information Bureau, Government of India, September 15, 2011.

37 Chhattisgarh has 28 battalions and Jharkhand has 15. See Vinay Kumar, "In Chhattisgarh, Central Forces Don New Mantle," *Hindu*, April 23, 2011; Amit Gupta, "CRPF's Rain Offensive," *Telegraph*, July 12, 2011.

38 This assessment is based on data from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

39 Sahni, "India's Maoists and the Dreamscape of 'Solutions'"; Achuthan; Bhavna Vij-Aurora, "Armed and Dangerous," *India Today*, April 25, 2011.

40 The local vigilantes in part recruited by the state governments, sometimes as special police officers or village defense committees, are known as the Salwa Judum ("peace hunt") movement. They have brutally abused the population and in fact escalated violence. See Sundar; Chakravarti.

41 Chakravarti.

42 Ibid.

43 Sundar; Ajai Sahni, "India and her Maoists," *Wars Within Borders*, November 2009.

44 Supriya Sharma, "Unified Command Flopped Last Time, Will it Work Now?" *Times of India*, July 17, 2010; Bibhi Prasad Routray, "India's Anti-Maoist Operations: Where Are the Special Forces?" *Eurasia Review*, January 5, 2011.

45 Anuj Chopra, "India's Failing Counterinsurgency Campaign," *Foreign Policy*, May 14, 2010; "A Disaster Foretold," *The Pioneer*, April 11, 2010.

The two states that appear to be relatively successful at reducing insurgent activity or keeping it at bay are Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Maharashtra seems to have had a relatively higher police to population ratio at the beginning of the decade, potentially buffering it from the spillover of Naxalite insurgency from neighboring areas. While Andhra Pradesh's manpower ratio rose somewhat over the past decade, its success in dramatically reducing Naxalite activity in its territory is generally attributed by Indian analysts to a rather different strategy of raising a special commando force known as the Greyhounds.[46]

The Greyhound Force

The Greyhound force, an elite anti-Maoist commando unit, was raised beginning in 1987 from within the Andhra Pradesh police to conduct small unit counterguerrilla offensives against Naxalite insurgents.[47] Roundly believed to have been tremendously successful, the Andhra Pradesh police have drawn inspiration from the infamous Selous Scouts of Rhodesia to prosecute the equivalent of a "bush war" against the Naxalites.[48]

The 2,000-strong Greyhound force is better paid and equipped than federal or state paramilitary forces with state of the art weapons and technology, better trained in jungle warfare, and moves in nimbler, highly capable units to target, track, and destroy insurgent networks by modeling guerrilla tactics.[49] The Greyhounds are also well supported by the entire state police force.[50] Two companies of Greyhounds would be deployed at a joint operational base with two platoons of local home guards

for intelligence and logistical support.[51] Between 2005 and 2008, they have been credited with bringing down the Maoist cadre in Andhra Pradesh from 1,200 to 500 and Naxalite activity in the state this decade has dropped from a peak of roughly 600 attacks in 2003 to around 100 in 2010.[52] Their success was attributed to signals intelligence exploitation, careful operational planning, jungle survival training, night operations, and decapitation of Maoist leadership.[53]

The Greyhound model is perceived to be so successful that many states are starting to develop their own small unit commando police battalions. While the Indian central government continues to pour central paramilitary forces into the region (now on the order of about 70 battalions), it is also raising 10 Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA) and deploying them alongside state and federal units.[54] Yet one should be leery of the triumphant claims made of Andhra Pradesh as well as the potential to model the Greyhound success.

First, there is reason to believe that the Greyhounds did not defeat the Maoist insurgents outright but merely displaced them to neighboring states. This corresponds with data that shows Naxalite activity skyrocketed in neighboring Chhattisgarh as it declined in Andhra Pradesh.[55] Second, intelligence officers and other analysts believe gains in Andhra Pradesh are unsustainable and the state remains highly vulnerable to Maoist activity.[56] This fear was validated by a recent *Times of India*-IMMRB survey of five northern districts of Andhra Pradesh recently cleared of Maoist insurgents where the majority of those surveyed still sympathized with Naxalite motives, methods, and results, and viewed actions by state forces such as encounter

killings as suspect and unjustified. Meanwhile, a plurality believed nothing had improved and exploitation had increased since their departure.[57] Even if the Naxalite presence and violence has been structurally reduced, the survey revealed that the strategy has certainly not relied upon winning hearts and minds to achieve this end.

