



Occasional Paper - July 2013



Present State of Insurgency, Extremist Violence & Terrorism in Pakistan

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About The Author



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General

State actors in Pakistan have pursued a policy of employing irregulars as instruments to further their political and military objectives ever since the state came into being in 1947. It first used irregulars to invade the then princely state of Jammu & Kashmir soon after India's partition. Two momentous events in the late 1970s, the usurpation of power in a military coup by Gen Zia ul-Haq and the resistance movement to overthrow the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, led to the creation of a sprinkling of jihadi groups that were used by Pakistan to further its interests, first in Afghanistan (though Pakistan had started sponsoring small groups of Afghan Islamists from 1972-73 onwards) and then in Kashmir. The Zia era radicalised the political discourse and strengthened the orthodox religious right in Pakistan. He was responsible for ingraining religious zeal into the Pakistan Army that to a certain extent transformed its character from a professional force into becoming 'defenders of Islam'.¹ The doctrine of waging, 'a thousand cuts' on the enemy through irregular warfare was also propounded during the Zia years. In the past four decades, the Pakistani state has offered direct or indirect support to a host of terrorist groups and secessionist movements in Afghanistan, India's North-Eastern states, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

Until the attacks of 11 September 2001, the Western world had turned a blind eye towards Pakistan's state sponsorship of terrorism against India. But the US involvement in Afghanistan was to turn yet another dark page in the history of Pakistan's involvement with terrorist groups. Due to international pressure and coming dangerously close to being declared a terrorist state, Pakistan was forced to turn against some of its proxies who have since then unleashed a deadly spiral of violence in Pakistan. In many ways, this blowback is more due to Pakistan's duplicitous and ill-fated policy of maintaining proxies who have now come to bite the master's hand rather than it being a 'victim of terrorism'.

Broadly, three types of militant groups exist in Pakistan. One, anti-India and Kashmir-centric groups like the LeT, HM, HuM, JeM, which receive complete support from state agencies in Pakistan; two, groups focused on Afghanistan like the Quetta Shura, Haqqani network, etc who receive tacit backing from the state and generally refrain from targeting Pakistan; three, groups like the Pakistani Taliban and sectarian outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Tehrik-e-Jafaria (TeJ), etc which previously received some degree of state support but have now turned against the state.

An affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court by Pakistan's intelligence agencies has revealed that 49,000 people have been killed in terrorist and insurgent violence in Pakistan since 2001. This figure includes about 24,000 civilians, security force personnel and militants killed from 2001 to 2008. The casualties for the period 2008-2012 are as under ²:-

	Killed	Injured
Civilians	5152	5678
Security Force	NA	15681 (total casualties)
Militants	3051	1228

The Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps have suffered 3109 fatal and 9681 non-fatal casualties due to insurgent and terrorist violence since 2001.³ The report also provided the number of major terrorist incidents from 2008-12.

Suicide attacks	235
Bomb blasts	4256
Rocket attacks	9257

The number of terror related incidents in Pakistan increased from less than 50 each year till 2001-02 to more than 900 in 2011. The total number of incidents witnessed a sharp jump in 2009 recording more than 650 incidents from about 400 in the previous year.

Year	Total no of incidents (approx)
2002	less than 50
2003	50-70
2004	100
2005	100-120
2006	150
2007	180-200
2008	400
2009	650
2010	800
2011	900

Source: Maryland University's World Terrorism Database

Figures compiled by South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) broadly conform to the above trend and indicate that more than 21,000 civilians and security force personnel have been killed in terrorist violence in Pakistan during the period 2003-2013.⁴ Approximately 26,000 militants have also been killed in security force operations and US drone attacks during the same period. More than 60 % of the fatalities in terrorist violence have occurred in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakthunkhwa (formerly known as North West Frontier Province). The incidents have sharply increased from the year 2008 onwards when NATO/ISAF operations intensified in Afghanistan pushing hordes of insurgents into the tribal areas. Pakistan Army's operation in Lal Masjid in 2007 and its subsequent operations in FATA and NWFP led to reprisal attacks by the Pakistani Taliban all over the country.

This paper is an attempt to situate the main players who are pitted against the Pakistani state with particular emphasis on FATA and erstwhile NWFP. In addition, the paper will briefly touch upon the impact of violence on Pakistan's other fault-lines. These include the long-festering insurgency for a separate Balochistan, the inter-mingling of ethnic, sectarian and criminal violence in Pakistan's financial capital Karachi, and the recent spread of terrorism to Pakistan's heartland of Punjab.

Background

Pakistan was created in 1947 as a separate homeland for Muslims after the partition of British India. Thus, Islam became the bedrock for the newly formed state, a strong pillar on which it could stand united. However, cultural and historic realities soon came to the fore, and rallying behind a distinct Muslim identity could not prevent fissiparous tendencies to emerge. Even before the Islamic Republic of Pakistan could grapple with the aftershocks of the violent pangs of partition, the Pashtuns in the frontier areas rejected the idea of Pakistan and refused to accept the artificially created Durand land which left people sharing a common ethnic and tribal ancestry on either side. In the next few decades, the Pakistani state was to be further challenged in the tribal belts of Balochistan and later in East Pakistan, which ultimately led to its dismemberment. To tide over these vulnerabilities arising out of an artificially constructed state and to further strengthen its hold over these loosely governed and largely autonomous provinces, state and religion got even more closely intertwined in Pakistan.

A distinct Islamic identity also meant that all non-Muslims, especially a 'Hindu India' were seen as enemies or threat to the idea of Pakistan. Without dwelling further into the ideological and religious basis of the creation of Pakistan, two basic points need to be highlighted to situate the rise of religious extremism and militancy in Pakistan. One, the very basis of the creation of Pakistan (a distinct religious identity) failed to integrate its peripheral areas like the North West Frontier Regions, FATA and Balochistan, where tribal customs were seldom subservient to a pan-Islamic identity, and areas which could never accept outside control or where the edifice of a modern state system rarely existed. Two, to prevent the artificially created state from unraveling, its rulers increasingly rallied behind the banner of Islam to prevent different ethnic groups from asserting their own separate identities and direct their energies outwards against a common foe, i.e, India. But a pan-Islamic identity was not without its myriad internal contradictions and conflicts. Similar to trends in other parts of the world, Shia-Sunni rivalry assumed a violent form in Pakistan as well. Added to these were other intra-sect clashes like the enmity between Deobandis and Barelvis, ethnic schisms between the Mohajirs and Sindhis and the persecution of Ahmediyyas (whom the Sunnis consider to be non-Muslims) and other minorities like

Hindus and Christians. Thus, building an anti-India rhetoric became the *raison d'etre* for the Pakistani state which through most of its history has been directly or indirectly ruled by its Army. This anti-India orientation is reflected almost everywhere from Pakistan's education curriculum to its military doctrines and nuclear weapons programme.

In 1977, Gen Zia ul-Haq seized power in yet another military coup in Pakistan. His coming to power led to the strengthening of fundamentalist religious organisations like the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). It also led to the seeping of religious fervor in the Army. The Zia era coincided with the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and mushrooming of mujahideen groups to fight the Communists. Most of these outfits were born out of Deobandi madrasas that were active in the NWFP and FATA. Flush with funds from the United States and donors in the Arab World, these madrasas became the recruiting ground for launching the mujahideen into Afghanistan. They also became a channel for countries like Saudi Arabia to introduce the more puritanical Wahabi form of Sunni Islam into Pakistan. The decade of the 1980s saw the strengthening of Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith groups inside Pakistan and the targeting of Shias by Sunnis also increased. One of the reasons for this was the Iranian revolution in 1979. The prospect of Iran exporting its revolution had set alarm bells ringing in countries like Saudi Arabia, which became more aggressive in combating the Iranians and increasing their influence in countries like Pakistan which became a battle ground for proxies of Iran and Saudi Arabia. Also the Islamisation programme of Zia riled the Shias and in 1980 the Tehrik-i-Nafiza-e-Fiqah-e-Jafferia (TNFJ) held a massive demonstration in Islamabad to protest against the Sunni Zakat Ordinance. Following this, Zia started raising a Sunni counter force, the result being the formation of the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) by the mid 1980s.⁵ The combustible mixture of radical Islam and armed groups that emerged continues to singe the tribal areas where the infrastructure of the Soviet Jihad era was later utilised to invigorate the 'armed struggle' in Kashmir, and post the American invasion of 2001, was directed inwards against the Pakistani state itself.

Insurgency in Khyber Pakthunkhwa Province (KPP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

The Frontier regions of North West Pakistan have been home to several tribes and sub-tribes who share common affinity with their Pashtun brethrens residing in Eastern and Southern Afghanistan. The age old tribal customs and traditions have always been in vogue and the tribes have throughout their history resisted foreign subjugation and authority; nor have the Pashtun tribes ever remained a united lot. Several differences and distinctions exist among the numerous tribes, clans and sub-tribes. For instance, the tribes inhabiting the plains and engaged in settled agriculture have in the past readily accepted state authority than the more orthodox highland tribes. However, a common weakness of the Pashtuns has been their susceptibility to strike deals with outside forces by accepting bribes and favourable arrangements. This weakness has often been exploited by foreigners and Pakistani forces alike to win over certain tribes and fuel inter-tribal feuds in order to keep them divided.

Despite several differences, a common religious faith that binds them together has often become a rallying point for temporarily uniting the tribes to oppose foreign subjugation. The Barakzai ruler Dost Mohammed was the first person to declare 'Jihad' against the British forces in 1840. His call was later ratified by the Maulvis of Kabul and helped in mobilising the tribes inhabiting the present day Pakistan-Afghanistan border regions to decimate the Anglo-Indian forces in Afghanistan.⁶ Ever since, the Pashtun tribes have resisted imposition of a central authority either from Kabul or Peshawar. The British maintained a loose authority over the region by imposing a system of financial grants and winning their favour for securing safe passage and trade activities, etc. They did not maintain significant military presence beyond the Bolan and Khyber Passes. Closer to India's independence, the Pashtuns once again went up in arms against British rule. The campaign of Abdul Gaffar Khan also known as 'Frontier Gandhi' was instrumental in building Pashtun nationalism. In 1947, this movement threatened the integrity of the embryonic Pakistani state. One of the reasons for launching the tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 was

to divert the Pashtuns and stem the growing tide of Pashtun nationalism, advocating a separate homeland.⁷

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the frontier tribes were locked in a low-scale armed resistance to the central authority in Kabul. Some of these forays were even backed by Pakistan. The madrasas inhabiting the tribal belt became the nerve centre of these militant movements and remain so till date. The campaign to overthrow the government of Sardar Mohammed Daoud Khan was waged from the Loya Paktia, an area bordering North Waziristan. The struggle against the Communist rulers of Kabul produced two distinct streams of mujahideen fighters; one was born in the Haqqaniya madrasa in Akora Khattak near Peshawar and other locations in Pakistan's tribal areas and included leaders like Jalauddin Haqqani and Mullah Omar. The other group included leaders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani and the Tajik warlord Ahmad Shah Masooud, who were students of the Kabul University. All these individuals were to play a major role in the Afghan jihad and the future of post-Soviet Afghanistan. The decade of the 1980s marked a turning point in the history of the tribal areas. The sudden influx of Wahabi madrasas from Saudi Arabia, and pumping of American dollars and Saudi 'petrodollars' led to the creation of a jihadi behemoth. The Pakistani ISI was the main channel for equipping and training the Mujahideen forces, and later the Taliban for carrying out insurgent attacks inside Afghanistan. The network of Deobandi and Wahabi madrasas that were pivotal in indoctrinating and launching mujahideen forces into Afghanistan soon attracted foreign fighters from across the Arab World, Central Asia, Chechnya, South East Asia and even some western converts to Islam. Post the Soviet withdrawal, the terrorist infrastructure in place in the tribal areas and Afghanistan was utilised by the ISI to train, equip and launch Afghan and Pakistani Punjabi militants into Jammu and Kashmir.