Finally, even if the Greyhound approach was actually successful, the background conditions required to achieve operational effectiveness are currently absent or underdeveloped in the rest of the country. Andhra Pradesh began raising the Greyhounds in 1987 but did not achieve marked success until almost two decades later. Despite the state having a relatively efficient policing system, both the Greyhound commandos and the state police and security force serving as the logistical and intelligence "tail" took substantial time to mature.[58] New police inductees served first in the Greyhound support unit for about four years before rotating to the district level where they might continue to support operations.[59] This gradually built up inter-organizational familiarity and cooperation within the state, and the substantial network of well-trained local police—features noticeably absent in the rest of Naxal-affected India—were able to funnel high quality intelligence for Greyhound targeting.[60]

Conclusion

Three points are worth noting about Indian counterinsurgency strategy. First, rather than abiding by a singular formula, strategies have varied over time and space depending on the context and nature of the insurgency. Second, India has routinely departed from the traditional "hearts and minds" or population-centric COIN for a highly kinetic and coercive enemy-

46 The different approaches to counterinsurgency employed by the U.S. Army (modeled on *FM 3-24*) and U.S. special forces are analyzed by Jon Lindsay in "Commandos, Advisors, and Diplomats: Special Operations Forces and Counterinsurgency," presented to the International Studies Association Annual Conference, New York, February 15, 2009.

47 Boyini; Madhavi Tata, "Lessons from Andhra," *Outlook India*, April 19, 2010; Ajai Sahni, "Andhra Pradesh: The State Advances, the Maoists Retreat," *South Asia Intelligence Review* 6:10 (2007).

48 Achuthan.

49 Boyini.

50 Sahni, "Andhra Pradesh: The State Advances, the Maoists Retreat."

51 Ibid.; Achuthan.

52 This data is from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Also see Sreenivas Janyala, "The Andhra Fightback," *Indian Express*, June 27, 2009.

53 Ibid.; Achuthan; Tata.

54 Routray.

55 This data is from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Also see Vij-Aurora.

56 Chakravarti; KP Narayana Kumar, "Naxalites 'Tamed' in Andhra Pradesh, Hub of Movement," *MINT*, July 2, 2009.

57 "58% in AP Say Naxalism is Good, Finds TOI Poll," *Times of India*, September 28, 2010. Although the survey did not specifically pose questions about the Greyhounds, they are likely included in the forces viewed with suspicion as unjust since they were the lead operational forces in these areas over the last decade.

58 On initial police efficiency, see Verma and Gavirneni. On maturation, see Sahni, "Andhra Pradesh: The State Advances, the Maoists Retreat."

59 Achuthan; Sahni, "Andhra Pradesh: The State Advances, the Maoists Retreat."

60 Ibid.

centric COIN. Third, Indian successes are never "clean" and always involve uncomfortable tradeoffs, whether by way of criminal activity, organizational dysfunction and corruption, or further insurgency. These should all be expected as India faces down the Naxalite insurgency over what might be a full decade or more.[61]

This third point is in part related to India's democratic character. The mobilization capacity of insurgents creates perverse interests by political parties to harness these assets for their own ends.[62] In fact, for much of the earlier part of this decade, most Naxal-affected states "abdicated their authority over vast regions, as long as the semblance of normalcy could be maintained and the electoral interests of the dominant political party could be taken care of."[63]

Moreover, Indian counterinsurgency has been and will likely continue to look both brutal and incomplete (by Western standards) because the incumbent is unwilling to countenance the types of institutional overhauls needed to fully quell insurgent impulses. If the fundamental conflict is not over the distribution of resources that can be mended with economic development, but rather the distribution of power controlled by the state and elite cadres, then the disease is the system.[64] The cure then may deeply threaten not only India's growth engine that has relied upon land appropriation and displacement for industrialization and mining, but also the power, composition, and identity of the Indian state stretching from the local level up to the state and national governments.

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61 Ramana estimates 7-10 years for government strategy to start seeing results and Vij-Aurora reports that one intelligence official estimated 8-10 years simply to properly train the required force.

62 Mukherjee, "India's Experiences with Insurgency and Counterinsurgency"; Paul Staniland, "Cities on Fire: Social Mobilization, State Policy, and Urban Insurgency," *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2010).

63 Achuthan.

64 This borrows a concept used by Anatol Lieven to explain some elements of another South Asian state. See Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).

Evaluating Pakistan's Offensives in Swat and FATA

By Daud Khattak

IN THE PAST three years, Pakistani security forces have launched a number of operations against Pakistani Taliban militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) as well as in the Swat Valley. Each one of these operations concluded with government pronouncements that the "miscreants" had been routed and the area secured. In almost all of these cases, however, the goals of the operations—primarily the maintenance of peace—remained elusive. Although militants were routed in the initial phase, their staying power afterward remained. While hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their villages as a result of the military operations, the Pakistani Taliban leadership remains alive and their support mechanisms intact.

To judge the success of these offensives, this article will discuss each major operation. It will explain the security situation before each offensive, and then provide an update as to what the security picture is today. This evaluation is especially critical in the context of U.S. demands on Pakistan to launch an offensive against the Haqqani network in North Waziristan Agency.

North and South Waziristan

Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan forced Pakistani security forces to help capture or kill fugitive al-Qa`ida and Taliban leaders in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. It was the first time in Pakistan's history that the state deployed more than 70,000 regular troops in the tribal areas.

One key area was the Waziristan region, which includes both North and South Waziristan, bordering the southeastern provinces of Afghanistan. Two major operations—al-Mizan and Zalzala—were conducted by Pakistani security forces between 2002 and 2008 in Waziristan against Pakistani Taliban commanders Nek Mohammad Wazir, Baitullah Mehsud and foreign fighters.[1] Both of

1 Iqbal Khattak, "Deserted Town Shows Human Cost of Operation Zalzala," *Daily Times*, May 20, 2008.

the operations, however, ended in peace deals—the Shakai Agreement in March 2004 and the Sararogha Agreement in February 2005—which basically conceded more power and influence to militants in the region.[2] The benefit of the peace deals for Pakistan was that the militants agreed not to target the Pakistani state. Their cross-border activities in Afghanistan, however, continued.

In 2009, the United States placed increased pressure on Pakistan to launch an operation in North Waziristan Agency, specifically against the Haqqani network. Instead, the Pakistan Army began an operation in South Waziristan Agency against TTP chief Hakimullah Mehsud, who was responsible for the majority of suicide and other attacks in FATA and Pakistani cities. The operation largely began on October 17, 2009, and was called Rah-e-Nijat.[3] Pakistan's security forces claimed to inflict heavy casualties on South Waziristan's militants, disrupting their command and control system.[4] Yet the top militant leadership, such as Hakimullah Mehsud, Qari Hussain and Wali Muhammad, managed to escape. The operation also displaced thousands of locals, and their homes were bulldozed. The majority of these refugees are still living in Dera Ismail Khan and other cities in internally displaced person (IDP) camps. They are reluctant to move back to their homes because of lack of shelter as well as fear of the Pakistani Taliban. Many civilians believe that the Pakistani Taliban is sheltering in neighboring Orakzai and Kurram agencies, and plan on returning to South Waziristan once the military relaxes its presence.

In North Waziristan, the well-known *maliks* (tribal elders) and their families have already migrated to Bannu District or other neighboring cities, while the lower middle class or poor families are still living in the agency. North Waziristan remains the stronghold

2 Khadim Hussain, "Social Control in FATA," *Dawn*, June 22, 2011.

3 Zahid Hussain and Jeremy Page, "Taleban Militants Put Up Stern Resistance to South Waziristan Offensive," *The Times*, October 19, 2009.

4 Irfan Burki, Daud Khattak and Muhammad Anis, "Forces Close in on Srarogha," *The News International*, October 29, 2009.