Post the US led invasion of Afghanistan and the Global War on Terrorism in 2001, a large number of Taliban, Al Qaeda and other foreign militants sought refuge in the tribal areas which further intoxicated its militant landscape. The local Pashtun tribes provided shelter to these militants due to the age-old tribal customs and traditions. It is also believed that the militants provide a large amount of money to the tribes in return of their hospitality.⁸ The Pakistani government under President Pervez

Musharraf, with great reluctance and under intense pressure from the US, agreed to target elements of Al Qaeda and other foreign militants in the tribal agencies. The Pakistan Army was deployed to cut off militants escaping into FATA from the Tora Bora Mountains in December 2001. The assassination attempts on Pervez Musharraf in December 2003 brought the Pakistan Army into the tribal areas in a big way for the first time since 1947. The presence of the Army further antagonised the tribes and was seen as an attempt by the state to subjugate them. This provided an opportunity to the Al Qaeda, foreign militants and several hundred Taliban foot soldiers who had fought in Pakistan to launch an insurgent campaign against the Pakistani security forces and enlist support of the local tribes. The Taliban-linked militants also received support from some Punjabi militant groups like the JeM, HuJI, HuM, LeJ and SSP as they were incensed with Musharraf for banning their organisations and restricting their activities following international pressure in the aftermath of the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001. Therefore, due to the Pakistani operations in FATA, a host of refugees and Taliban members who had fled Afghanistan and were regrouping to launch attacks against NATO/ISAF forces, directed their energies against the Pakistani state instead.

The extension of US Drone Strikes in FATA from June 2004 onwards has been cited by many analysts as a major factor that has caused resentment among the tribal population against the West and the Pakistani state. Even if the collateral damage in some drone strikes seem to be exaggerated, the extremists have used it as a major propaganda tool to pit the populace against the West. Although the first drone strike took place in 2004, the campaign intensified only by 2008 when the US refocused on Afghanistan after delinking from Iraq. The frequency of drone attacks increased as the NATO/ISAF forces realised that their counter-insurgency campaign in Afghanistan was not reaping dividends as the militants were melting away into safe sanctuaries in FATA, to avoid being targeted by Coalition forces. The number of drone attacks inside Pakistan from 5 in 2007 to 35 in 2008 and has since been on an upward trajectory⁹.

Year	No of Recorded Drone Strikes
2004	01
2005	01
2006	03
2007	05
2008	35
2009	53
2010	117
2011	64
2012	46
2013 *	13
Total	338

* till 17 April 2013.

The response of the Pakistani state and Lal Masjid Operation

The initial response of the Pakistani state was characterized by launching selective operations in FATA and the NWFP, negotiating peace deals with militant groups and winning support of the tribes. Major operations were launched in Tirah valley of Khyber Agency where the militants were well entrenched. The Paramilitary Frontier Corps, irregulars like the Khassadars and Levies were at the forefront of the operations while the Pakistan Army remained in the background. Air strikes by the Pakistan Air Force and bombardments and US drone attacks acted as force multipliers. The Pakistan Army operation to flush out militants and radicals from the Lal Masjid in July 2007 was the tipping point that has besieged Pakistan with a deadly spiral of terrorist violence and religious extremism. From 2006-07 onwards, a radical campaign to enforce Sharia law in Pakistan was orchestrated from the historical Lal Masjid in Rawalpindi. Several militant leaders of the Afghan Jihad had been students of the Lal Masjid. Frequent demonstrations took place in Islamabad that sometimes led to violence and the inmates of the mosque indulged in the kidnapping of persons they considered were engaging in immoral activities. A

sustained campaign to impose Sharia law was being run from the Lal Masjid and its women wing, Jamia Hafsa. In the meantime, several hundred radicals and armed militants, which included foreigners and those from the tribal areas entrenched themselves inside the Jamia Hafsa and Lal Masjid complexes. After sustained negotiations did not yield results, the Pakistan Army launched 'Operation Sunrise' on 3 July 2007 to flush out the militants. In the week long operation, more than 100 hundred inmates were killed and several others captured. In the days preceding the operation, at least 1500 inmates had accepted the terms of the security forces and vacated the premises. The caretaker of Lal Masjid, Maulana Abdul Aziz, was captured and his brother Abdul Rashid Ghazi was killed during the course of the operation. The operation led to the collapse of a 10 month long ceasefire with the militants in FATA and NWFP.

The aftermath of the Lal Masjid operation led to the intensification of the militant campaign against the Pakistani state and the number of attacks on Pakistani security forces in FATA and NWFP escalated dramatically. In December 2007, the former Pakistani President Benazir Bhutto was assassinated by the militants. This marked a new phase in Pakistan's internal turmoil and brought the wave of terror campaigns to its heartland of Punjab. Since then, several suicide attacks on security establishments have taken place in Punjab claiming hundreds of lives. In the frontier region, the Paramilitary Frontier Corps bore the brunt of reprisal attacks. The suicide bombings on military convoys, check posts and mosques have exacted a deadly toll on the security forces.

Noted Pakistani author, Shuja Nawaz has described the tribal insurgency in FATA as a struggle between the kashar – tribesmen from inferior lineages and poorer background against the mashar – elites who include tribal elders, maliks, political agents and businessmen. Most of the TTP cadres belong to the former category of kashars. The emergence of the TTP has demonstrated its ability to usurp the political and social space in FATA by replacing the elite maliks who long occupied that space and were seen as autocratic and corrupt. In fact, since the emergence of the TTP, nearly 700 maliks have been killed by the militants. Thus, two main factors; anger caused by military operations that led to destruction of property, damage to religious sites and large-scale displacement of tribal population, and growing religious

indoctrination/ frustration gave rise to militant extremism in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkwa Province (KPP).

The emergence of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Local tribal groups have been engaged in low-scale hit and run attacks on Pakistani security forces since 2002. Militant actions accelerated after the Lal Masjid operation of July 2007. In December 2007, the TTP announced its emergence under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud and claimed support of 13 Deobandi linked groups operating out of the NWFP and FATA. Essentially, TTP is an umbrella organisation of several small militant groups with each having influence in their respective areas and zones of operation. It is a loose organisation with no hierarchical structure like the Al Qaeda or the Afghan Taliban. It has representation and draws fighters from both the agencies of FATA as well as from the seven settled districts of KPP namely, Swat, Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohistan, Buner and Malakand.¹⁰ The TTP is closer to the Al Qaeda in its ideology and adoption of violent methods of attacks. It maintains close tactical and operational linkages with several outfits due to local pragmatism, tribal customs and co-location in FATA. Also, most of the centres of religious and political indoctrination adhering to the Deobandi or Wahabi faith have mushroomed in FATA and KPP since the 1970s. This makes it a fertile breeding ground for several militant groups to recruit their cadres.

The intensification of attacks in the tribal belts and Punjab led to the full fledged involvement of the Pakistan Army in operations. In the years, 2007-09, major offensives had to be launched in Bajaur agency and Swat to push back the militants. In 2009, the militants rallying under the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) banner had come menacingly close to Islamabad by moving into Buner from Swat valley. By the year 2008, the Pakistan Army had bolstered its counter insurgency campaign by pulling out several units and formations that faced India on its eastern front.

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ¹¹

Ideology and objectives

The several factions proclaiming allegiance to the TTP banner belong to the Deobandi school of Sunni Islam though several differences exist between the various tribes and sub-tribes that make up the TTP. Due to their close operational inter-linkages with the Al Qaeda, they have also been greatly influenced by its more orthodox Wahabi ideology and goals. The stated objectives of the TTP are:-

- Enforce Sharia, unite against NATO forces in Afghanistan and perform "defensive jihad" against the Pakistan Army.
- React strongly if military operations are not stopped in Swat District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and North Waziristan Agency of FATA.
- Demand the abolishment of all military checkpoints in the FATA area.
- Demand the release of Lal Masjid Imam Abdul Aziz. (Aziz has been released by a Pakistani court).
- Pakistan should break all alliances with the US and declare war on India. ¹²

The Pakistan Army is seen by a majority of Taliban-linked groups as 'apostates' of the US. Instances such as the passing of the Kerry-Lugar Bill of 2009, unrelenting drone attacks are seen as US ploy to take over Pakistan through a "puppet" Pakistan Army. For this reason, the militants project themselves as the only saviours of Pakistan from the 'infidel' ways of the Pakistani state and elites as well as the American usurpers. They feel that Sharia is the only anti-dote for the ills of the modern world. One Taliban propaganda message proclaims, "Should the world, which is torn by corruption and unpropitiousness, embrace Islam, it will become a receptacle of peace and stability". Some of the other groups affiliated with the TTP have specific and limited goals like carrying out revenge attacks against the Pakistan Army for the Lal Masjid operation and some are exclusively opposed to US presence in Afghanistan or its drone campaign in FATA. The Sectarian leaders with a LeJ or SSP background primarily indulge in the killings of Shias.

In due course, however, the TTP has moderated its goals and is not averse to entering into peace deals with the Pakistani state. This could be due to splintering of the TTP into two major factions and lack of unity, as it is primarily a loose confederation of several tribes with each having their own agendas and limited objectives.

Conversely, the linkages of the Times Square bomber with the TTP and its recent trend of advocating moral support, and threatening Jihad in support of Muslims in India and Myanmar (Rakhine State) point to a broader and more global agenda. This could be due to the influence of Al Qaeda's ideology. Some experts feel that this could also be a strategy to broaden its appeal among the anti-India sections of the Pakistani population, especially in Punjab. For instance, its growing tendency to operate outside the frontier regions and aspiration to take over Pakistan and imposing Sharia coincides with Al Qaeda's stated aim of imposing a Muslim Caliphate and overthrowing apostate Islamic governments who are seen to be siding with the West. But several contradictions exist even in its ideological relationship with the Al Qaeda and they are not as puritanical in their religious outlook and practices as the Salafists of Al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden, in one of his letters to Hakimullah Mehsud, had asked the TTP to cease suicide bombings inside mosques and desist from targeting civilians. Similarly, the practices of TTP militants are deeply rooted in tribal customs and the performance of barbaric acts like beheadings and mutilations of prisoners, etc largely seem to be an Arabic phenomenon (though the Pashtuns are known to have carried out mutilation of the dead bodies of their rivals and the British troops during the First Anglo-Afghan War in 1839-42) and tribal customs take precedence over Islamic practices. On the other hand, Al Qaeda members strictly adhere to orthodox Salafist practices and traditions.

Kashmir

In recent messages, the TTP has pointed out that the next battleground for the Jihadis after the withdrawal of Coalition forces would be Kashmir. At present, such advocacies appear to be purely rhetorical. However, it would be interesting to see to what extent state actors in Pakistan are able to convince some factions of the TTP to lend their fighters for the Kashmir front. This would mean that those elements would

no longer target the Pakistani establishment who would then facilitate their entry into J&K. And, even if the TTP aspires to involve itself into the 'Kashmir Jihad', it would require close association with the tanzeems operating there. Most of these tanzeems are handled by the ISI and would be reluctant to offer their assistance without its backing. Therefore, TTP's involvement in Kashmir could happen only if it refrains from attacking the Pakistani state. This would imply a major policy shift on its part. What is more, any diversion of the Taliban to Kashmir would only be possible with the connivance of the Pakistani establishment and to attribute their actions to non-state actors would be nothing but self deception.

Organisation and Leadership ¹³

Besides attacking symbols of the Pakistani state, rival and state-sponsored tribal lashkars, the TTP also provides a reservoir of fighters for the Afghanistan theatre in support of efforts of the Afghan Taliban and other groups who are engaged against the Western and Afghan government forces. In 2007, as many as 27 local militant groups had pledged their allegiance to the then TTP Commander, Baitullah Mehsud. A Shura or consultative committee of 40 tribal elders was formed to guide the organisation. The TTP factions in FATA and KPP are divided into several administrative zones, each headed by a military commander who reports to the supreme commander of the local Taliban and Shura. Within each administrative zone, there are specific units for intelligence collection, identification and elimination of spies, revenue collection, maintenance of law and order, etc. The TTP lacks a centralised or hierarchical organizational structure and the local factions enjoy relative autonomy in their operations.

Tribal customs and traditions take precedence over religious and tactical dictates. The factions mainly restrict their operations to their respective zones and prior permission is required to enter into an area controlled by a different tribe. The various factions also differ in their motivations, aims and tactics. Tribal customs are more pronounced among the mountainous Pashtun tribes than those inhabiting the lowland or settled areas. Clan identities are not as strong in Bajaur, Orakzai and Mohammand agencies of FATA which and the TTP has to expanded its presence through local tribal militant factions.

The known leadership structure of the TTP is as under:-

Hakimullah Mehsud - *Amir* (Chief) of TTP (took over after the death of Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009) – Prior to taking over the leadership position, he operated in Orakzai, Khyber and Peshawar. In 2007-08, he carried out several attacks on NATO convoys in Peshawar which led to the closure of the Khyber Pass at least six times during the period.¹⁴

Khan Sayed @ Sajna Mehsud – He was appointed the TTP's Deputy Amir on 30 May 2013. Khan Sayed participated in the Afghan jihad in the 1990s and was a close confidante of Waliur Rehman Mehsud. He is credited by the TTP to have been part of the module which carried out the attack on Pakistan Naval Base Mehran in 2011.

Omar Khalid - Chief of Mohmand Agency Chapter; In 2007, he took over a prominent shrine in North Waziristan and established his dominance in Mohmand by defeating the Shah Sahib group, a pro-Taliban group which also had links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Khalid's top lieutenant in the region is Qari Shakeel.

Waliur Rehman Mehsud – He was Hakimullah Mehsud's Deputy and formerly the Chief of South Waziristan Agency Chapter. He was killed in a US drone strike in North Waziristan on 29 May 2013.

Faqir Mohammed - Chief of Bajaur Agency Chapter. He is presently in the custody of Afghan authorities.

Wali Muhammad - Appointed head of TTP in Wana

Maulana Fazlullah *aka* Radio *Mullah* - Chief of Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM, based in Swat). He is believed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan.

Chief Sokespersons - Azam Tariq, Ehsanullah Ehsan and Muhammad Suleman.

Strength

Various estimates peg the combined strength of the various TTP factions from 5000-30000 fighters, and the official estimate for foreign fighters operating in Pakistan range from 500 to 8000. From these figures, the combined fighting strength of the

various TTP conglomerates can easily be estimated to be in the range of 5000-6000. The TTP is believed to be headquartered in South Waziristan and has a presence in all the four provinces of Pakistan. South Waziristan has been the traditional stronghold of the various tribes affiliated to the TTP. However, sustained operations and drone strikes have pushed most of the TTP commanders and cadres into North Waziristan and even places like Karachi. It carries out attacks against Pakistani security forces and rival tribes almost on a daily basis in Khyber Pakthunkhwa and FATA. Since 2008, the TTP has displayed the capability to carry out several suicide bombings and attacks in Punjab. Several attacks on Shias in Quetta and Karachi have also been linked to the TTP. Most of the TTP commanders belong to poor families and are generally in the age group of 30-35. Most of them did not receive education at a prominent madrasa but are mainly affiliated to either the JI or JUI. Other than fighting to implement Sharia law, they lack a broader political or economic vision.

Weapons and Tactics

As the TTP cadre base included hundreds of fighters who fought under the Taliban and other groups in Afghanistan, sourcing weapons was not a major difficulty. Most of these cadres retained their personal weapons from the days of the anti-Soviet jihad. FATA is perhaps one of the most weaponised regions of the world where stockpiles of weapons from the days of the Mujahideen resistance in Afghanistan exist till date. The local variant of the AK-47 Rifle is the most popular light weapon in the tribal areas and is also locally manufactured in the FATA and Khyber agencies. In fact, the arms market in Peshawar has been frequented by several jihadi groups and local militias ever since the 1970s. The TTP also replenishes its stockpile by carrying out raids on police stations, militia check-posts and security forces engaged in combating them. It also loots weapons after ambushing security convoys in the tribal areas. Pakistani agencies have claimed that the TTP receives weapon consignments from Iran via Balochistan. These weapons may have been sourced from international arms cartels. The other sources for small arms include Afghanistan and arms bazaars in the Middle East and former Soviet satellite countries.

The most common battlefield tactic adopted by TTP cadres is raids where at least 50-100 militants swoop down upon an isolated security check post from multiple directions and employ AK-47s and RPGs to carry out the fire assault. This tactic is mostly adopted against rival militias or Pakistani security forces. Some of the TTP cadres have gained sufficient battlefield experience by combating Afghan and Western security forces in Afghanistan. The TTP carries out suicide attacks in more populated and distant areas from its base in South Waziristan. Lone suicide bombers blowing themselves inside mosques and Shia places of worship in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is now commonplace. It has also mastered the art of carrying out vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) attacks. Such attacks have been directed against security force convoys and their buildings in FATA, KPP and Punjab province. In some of the more sensational attacks on sensitive and prominent targets like the GHQ Rawalpindi, ISI building in Lahore and Pakistan Military installations, it has combined fire assault along with employing suicide bombers. Therefore, the TTP adopts a combination of tactics for different targets, and has borrowed many techniques from Al Qaeda.

Finances

The TTP funds its activities through multiple sources. It imposes taxes and levies on transporting goods, penalties, etc on the local population. Many Islamic charities within and outside Pakistan are known to collect donations in the name of jihad for the TTP. Expatriate population of Pashtuns in the Arab World also provides finances through hawala channels as their contribution towards the 'cause'. Karachi is a major source of revenue for the TTP factions. They appropriate 'security money' from the transport business which is dominated by Pashtuns in the city. It also funds its coffers through criminal activities in Karachi. For instance, the Jundullah group has often been contracted by the TTP to carry out kidnappings for ransom, bank robberies, etc. The money trail in most of these crimes often leads to Waziristan. The militants replenish their financial resources by indulging in similar criminal activities in the FATA and looting of supplies and munitions from NATO and Pakistan Army convoys transiting through the region.

Other terrorist groups are also known to provide financial contributions to the insurgents. For instance, in 2009, Pakistani agencies uncovered that \$ 15 million was transferred to the TTP by Al-Haramain Foundation which is a front organisation for the Al Qaeda. Another major route for obtaining finances is the drug and heroin trade. In the past, arrested TTP and LeJ members have revealed that the organisations are involved in the trafficking of heroin to countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, China, UAE, Europe and the US.

Linkages with other groups

Al Qaeda core in Afghanistan-Pakistan

The Al Qaeda runs two operation centres in North and South Waziristan with assistance from the TTP. An Al Qaeda leader Essa al-Misri was hiding in North Waziristan before his arrest in May 2009.

The cornerstone of US counter-terrorism policy has been to keep the Al-Qaeda core in a decimated form so that they are unable to find sanctuary to plot major strikes. Technical intelligence along with painstaking efforts at planting human intelligence assets into the organisation has yielded positive results in this regard. Relentless drone strikes and Special Forces operations have created a dent in their organisational structure and succeeded in substantially disrupting their operational capabilities. In June 2010, Leon Panetta, the CIA Director estimated that only 50-100 Al-Qaeda operatives were left in Afghanistan. Other US estimates put the total number of Al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan to be around 300-400.¹⁵ The frequency of drone attacks have increased from 34 in 2008 and 53 in 2009 and peaked to more than 117 in 2010.¹⁶ In the years 2011 and 2012, 64 and 46 drone attacks were reported. This year at least 10 drone strikes have taken place inside Pakistan.¹⁷ But, on the flip side, the drone strikes have pushed the top Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership into populated centres of Quetta, Karachi and even Southern Punjab where it would be difficult to target them with drones.¹⁸ However, it continues to operate a smaller number of camps in the tribal areas which have become more mobile due to the constant threat from drone strikes. In the opinion of some US experts, these camps will continue to pose a direct threat to the US mainland and other parts of the world though for now Al-Qaeda appears to be more focused on

attacking the Pakistani state. Nearly 150 westerners are believed to have received terror training in such camps since 2008.¹⁹

Post-9/11 and dictated by the necessity to survive, Al-Qaeda decided to move its operational base to Pakistan's tribal areas. The outfit shaped a favourable environment for its survival by providing ideological support to the local tribal groups in the region. It achieved this end by using its extensive propaganda tools to fuel hatred against the US and the Pakistani state for supporting the former. More importantly, it re-activated its old links and networks to establish safe havens and bought the loyalty of the tribes by paying them money. Civilian casualties in US drone strikes has aided it in spreading hatred among the population and local militias against the US and Pakistani forces. To further its strategic goals, it played the role of a mediator between various factions and united them against the Pakistani state. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA regions today serve as Al-Qaeda's physical centre of gravity. But, instead of taking the leadership role, it has assumed the role of a facilitator and mainly provides ideological, training and logistical support to local militant groups for carrying out strikes. Farman Shinwari, who belongs to the Kukakhel sub-tribe from Landikotal in FATA is the current emir of Al Qaeda in Pakistan. He has five brothers, most of whom serve with the HuM and TTP.²⁰

By assuming this new form, it has become more difficult to distinguish between the Al-Qaeda core and its affiliated organisations. For instance, Al-Qaeda has reorganised its erstwhile 055 Brigade into a larger and more effective fighting force called the Lashkar al Zil or the Shadow Army. This force is believed to be made up of four to six brigades and includes elements from the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Haqqani network (HQN), Harkat-ul-Jihadi-Islami (HuJI), Lashkra-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Hizb-e-Islami (HeI) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen al-Alami. The most prominent of its brigades is the 313 Brigade which was led by the late Illyas Kashmiri (accused of plotting the assassination attempts on President Musharraf). The Shadow Army also includes former members from Saddam Hussein's Republican Guards and other foreign fighters of Saudi, Yemeni, Egyptian and North African descent. The well equipped and trained force has gained an upper hand in several engagements with Pakistani forces in North and South Waziristan, Bajaur, Peshawar, Khyber and Swat. In Afghanistan, it has conducted operations in conjunction with local Taliban forces in

the provinces of Kunar, Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Khost, Paktika, Paktia, Zabul, Ghazni and Kandahar. The presence of Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have been detected in 16 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces since 2007.²¹ Al-Qaeda's safe havens in the tribal areas, particularly North Waziristan where it is closely aligned with the Afghan Taliban, are used for training this fighting force and also indoctrinating suicide bombers who mostly carry out strikes in Pakistan. The lethality and frequency of suicide bombings in Pakistan has been on an upward trajectory since 2007. Some of the notable actions of the Shadow Army includes the ambush of an Afghan National Army battalion in Laghman which killed at least 30 Afghan soldiers in August 2010, laying siege on Bagh-e-Matal district in Nuristan in July 2010, coordinated attacks on two joint outposts in Nuristan province which killed eight American and seven Afghan soldiers, a coordinated attack on an outpost manned by US Airborne troops at Wanat in July 2008 which killed nine American soldiers and 40 militants, ambush of a French battalion east of Kabul in August 2008 which left 10 French soldiers dead and 21 wounded.²² There are also reports that the Black Guard (erstwhile bodyguard unit of Al-Qaeda) is being trained in one of the camps. But in the wake of the relentless US drone campaign since 2007 and the death of Osama Bin Laden in an isolated hideout in Abbottabad, the efficacy of the Black Guard unit is questionable. Therefore, the Al-Qaeda core is more diffused and their leaders are constantly on the run but in its new form as a force multiplier, it has succeeded in spreading its ideology among a host of Jihadi groups active in the region.

Some American analysts believe that the objective behind Al-Qaeda's tactics of moving into Pakistani cities could be to provoke conflict in these areas which would then divert the Pakistan Army away from FATA.²³ For instance, sectarian violence and targeted killings have witnessed a sharp rise in Karachi in recent years. Also, Al-Qaeda has managed to consolidate its resources and capabilities by forging alliances between groups like the TTP, LeJ and HQN. Increased contacts with members of these groups have led to a great degree of inter-operability and dependability for seeking refuge in each others's safe havens. In January 2012, The Shura-e-Murakeba, a grouping of different militants was constituted in 2012 (reportedly under the instructions of Mullah Omar) and consists of five major Taliban

groups that operate in Pakistan's tribal area: TTP, which is led by Hakimullah Mehsud and his deputy, Waliur Rehman Mehsud (since deceased); Hafiz Gul Bahadar's group; Mullah Nazir's group; and the HQN.²⁴ Abu Yahya al-Libi, a senior Al-Qaeda leader (who was later killed in a US drone strike) played a major role in brokering the deal. The factions were asked to desist from undertaking kidnapping of civilians and targeting the Pakistan Army and instead re-focus attention on the US forces in Afghanistan.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

The Uzbeks form a sizeable portion of the foreign fighter component inside Pakistan. Some factions of the TTP including that of Baitullah Mehsud supported the IMU in return of their manpower assistance to fight the Pakistani forces. The presence of foreign fighters, in particular Uzbeks has also led to conflict within the constituents of the TTP over the brutal methods employed by the Uzbeks and their assertiveness. On previous occasions, Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gulbahadur factions assisted the Pakistan Army in tracking down Uzbek fighters in FATA.

Afghan Taliban

The linkages between the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban are more complex and overlapping. The TTP officially promulgates its association with the Afghan Taliban though the latter distances itself from it. The TTP reinforces the Taliban efforts in Afghanistan and also benefits from its sanctuaries, training facilities, weapons, ammunition and other logistical assistance in Balochistan, North Waziristan and southern Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban on the other hand partially benefits from TTP resources in South Waziristan, Karachi and southern Punjab. It is averse to projecting an open alliance with the TTP at the cost of antagonizing Pakistan and does not carry out attacks against the Pakistani security forces. However, there have been instances of Mullah Omar's Quetta Shura providing financial assistance to the TTP for carrying out attacks against western targets like the UN and Red Cross in Pakistan. Also, Afghan Taliban cadres had previous marital and clan linkages in FATA many of whom returned to these areas and participated in attacks on the Pakistan Army owing to these linkages. One example would be Mullah Sangeen, an Afghan commander of the TTP who is also linked to Sirajuddin Haqqani.

Haqqani network

The Haqqani network which straddles the mountainous region between south-eastern Afghanistan and North Waziristan offers logistical and other tactical support to the TTP owing to age-old tradition of Pashtun solidarity. Both Baitullah and Hakimullah Mehsud had close links with the Haqqani network. Baitullah Mehsud had fought under Jalaluddin Haqqani's leadership against the Northern Alliance in the battles at Shomali Plains, north of Kabul in 1994-96.²⁵ Both the Mehsuds assisted the Afghan Taliban to regroup in Waziristan after their flight from Afghanistan following the US invasion. In North Waziristan, they came in close contact with the Haqqani network commanders who control the Loya Paktia region. Darim Sedqai, who was a lieutenant of Jalaluddin Haqqani, acted as a liaison between several groups before he was killed in a drone attack in 2008. Mullah Sangeen, an Afghan commander of the TTP fought together with Haji Mali Khan (Jalaluddin's brother in law) in Khost. A TTP suicide attack in Khost which was carried out by a Jordanian, and resulted in the death of seven CIA operatives is illustrative of the close support that the TTP receives from the Haqqani groups.

The TTP benefits closely from Haqqani group's assistance for its fighters to transit between FATA and Afghanistan. Most of the TTP fighters transit through the mountainous belt in North Waziristan which is the traditional stronghold of the Haqqanis. Mullah Nazir (killed in a US drone attack in North Waziristan in January 2013) and Hafiz Gul Bahadur are the top commanders in the region who coordinate strategic and operational matters with the TTP. In the past few years, several TTP cadres have been killed by Coalition forces in Khost province of Eastern Afghanistan. Therefore, the TTP fighters gain battlefield experience by accessing the Afghan theatre through the Haqqani network. The TTP can also access safe sanctuaries and receive superior training from the Haqqani resources. In return, the Haqqanis utilise the services of TTP's suicide bombers to carry out attacks in Afghanistan with increased lethality. Mullah Nazir provided suicide bombers to the Haqqanis whereas his deputy Sadiq Noor assists in car bombs. The Wazir, Dawar and Mehsud tribes who are mostly affiliated with the TTP also reinforce the fighting strength of the Haqqani network in their actions in Afghanistan since 2008.²⁶ The Haqqanis are also majorly dependent on the TTP for carrying out their drug trade.

The Haqqanis are a major conduit in the trafficking of heroin to Central Asia and other parts of the world. It is dependent on the TTP to gain access over the agricultural and opium producing belts of the lowland Pashtun areas which are controlled by the TTP.

Nevertheless, differences do exist between the Haqqanis and TTP over the latter's indiscriminate killing of civilians and targeting of Pakistani security forces. A meeting was held between Sirajuddin Haqqani, Hakimullah Mehsud, Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Mullah Nazir somewhere near Khost in September 2009 to resolve such differences. The Haqqani network also plays a significant role in resolving differences between local groups and factions. In 2007, the Haqqanis mediated to mitigate violence between the Uzbek fighters and Mullah Nazir. It also played a major role in the formation of the Shura-e-Murakeba in December 2011. The Shura brought together leading commanders of the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, Al Qaeda, Haqqanis and other shuras under one umbrella. The Haqqanis are the primary instrument for the Pakistan Army to mediate with the TTP factions. In fact, close affinity with TTP commanders is a leverage which the Haqqanis use to negotiate better deals from Pakistan.

Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Mohammadi (TNSM)

The TNSM emerged as a separate group in Swat in the 1990s and today is a key constituent group of the TTP. Maulana Fazlullah also known as Radio FM who was once associated with the TNSM, is the Emir of the TTP faction in Swat. TNSM was formed by Sufi Mohammed, Fazlullah's father in law. Sufi Mohammed led the 'tor patki' or black turban movement for the implementation of Sharia in Malakand which was eventually accepted by the government. In 2009, the TNSM along with other local TTP factions had advanced to Buner only about 160 kilometers from Islamabad but were pushed back by the Pakistan Army. The Shaheen force in Swat functioned as a moral police and also carried out law and order and traffic regulation functions in places like Matta. TNSM maintains close links with foreign fighters, particularly those belonging to the Al Qaeda. Fazlullah's deputy is Ibn Amin (later killed in a drone strike) once led the Tora Bora Brigade of the Al Qaeda 'Shadow Army' or Laskhar al-Zil. The attack on Malala Yousafzai was ordered by Mullah Fazlullah.

Punjabi Taliban

The coinage of the term 'Punjabi Taliban' is a recent one, though it is not a separate or exclusive outfit in the real sense. It comprises, primarily of elements from sectarian outfits like the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and Laskhar-e-Jhangvi. During the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, many members and wanted leaders of these sectarian outfits took refuge in that country to evade capture by Pakistani agencies. Some Punjabi militants from Kashmir centric groups like the HuM, JeM, HuJI and LeT who were influenced by the Taliban ideology also coalesce under the banner of Punjabi Taliban. They provide manpower, shelter, financial and other logistical support to the TTP. Most of these militants deserted their parent outfits as they were enraged with the Pakistan Army for turning against its own people in FATA and were opposed to its support of the US. Some individuals (especially from outfits like the LeT) joined the battles on their own accord due to frustration with their tanzeems for not targeting the Pakistan Army.²⁷ TTP leaders including Hakimullah Mehsud, Waliur-Rehman and Qari Hussain have deep links with the Punjabi militant groups. For instance, Qari Hussain, who was the Suicide Squad commander of the TTP, was once a member of the LeJ. In addition to supporting TTP suicide attacks in Punjab, these militants also augment its fighting component in FATA and Afghanistan.

Links with sectarian groups

As mentioned above, LeT and SSP militants based in Afghanistan fled to Lower Kurram and Orakzai agencies following the US invasion of Afghanistan. The middle agencies of FATA which has a sizeable Shia population have witnessed a spurt in attacks since 2007 though sectarian violence has been a regular feature since decades. This has been due to extension of support and inter-linkages of the sectarian outfits with the TTP. The TTP projects the Shias to be pro-US and agents of the Northern Alliance as a justification for targeting them. In reality, however, the Sunnis have targeted them in areas where they have a large presence or are economically strong. They also suspect them to be Iran's agents for spreading the arc of Shi'ism into FATA, and therefore support the SSP and LeJ in their persecution. In addition to the middle agencies of FATA, TTP has also targeted Shias in Karachi and Punjab. There have also been attacks on them in Gilgit-

Baltistan. Local militant leaders of the TTP in KPP such as Mufti Ilyas, Khalid Khan and Maulana Tariq are responsible for maintaining close links with the LeJ and SSP.

Other local groups

The TTP has operational and logistical linkages with several other tribal and local militant groups in Pakistan. The degree and extent of linkages varies with each group. Some of these groups comprise members of those sects who were displaced due to the operations conducted by the Pakistani security forces in FATA and NWFP. The motivations and aims of these groups are specific and generally limited but they are amalgamated into the broader ambit of the Jihad by siding with the TTP. One such group is the Ghazi force whose presence is restricted to Hangu (KPP) and Orakzai (FATA). It is led by Fidaullah who was an inmate of the Lal Masjid. The sole motivation of the Ghazi Force is to extract revenge on the Pakistan Army for the Lal Masjid operation. It is drawn from recruits from the Lal Masjid, many of whom suffered due to the Pakistan Army operation or were deeply affected by the killings of their associates. The Ghazi Force has been instrumental in carrying out attacks on symbols of the Pakistani state and Army in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Lashkar-e-Islam and Ansar-ul-Islam

These are local groups who have no known alliances with the Al Qaeda or other foreign militants. The clash between the Lashkar-e-Islam and Ansar-ul-Islam is mainly a sectarian conflict between the Barelvis and Deobandis. Both these outfits do not attack the Pakistani forces. However, in January 2013, the Lashkar-e-Islam joined hands with the TTP to fight the Ansar-ul-Islam which had been co-opted by the Pakistan Army to combat TTP militants entrenched in the Tirah valley of Khyber Agency.

Regional presence of the TTP

The main arc of TTP's influence is the FATA (primarily South Waziristan) and some agencies of Khyber Pakhtunkwa. It has also established sanctuaries in Karachi and southern Punjab in conjunction with the Punjabi Taliban elements. It has

demonstrated its Pakistan-wide presence by carrying out frequent suicide attacks in Punjab province in the past several years.

North Waziristan

The Uthmanzai Wazir and Dawar are the predominant tribes in North Waziristan. Hafiz Gul Bahadur belongs to the Uthmanzai and other prominent Taliban commanders in the area, Sadiq Noor and Abdul Khaliq Haqqani belong to the Dawar tribe. Gul Bahadur and Mullah Nazir formed the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban (MTT) to represent the interests of the dominant tribes in North Waziristan. This group carried out the eviction of foreign fighters from North Waziristan at the behest of the Pakistani ISI and resisted the Ahmedzai Wazir and Mehsud tribals of the TTP from using territory under their control to launch attacks on the Pakistan security forces. The MTT believes that the theatre of jihad should be Afghanistan while the Mehsuds prioritize their actions on the Pakistani state. North Waziristan also has a sizeable presence of members of the Haqqani network and some Afghan Taliban Shuras. Both these groups receive tacit support of state actors in Pakistan, and the Pakistan Army has so far desisted from launching any significant ground operation in the region.

South Waziristan

The Ahemdzai Wazirs and Mehsuds dominate the tribal scene in South Waziristan. Nek Mohammed, who belonged to the Yargul Khel clan of the Mehsud tribe was the main TTP commander in the area. Mullah Nazir was another important leader in the area who fought to expel the Uzbeks from South Waziristan. South Waziristan is the cradle of the TTP and therefore incurs the wrath of drone strikes and operations of the Pakistani security forces.

Bajaur

The Uthman Khel, Tarkalanri and Mohmand are the chief tribes inhabiting the Bajaur agency. Faqir Mohammed, a prominent leader of the TTP faction in Bajaur who also coordinated activities of the Al Qaeda in the area, was captured in NAGRANHAR province of Afghanistan in February 2013. He rose to prominence after beating back two offensives launched by the Pakistan Army in 2008 and fighting them to a

standstill in 2009 and 2010.²⁸ He was demoted by the Taliban from the post of Naib Amir as he had engaged in peace talks with the Pakistan government. His replacement, Jamal Saeed @ Mullah Dadullah was killed in a drone strike in August 2012. The current leader of the TTP in Bajaur is Maulvi Abu Bakr. Qari Zia-ur-Rehman is another key Afghan TTP commander in Bajaur and is closely associated with the Mehsuds. Rehman leads a strong component of foreign fighters made up of Uzbeks, Chechens, Turkis and Afghans. Qari Rehman and his fighters are also active in Kunar and Nuristan provinces of Afghanistan. The IMU, Islamic Jihad Union and Al Qaeda are also active in Bajaur. He also commands one of the shadow brigades of the Al Qaeda. Maulana Mohammad Jamal @ Malik Noor is another Taliban commander who was once rumoured to have replaced Faqir Mohammed as the leader of TTP in Bajaur. The Jaish-e-Islami headed by Wali-ur-Rehman, Karwan-e-Niamatullah and Dr Ismail's group are some of the other local groups in Bajaur that are aligned with the TTP.

Mohamand

The tribes inhabiting Mohamand agency include the Mohamand, Musa Khel, Tarak Zai, Safi, Uthman Khel and Halim Zais. The notorious TTP faction in Mohamand is the Omar Khalid group. Both Omar Khalid and his Deputy Qari Shakeel maintained close ties to Baitullah Mehsud and are opposed to the Pakistan government. At one point in time, the TTP had virtually liberated Mohamand, Kuram and Khyber agencies. However, the Pakistan Army fought back and regained most of the lost ground. At present, the TTP is restricted to the peripheral mountains and borderline valleys of these areas with the government enlisting local lashkars to regain control of the settled areas.

Middle Agencies – Kurram, Khyber and Orakzai

The middle agencies have witnessed a large number of attacks on Shias ever since Hakimullah Mehsud assumed command of the TTP. A large number of Afghan militants operate in Orakzai and are led by one Rahamullah. This group mainly carries out ambushes on NATO supply convoys travelling between Peshawar and Kabul. The Turis who are Shias are the largest constituent of Kurram agency and have faced a large number of attacks. Maulvi Noor Jamal, popularly known as Maulvi

Toofan and a firebrand anti-Shia leader, heads the TTP in Kurram. He, along with another commander, Fazal Saeed Utezai, have carried out some of the worst attacks on Shias in Kurram. Akhunzada Aslam Farooqui was picked to lead the TTP chapter in Orakzai after Hakimullah was appointed the supreme commander or Amir. He is close to Mullah Omar and claims to lead a contingent of 7000 tribals.

Khyber, Swat valley and Dara Adam Khel

The TNSM is the TTP's subsidiary in Swat valley. They had captured Mingora, the principal town of Swat in 2007 and gave pitched battles to the Pakistani forces in 2008 and 2009. The Taliban factions have divided the KPP into 37 chapters or sections with a separate commander for each. The TNSM in TTP is one such chapter. It carried out police, judicial and financial services in the area and also holds Sharia courts for the dispensation of justice. It even facilitates contract marriages in the area. To ascertain their power and establish their writ, the various TTP chapters in KPP carry out several activities like assuming temporary control of police stations and hospitals, manning roadside check posts, hoisting the white flag of TTP, etc. At Imam Dheri, the TTP had even established a sharia court where the populace was urged to lodge their complaints. The TNSM is also infamous for bombing girls' schools and flogging alleged criminals, etc. In Darra Adam Khel, the local militant outfits, Tehrik-e-Islami and Islami Taliban have merged with the TTP. Mufti Illyas is the TTP commander for Dara Adam Khel. Tariq Afridi was appointed the TTP commander for Khyber, Peshawar, Kohat and Hangu. He is also the leader of the Tariq Afridi group and was behind the killings of a former ISI officer, Khalid Khwaja and a Polish geologist Piotr Stanczak. His fighters had also managed to shut the Kohat tunnel twice in the year 2008. Moman Khan leads the TTP in Manshera. His forces had moved into Manshera in 2009 and even established a training camp there when the Pakistani forces were moving against the TNSM in Swat. He was previously associated with the Laskhar-e-Jhangvi.

Punjab

The presence of the TTP has been observed in Chakwal, Mianwali, Bhakar, Jhang, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan districts of Punjab province. These places constitute nearly 22 % of the total population of

Punjab and are also the main recruitment ground for several Punjab based militant outfits like the JeM and LeT. In 2011, a report prepared by the Provincial CID revealed that at least 2500 militants and an additional 556 released from Afghan prisons were active in Punjab.²⁹ The TTP militants receive support from their Punjabi associates in these places and use it as a base for carrying out attacks in Lahore and Islamabad. Despite a sizeable presence in Punjab and Sindh, the TTP has so far not attempted to establish a parallel structure of governance or impose strict Islamic codes and practices as they have in FATA and KPP. From 2006-12, nearly 1095 civilians, 280 security force personnel and 120 militants have been killed in violent incidents in Punjab province. Most of these incidents have been suicide bombings that can be traced to the TTP. Some of the sensational incidents in Punjab province include the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on 27 December 2007, attack on GHQ Rawalpindi (10 October 2009), bomb explosion outside the ISI office (27 May 2009) and attack on Sri Lankan cricketers (3 March 2009) and on the Manawan Police Academy in Lahore (30 March 2009), Marriot Hotel bombing (20 September 2008), suicide attacks outside the Pakistan Air Force bases at Sargodha (1 November 2007) and Minhas (16 August 2012). Manawan Police Academy The Punjabi Taliban militants were also responsible for the killing of two senior and former ISI officials – Col Imam and Khalid Khawaja.

The sectarian groups like the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi are also active in Punjab province and carry out attacks on Shias and clash with rival Shia groups such as the Tehrik-e-Jafaria. The SSP (renamed Ahl Sunnat wat Jamaat (ASWJ) Millat-e-Islamia Pakistan) is active in Sargodha, Bahawalpur, Jhang, Multan and Muzaffargarh. Its home base is Jhang which divides South and Central Punjab where it took roots in the struggle of the Sunnis against the feudal land lords who were mostly Shias.³⁰

The other sectarian outfit which is active in Karachi and parts of Punjab province is the LeJ. It splintered from the SSP in 1998 and targets Shias and Iranian interests in Pakistan. Most of its commanders are veterans of the Afghan jihad. Both the SSP and LeJ are part of the broader Deobandi movement and maintain operational linkages with other militant groups. The LeJ for instance had good relations with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and its leaders were often provided sanctuary by the

regime. The Taliban had refused to hand over LeJ leaders who were on Pakistan's most-wanted list. The LeJ also has ties with the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). Both SSP and LeJ advocates for the declaration of Pakistan as a Sunni state.

South Punjab which is broadly the area between Jhang and Bahawalpur has been a traditional recruitment ground for jihadi groups that were active in Afghanistan and Kashmir since the 1980s. Statistics compiled by a Pakistani author bring out that from the 1980s till about 2008, more than 12000 militants from Punjab have lost their lives in various theatres, of which 4000 were killed in Afghanistan alone.³¹ A large number of mosques and madrasas in southern Punjab acted as a channel for sending Punjabi youth to the various tanzeems like the HuM, HuJI, LeT, JeM as well as to the Taliban and Al Qaeda even before 2001. Since 2001, the number of madrasas in South Punjab has witnessed an even greater increase. Though no official record is available, the total number of madrasas in Punjab is estimated to be around 5500.³² Dera Ghazi Khan alone has close to 185 madrassas, of which 90 are Deobandi, 84 are Bareilvi, six Ahle Hadith and five are Fiqh-e-Jafaria madrasas. Multan is the nerve centre of radical madrasas in South Punjab and the number of such madrasas has proliferated in Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur in recent years.³³ Most of South Punjab's towns are characterized by abject poverty, and the rural areas are dominated by feudal landlords. These conditions provide a ready supply of foot soldiers to the militant outfits. Most of the TTP suicide bombers in recent years have belonged to South Punjab. Militants from South Punjab are also assuming leadership positions in the various TTP factions and Al Qaeda because of their active involvement in the battlefield landscape of FATA, KPP and Afghanistan. A majority of the 26/11 attackers also belonged to South Punjab.

Punjab has witnessed the lowest number of terrorist incidents among all four provinces of Pakistan, and most of these attacks have been directed at minority groups such as Shias, Ahmadiyas and Christians. As mentioned earlier, the Punjabi Taliban and TTP mainly want to use Punjab as a safe sanctuary to escape security force operations in FATA and KPP. They are also not concentrated in strongholds and are scattered across different areas in small concentrations, making it difficult for security forces to identify and neutralise them. The Punjabi militants would also not like to become unpopular and risk losing public support by inflicting large civilian

casualties and indulging in activities like extortion, kidnapping for ransom or attempting to enforce Sharia practices to the extent that they have in FATA and KPP. Also, the Pashtun militants in Punjab do not enjoy the same levels of public support as they receive in FATA and are greatly dependent on their Punjabi associates to operate from Punjab. Punjab province is also the primary recruitment ground for the Pakistan Army and many of the Punjabi militants of LeT and JeM have their relatives serving in the Pakistan Army. For this reason, the Pakistan Army does not want to open another front in Punjab and earn the wrath of Punjabi militants. As the various militant groups have become interlinked due to operational, logistical and ideological interdependencies in their jihad in Afghanistan and the tribal belt of Pakistan, acting against even some of the Punjabi militants could provoke reactions from other groups or individual militants who have so far refrained from attacking the Pakistani state. The Punjabi militants also enjoy some clout due to their strong ties with right-wing extremist parties in Punjab. The mainstream political parties in Punjab depend on these religious organisations for mobilizing crowd during political rallies and for electoral benefits. Nawaz Sharif's brother is believed to have links with the SSP while his father was previously associated with the LeT Chief, Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed. All these factors prevent the Pakistani administration from taking strong action against militants based in Punjab even though the latter are increasingly using Punjab as a base to launch attacks all over the country.

Karachi

The port city of Karachi has been a hotbed of sectarian violence in Pakistan for several decades now. Since 2008, violence in Karachi city has claimed more than 7000 lives. The violence peaked from the year 2010 onwards claiming the lives of 1000 and 1800 persons in 2010 and 2011 respectively. In the first five months of 2012, at least 540 persons lost their lives to ethnic, sectarian and militant violence in the city. Karachi is central to Pakistan's economic development and accounts for 25 % of its GDP, 70 % of national income tax revenue, and 30 % of industrial output. Therefore, outbreak of violence causes frequent disruptions to economic activity.³⁴

Karachi is an ideal place for militant groups to establish hideouts because of its urban landscape and burgeoning population. More than one million people from rural

Sindh move to Karachi every year residing in slums which are growing at the rate of 100,000 plots every year. Another advantage that Karachi offers is that it cannot be targeted by armed predator drones of the US. Dawood Ibrahim's crime syndicate also has deep roots in the city. Karachi has also been a traditional recruitment ground for militant outfits due to flourishing of at least 3000 madrassas in and around the city. Most of the madrassa students belong to the tribal areas and Afghanistan. In addition, there are thousands of former jihadi veterans who participated in the jihad against the Soviet Union and US in Afghanistan. They can be readily contacted by militant groups through the madrasas for carrying out one-time attacks. The Jamia Uloom Islamia Binori Town madrassa has provided jihadis to several Afghan and Punjabi militant groups like the Harkat-ul-Mujahdieen (HuM) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). The madrasas and religious groups have the ability to mobilise people, and are slowly challenging the dominance of political parties in the city. Different sects often vie for control of madrasas to gain resources and even land. In particular, clashes between the Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) and Sunni Tehrik (ST) which is affiliated to the Barelvis has been on a rise.

Because of the above mentioned factors, it is not surprising that most of the major terror plots in recent years were hatched out in Karachi. The LeT squad which carried out the 26/11 attacks set sail from Karachi port and the terrorist control room that directed the attacks was also based in the city. Faizal Shaizad, who attempted to carry out a bomb attack in Times Square, New York, had contacted TTP sources in Karachi for training purposes. The Indian Mujahdieen (IM) leadership comprising of the Bhatkal brothers reportedly operate from Karachi. The American journalist Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and beheaded by militants linked to the JeM and Al Qaeda in the outskirts of Karachi.

However, before exploring the militant landscape of Karachi, it would be instructive to briefly dissect the nature of political, ethnic and sectarian nature of violence that, coupled with increased criminal activities, have rocked Karachi since the 1980s.

The Mohajir party, Muttahida Qami Movement (MQM) and Pashtun based Awami National Party (ANP) have often been at loggerheads to gain control over economic resources and funds through extortion. The clashes between the Mohajirs and Pathans intensified in the 1980s when the Pathans attempted to gain control over

businesses in the city that were traditionally managed by the Mohajirs. The first city-wide riots in 1985 claimed hundreds of lives. The Pakistan Army launched 'Operation Cleanup' in 1990 to clear the Mohajir areas of armed groups. The operation was intensified in 1995 by the Benazir Bhutto government. The police and Rangers who took over the operations from the Army indulged in ethnic cleansing of Mohajirs killing thousands of them. The operation was followed up with actions against the ethnic militant groups like the SSP and LeJ. This led to a considerable weakening of these groups by the mid-1990s and a consequent decrease in violence throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Since 2001, the influx of Pashtun refugees from Afghanistan and FATA to Karachi has increased. Nearly 300,000 pashtuns moved into the city following Pakistan Army's operations in FATA since 2007. Consequently, it has been estimated that the Pashtun population in Karachi has gone up from 12 % in 1998 to about 22 % now. The MQM therefore has resorted to violence to quell the trend of increasing Pashtun population which threatens its domination over the city.

Another dimension that compounds the security situation in Karachi is the rivalry between the armed groups of the ethnic political parties. They often resort to violence and target killings for political posturing and gain access over the city's administration and financial resources. For instance, violence is used to discourage further influx of Pashtuns in the city and force migration of these people in order to demarcate electoral zones. This affects the ethnic composition of a constituency which can lead to favourable electoral results. The ethno-political dimension of violence is primarily a struggle between the Sindhi dominated Pakistan People's Party (PPP), MQM, and the MQM (Haqiqi). Violence intensified in the run up to the 2013 general elections. The PPP is essentially a rural Sindh based party whereas Mohajirs dominate Karachi. The struggle for gaining influence Karachi assumes importance as the city contains 30 % of Sindh's population and a lion's share of industrial jobs and economic resources of the province. The Sindhi population in the city came down from 60 % in 1947 to about 7 % in 2011. They are mostly settled in the outskirts to control the access points (national highway) to the city. The Mohajirs who make up 48 % of Karachi's population resented the introduction of Quotas for Sindhis in government jobs by ZA Bhutto in the 1970s. In recent years, Sindhi nationalist parties like the Sindh Tarraqi Passand Party, Jeay Sindh Quami Mahaz

(JSQM), and Awami Tehrik (AT) called for greater representation of Sindhis in Karachi. The call for an independent Sindh by JSQM in 2012 led to violence.

Several criminal gangs and the land mafia are used by the political parties to extend their domination over an area or extort money from members of a different ethnic group. At least 200 criminal gangs carry weapons and narcotics smuggling, land grabs and extortion. Most of these gangs operate out of Lyari, a Baloch concentration with a population of 1 million people. Lyari is also a PPP stronghold where it once supported a grouping of criminal gangs called the People's Aman Committee (PAC). Succession struggle within the PAC led to a gang war in 2011 which led to its banning and severing of ties with the PPP. The political parties are the main beneficiaries of the city's wide-spread extortion racket, which according to one estimate amounts to a collection of over 12 million rupees in a day from about 400 markets, transporters, tankers and shopping complexes.

Incidents of sectarian violence have also been on a rise since 2009. More than 100 such incidents were recorded in the 2009-10 period. The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jammāt (ASWJ), known as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) before being banned and Jundullah have often targeted the Shias, and frequently clash with Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP), an armed Shia group in the city. The SMP has also consolidated its hold in Kurram agency of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the proportion of Shia population is quite high. The activities of the LeJ intensified after one of its leader, Naeem Bukhari, who was an accused in the murder of Daniel Pearl was released in 2007. Bukhari developed links with the TTP in FATA and returned to Karachi to unleash a deadly wave of attacks on Shias. The LeJ has a past history of associating with extremist Salafist organisations like the Al Qaeda and its cadres were also sheltered by the Taliban regime prior to 2001 sectarian violence. The assassination of Raza Haider, a prominent Shia leader of the MQM by the LeJ had triggered large-scale reprisal attacks in August 2010 which left more than 50 people dead. The violence reduced after the MQM accepted that the killing was sectarian in nature and not a terrorist attack. The MQM and ST also clash over control of mosques and land areas. Most of the ST cadres were once political activists of the MQM and want to maintain dominance over their traditional pockets.

Yet another dimension marring the violent landscape of Karachi is the turf war between the Deobandi outfits and Barelvi groups primarily represented by the Sunni Tehrik (ST) for control over places of worship. The militant groups also indulge in political violence, target killings and criminal activities like kidnappings for ransom, armed bank robberies, extortion etc.

The violent landscape of Karachi was further muddied when several Al Qaeda and Taliban members took refuge in the city after the US operation was launched in Afghanistan in October 2001. Many of the Pashtun cadres of the Taliban could easily seek shelter into the Pashtun dominated localities of Karachi. The Afghan Taliban does not carry out attacks in the city which is considered a safe refuge for them. They easily merge into the pockets with a presence of Pashtuns. Karachi also has a population of about 80,000 Afghan refugees from the days of the Soviet jihad. Resentment among this section of the population due to denial of jobs and deportations could lead them to the path of violence and incentivize their support to the Pashtun militants. It is estimated that about 6000 Afghan Taliban militants and Pashtuns move between Karachi, Balochistan, FATA and Afghanistan every year. In February 2011, the Taliban leader, Mullah Baradar was nabbed in a joint US-Pakistan operation in Karachi. Media reports also surfaced in 2011 claiming that Mullah Omar underwent heart surgery at a Karachi hospital under ISI supervision.³⁵

Initially, the Taliban and other foreign militants kept a low profile but in recent years have been increasingly involved in sectarian violence in the city. This phenomenon occurred when the TTP established its presence from 2008 onwards. Since 2011, incidents of sectarian attacks have spiralled in the city. Most of the attacks on Shias in the past two years have been attributed to the TTP. The factions of the TTP which have a presence in Karachi include those of Badr Mansoor, (North Waziristan) Mullah Fazlullah (Swat) and Waliur Rehman (South Waziristan). The TTP sources finances and new recruits from Karachi in addition to targeting Shias and security forces. Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban also have a presence in Karachi. The various militant groups have carved their different zones of influence in and around Karachi and make it extremely difficult for the Pakistani security forces to penetrate those areas.

Several high-profile attacks on security forces and government targets in Karachi from the year 2010 onwards are indicative of the TTP's strength and capabilities in the city. A TTP suicide attack on the CID office in Karachi killed 24 people and injured more than 130. A bus carrying Naval personnel was attacked in April 2011 leaving four sailors dead. The most sensational attack was on the Pakistan Naval Base, Mehran on 22 May 2011. On 19 September 2012, Chaudhury Aslam Khan, who headed the CID in Karachi, was assassinated by TTP militants. Eight other people were also killed in that suicide car bomb attack.

The Pashtun dominated clusters of Orangi, Baldia and SITE Industrial Township have a sizeable presence of TTP militants. The TTP also recruits from the madrasas where most of the students come from FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Of late, the TTP is also recruiting from the city's universities where lack of employment avenues are forcing even educated youth into the militant fold. The Punjabi Taliban in particular has attracted youth from the University of Karachi.³⁶

Since 2011, the Sindh Police and Pakistan Indus Rangers have intensified their operations against the TTP. In 2011 alone, 222 TTP militants were arrested in the city. Some important TTP commanders like Abdul Qayum Mehsud, the leader of the TTP in Karachi and a previous bodyguard of Baitullah Mehsud and Mullah Hakeen who headed the TTP faction in Swat, have been nabbed from Karachi. Yasin Shah, the commander of the TTP in Balochistan was also killed in an operation in Karachi. Security operations launched in the Pashtun neighbourhoods assume an ethnic colour and are seen by Pashtuns as being led by a Punjabi dominated Police force. This leads to further consolidation of the TTP support base among the Pashtuns.

The other militant groups which have a presence in Karachi are the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP); Sipah-e-Mohammed Pakistan (SMP); Sunni Tehreek (ST); Daawat-e-Islami (Del); Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM); Harkat-ul-Mujahideen – Al Alami (HUMA); Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM); Jamaat ul Furqaan (JuF); Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI); Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM); Jundallah; Tehrik-e-Islami Lashkar-e-Muhammadi (TILM); Lashkar-e-Islami (LeI); Mehdi Militia (MM); Hezbollah; Kharooj; Tawheed Brigade (TB); Al Mukhtar Group; and Punjabi Mujahideen.³⁷

Balochistan

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province in terms of size (it comprises 42 % of Pakistan's total land area) but comprises only 5 % of its population, nearly 50 % of whom are ethnic Pashtuns. The presence of vast amounts of natural resources, especially energy resources, including an estimated nineteen trillion cubic feet of natural gas and six trillion barrels of oil reserves and a long coastline of 750 kilometers makes it strategically important for Pakistan.³⁸

The Balochis adhere to the Hanafi school of Islam. They are quite moderate in their religious beliefs and tribal culture primarily takes precedence over Islamic practices. The Baloch were nomads who settled in the Sulaiman Mountains and Balochistan Plateau. The tribes have always resisted centralised control over them. There was an uprising against the Safavid Empire in 1698-99 when the latter expanded into Baloch areas. The Ghilzai Pashtuns had also suppressed a Baloch uprising in Kandahar in 1704. The Balochs expanded their presence into southern parts of Sindh in the late 1700s.³⁹ They carried out harassing raids on British columns moving into Afghanistan during the First Anglo-Afghan War in the mid 19th century.⁴⁰ By 1843, the British finally put an end to the Baloch sniping activities by comprehensively defeating them at the Battle of Meanee. The British maintained a string of cantonments to keep the trade route between Karachi and the Bolan Pass free from guerilla raids. Col Robert Sandeman was instrumental in establishing a relationship of "peace and goodwill" with the tribes. However, the undercurrents of Baloch nationalism had been brewing since the 1900s even as the British developed more communication and railway lines in Northern parts of Balochistan dominated by Pashtuns.

In 1948, the Khan of Kalat refused to merge with Pakistan and declared independence from it. The Pakistan Army moved into Balochistan for the first time on 1 April 1948 and launched a brutal offensive to suppress the revolt. Prince Abdur Karim who was the younger son of the Khan of Kalat launched an insurgency after fleeing to the mountains. The government brokered a peace deal but reneged its terms by arresting Prince Abdur Karim. The calm was once again shattered in 1954 when the Balochs went up in arms against the implementation of the "One Unit" plan

which merged all the four provinces of West Pakistan into a single administrative entity. The Pakistan Army once again suppressed the insurgency by negotiating a peace deal and arresting Nauroz Khan, the leader of the Zehri tribe who was the main player of the insurgency. The hanging of Nauroz Khan and increased presence of the Pakistan Army further outraged the tribes. In 1969, Gen Yahya Khan gave up the “One Unit” policy and Balochistan was granted provincial status. But the Provincial government was dismissed dissolved by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973. This led to the bloodiest phase of Baloch insurgency when the Sadar of the Marri tribe, Khair Baksh Marri, organised the Baloch resistance under the banner of the Baloch People’s Liberation Front (BPLF). The insurgents had managed to sever most lines of communications that connected Balochistan with other provinces which also disrupted the coal supply to Punjab. Nearly 80,000 Pakistan Army troops were deployed and the resistance suffered a decisive blow at Chamalang where nearly 1500 insurgents were lured into a trap and then strafed from the air. Iran also aided in the offensive by providing AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters to Pakistan. According to Selig Harrison, more than 5500 Balochis and 3300 Pakistani security personnel were killed in this phase of the insurgency that lasted for four years.⁴¹ In 1978, Gen Zia ul-Haq released 6000 Baloch prisoners and granted them amnesty. The support from Afghanistan also dried up due to the collapse of the Daud regime in 1974. The insurgency remained dormant till 2004 but disenchantment among the Baloch people continued over lack of political and economic representation in the Federal government, appropriation of the state’s mineral wealth, denial of government jobs, etc. The employment of Chinese workers for the development of the Gwadar deep sea port was a major factor in the emergence of the present phase of insurgency which began in 2003-04. The Baloch see no benefit accruing to them with the development of Gwadar and also from the Sui gas fields. In fact, at Gwadar, a separate colony has been set up for Chinese workers and the locals have been kept out. The Pakistan Army has also moved in to secure the areas around Gwadar.⁴²

The Bugti, Marri and Mengal tribes have been at the forefront of the Baloch insurgency and carry out guerilla attacks on Pakistan Army and other security forces in the area. Nearly 25,000 Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps personnel are deployed for counter-insurgency operations in Balochistan.⁴³ The killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a former Governor of Balochistan by the Pakistan Army in August 2006 further

fuelled passions of the Baloch people. The leader of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) was also killed in November 2007. There was a temporary decline in the number of militancy related incidents which came down from 641 in 2006 to 316 in 2007. But the attacks peaked once again in 2008. The number of incidents in 2009 and 2010 were 792 and 730 respectively.⁴⁴ From 2004 to 2008, out of 832 bomb blasts in Pakistan, 435 were reported from Balochistan alone.⁴⁵ In recent years, attacks on Shias have peaked in the province particularly in Quetta. The suicide bombings of Shia shrines and targeting of buses carrying Shia Hazara pilgrims can largely be attributed to the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). Since 2011, over 350 Shias have been killed in targeted attacks in Balochistan alone.⁴⁶

Presently, frequency of attacks on targets such as gas pipelines, power transmission lines, power pylons, security check posts, FC forts, security forces, railway tracks, oil tankers, government offices, pro-government tribesmen, official residences and civilians have increased. 690 civilians and 178 security personnel were killed in militancy related incidents in Balochistan in 2012.⁴⁷

The BLA is the most significant insurgent outfit challenging the writ of the state. Its current leader is Hyrbyair Marri. The BLA was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the US in 2000 and Pakistan in 2006. Besides BLA, there are four smaller Baloch insurgent outfits in the region: the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA), Lashkar-e-Balochistan and Jhalawan Baloch Tigers.⁴⁸ The BLA led by Dr Allah Nazar is a more potent outfit which carries out strikes against the security forces and is very active in the eastern parts of Balochistan. In October 2012, he announced that all the Baloch groups would unite to pose a coordinated challenge to the security forces.⁴⁹ He also claimed that the total strength of BLF was 6000. Pakistan's Federal Ministry of Interior believes that the insurgents run at least 54 'ferrari' or roving camps in Balochistan. There are also reports of the Baloch insurgents having linked up with Taliban elements who entrenched themselves in large numbers in the province following their flight from neighbouring Afghanistan. The Pakistan government even accuses the Karzai administration in Afghanistan of providing sanctuary to Baloch insurgents on its soil.⁵⁰ Iran has also accused the anti-shiite group Jundullah of conducting hit and run attacks in Sistan Balochistan province of Iran from Balochistan.

More recently, clashes occurred between the BLA and the United Balochistan Army (UBA) which is linked to the BRA. They have mostly occurred due to personality clashes among leaders and over issues such as sharing of financial resources and weapons, direction of the armed insurgency, etc.⁵¹ Iran has also accused the anti-shiite group Jundullah of conducting hit and run attacks in Sistan Balochistan province of Iran from Balochistan. The fractious nature of the Baloch Insurgency and deep suspicion of each other among the Bugti, Marri and Mengal tribes have inhibited the growth of a unified and more effective insurgency movement. In fact, various tribes have limited agendas of their own and for many of them nationalism does not extend beyond tribal loyalties. A 2006 cable from the US Embassy in Islamabad further elucidated this fact. It said, "There seems to be little support in the province, beyond the Bugti tribe, for the current insurgency".⁵² In fact, bulk of Pakistani security forces operations in Balochistan are directed against the Bugtis. Nevertheless, genuine disaffection against the Pakistan government exists and all the tribes target government symbols though they may differ in their objectives.

The presence in large numbers of the Afghan Taliban in Balochistan has added another dimension to the security matrix there. In fact, Quetta has emerged as a prominent safe haven for the Taliban cadres especially its senior leadership. Due to its close proximity to their stronghold of Kandahar, Taliban cadres find it safe to melt into safe sanctuaries in Balochistan after conducting attacks in Afghanistan. The Taliban Emir Mullah Omar is believed to be holed up in Quetta. The Pashtunabad locality in the city has been virtually ceded to the Taliban and it also has a sizeable presence in Kharotabad and Toba Kakar. The government agencies are virtually absent in the "non-governed areas" where the writ of the Taliban prevails.⁵³ According to some analysts, the Pakistan Army believes that the Taliban presence in Balochistan acts as a counter against the Baloch insurgents for which it has allowed them to establish bases there. Presence in Balochistan also offers them protection against US drone strikes.

Northern Areas of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK)

While POK serves as the primary base for anti-India jihadist groups to train, equip and launch militants into J&K, the Northern Areas of POK, now called Gilgit-Baltistan

was reportedly used by the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists to seek refuge following the launch of Operation Anaconda in south eastern Afghanistan in 2002. At one point, there were even indications that Osama bin Laden was holed up in Parachinar mountains bordering Gilgit-Baltistan. Although the region is peopled by Shias and other sub-tribes, the domination of Punjabis in administration and other jobs has created resentment among the local population. Over several decades, Punjabis and Psthuns have been encouraged to settle in the Northern Areas. Several small outfits such as the Balwaristan National Front have opposed Punjabi domination but their struggle has often lacked steam. However, since 2005 the region has witnessed increased disturbances and clashes between the local population and authorities. The establishment of Chinese infrastructure projects and denial of employment to local people in these projects has further alienated the population. In 2005, disruptions caused by Shias had led to the partial closure of the Karakoram Highway. The Pakistani state maintains strict control in the area and has largely managed to keep a lid over violent activities by Shia groups.

In the past few years, sectarian terrorist groups like the LeJ have targeted Shia passengers travelling on buses. In 2012, two such incidents were reported when Shias were separated from rest of the passengers and then shot dead. Some Pakistani analysts have suggested that the TTP also pursues a rabid anti-Shia ideology and it would be difficult to rule out its presence in Gilgit-Baltistan. Asmatullah Muawiya, a Pakistani TTP commander also linked to the Al Qaeda, has claimed that a TTP outfit is active in the region. The killing of nine foreign trekkers at the western Base Camp of Nanga Parbat in Daimer district on 22 June 2013 was also claimed by the TTP. It said that the act was a reprisal for the killing of its deputy, Waliur Rehman in a drone strike in May 2012 and that it would continue to target westerners in Pakistan. The death of Chinese nationals in the attack would put more pressure on Pakistan to ensure the security of Chinese workers in Gilgit-Baltistan. Additionally, TTP activities in the region would stretch the Pakistani security forces in an already sensitive region bordering India, Afghanistan, China and the Central Asian Republics (land opening to the latter has immense economic value for Pakistan). Yet, the attack is an isolated incident and it needs to be seen whether the TTP has plans to launch a full scale insurgency in a sparsely populated and Shia

inhabited region where it would find very little local support. Nevertheless, it could seek to embed itself among the Pashtun and Punjabi population there.

Conclusion

The contributory factors that sustain insurgency and terrorism have taken strong roots in Pakistan. Religious fundamentalism, resentment among the non-Punjabi population due to the state's discrimination against them and assertion of nationalism bordering on secessionism by different ethnic groups have only increased in the past decade. Of all the fault lines, the Pashtun insurgency led by the TTP is the most serious challenge threatening the vitality of the state. The steady flow of weapons and other supplies in the 1980s has transformed the North West frontier into one of the most heavily weaponised regions of the world. The spawning of a madrasa culture and presence of a host of jihadi groups has added to lawlessness in the area. Since 2008, the TTP has consolidated its presence in FATA and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by championing the cause of fundamentalist pan-Islamism, injected by Saudi Arabia based Wahabi madrasas and Al Qaeda's virulent ideology. The collateral damage and large-scale dislocation of the population caused due to high-handed military operations and US drone strikes further helped in consolidating the support base in favour of the TTP. In fact, Anti-Americanism is at an all time high in Pakistan and most people prefer a negotiated settlement with the militants rather than confronting them militarily. A Pew Research survey in 2012 established that only 32 % of the respondents favoured the use of Pakistan Army against the militants. 64 % of the respondents surveyed by the BBC in March 2013 described them as religious conservatives while 38 % preferred the implementation of the Sharia law in the country.⁵⁴ This is indicative of the increasing radicalisation among the people and their lack of faith in the administrative system in the country. The tribal insurgency has had a cascading effect on the levels of violence in Karachi and has introduced terrorist violence to the Punjabi heartland.

But the **single-biggest factor** that gave birth to the TTP, i.e. the presence of Western forces in Afghanistan, is going to get reversed by 2014. This will provide a tactical window for Pakistan to rid itself of the menace of tribal insurgency. The fractious nature of the insurgency itself provides an opportunity for Pakistan to

negotiate deals with some factions of the TTP, pit them against each other and liquidate the most virulent ones. Pakistani security forces have in fact been following such an approach which has led to several peace deals from time to time. In December 2011, several Afghan and Pakistani factions of the Taliban were brought under one roof. In the past one year, the Afghan Taliban has made some appeals to the TTP leadership, asking them to refrain from attacking Pakistan and concentrate their actions in Afghanistan. As has been brought out earlier in the paper, many members of the Pakistani Taliban had participated in battles in Afghanistan prior to 2001 and some of them are still actively involved there. The diversion of TTP cadres to Afghanistan will help stem the tide of insurgency and terrorism in Pakistan. This, of course is contingent on the ability of the Pakistani security establishment to strike a deal with the various TTP factions and whether they would agree to do Pakistan's bidding in the end-game in Afghanistan. They have indeed succeeded in driving a wedge between some factions and winning over some of them through favourable deals. State elements in Pakistan may also attempt to divert some TTP cadres to J&K in an attempt to rid the Frankenstein off their backs. The TTP is greatly inclined to negotiate with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as opposed to directly talking to the Pakistan Army, and Nawaz Sharif has indicated his willingness to open negotiations with the TTP. However, all this is easier said than done. Conversely, the withdrawal of western forces from Afghanistan could engineer a reverse Pashtun mobilization against Pakistan. Strident calls for establishment of a separate "Pashtunistan" straddling both sides of the Durand Line would then pose a far greater threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity. Another factor that helps in consolidating Pashtun solidarity against the state is their growing resentment against a Punjabi dominated Pakistan Army, whom they see as outsiders. (more than 40 % of the Pakistan Army is made up of Punjabis).

In the worst-case scenario, they may even attempt to link-up with Punjabi militants and threaten Islamabad itself. Insurgent movements the world over, have exhibited an universal tendency to retain trappings of power that flow through the barrel of the gun and it is difficult for them to let go of their energy. In any case, having acquired deep roots and clout in the tribal areas, it would be difficult for the Pashtun militants to let go of their power base by negotiating an agreement with the Pakistani state. They would attempt to negotiate from a position of strength to further expand their

influence in the area. Even in the run up to the elections, the TTP increasingly targeted the moderate Pashtuns represented by the Awami National Party. In any case, developments in Pakistan coupled with the drawdown of western forces from Afghanistan will have a security implication for India for which it needs to be on guard. If Pakistan is able to rid itself of the stranglehold of militancy, some elements in its state establishments would once again become inclined to increase the tempo of terrorist violence directed against India and the Taliban insurgency spreading east of the Indus would bring religious extremism dangerously close to India's borders. Further de-stabilisation and increasing primacy of radical forces in a nuclear-armed state will imperil world peace like never before. Under these circumstances, it would be interesting to see how well the Pakistani establishment, and especially its military, plays its cards and is able to roll back the devastating effects of extremist violence. What complicates the matter further is the increasing degree of sympathy and support for radicals and militants among the Pakistan Army itself. This factor prevents an all out action against militants of all shades and grants them space for carrying out their activities.

In any case, the Pakistani landscape with its cocktail milieu of insurgencies, militants, extremists, radicals, engines of jihad and madrasas, text books spewing Islamist and anti-India venom, represent a toxic potion having potential for deadly explosions, reverberations of which may well be felt across the Indus. Indian intelligence agencies, security forces and policy makers have their task cut out. Reading the tea leaves well should concern us all.

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Notes

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