

## PAKISTAN COUNTERINSURGENCY IN SWAT: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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### Abstract

*Every conflict has its own peculiar and distinct characteristics that demands a defining response in the form of counterinsurgency. Before embarking on any such counterinsurgency campaign, it is of utmost significance to frame the parameters of the appropriate response. That arises the question as how much research has been carried out on the nature of insurgency and more importantly on the counterinsurgency. Such critical inquiries can lead the academicians and practitioners to explore as what was the pattern and nature of insurgency, i.e. secessionist, traditional or spiritual etc. More importantly, the relevant literature review must explain the contours of counterinsurgency operations. Besides, such research should bring forth the critical constraint and shortfalls of the counterinsurgency campaign vis-à-vis the civilian and military's approach of handling the insurgency. In Pakistan's Swat region, the insurgency posed an existential threat to the security of Pakistan. The post 9/11 era proliferated the wave of insurgencies in the region and Swat was not immune to the shock effects of the violent social change. Swat's insurgency got its momentum in 2006 and unleashed a spate of terrorism and guerilla fighting that shook the entire country. In 2009, a grand scale counterinsurgency operation was launched incorporating all components of state. The softer prong of the operations is continuing till to date in the form of de-radicalization and counter extremism. In this article, I will endeavor to determine the research being*

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carried out on the counterinsurgency in Swat and more importantly, the research gaps will be identified which needs to be filled by the future researchers and studies.

## Introduction

The creation of *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) in December 2007 became the launching pad for organized phase of militancy, intertwining itself with the so called, global *Jihad*.<sup>1</sup> The insurgency in Swat widened to an extent that concerns were voiced internationally regarding safety of nuclear installations and writ of the government in areas close to Islamabad.

In the pre-9/11 period of Swat, *Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi* (TNSM)<sup>2</sup>, a spiritual movement which initially began for the introduction of *Sharia* in Malakand Agency in the 1990s, emerged as reactionary movement because they sought to implement Islamic political and social arrangements in accordance with their own self-styled version. Usually, the reactionaries believe that they are the custodians of truth and are extremely intolerant toward those who don't share their views. The TTP led Taliban, on the other hand, have been termed as anarchistic in nature by Rasool Buksh Raees<sup>3</sup>, because they aim at annihilating an established political system by terming it un-Islamic and replace it with an alternative Islamic political system based on *Sharia*, as interpreted by them. Historically, the post 9/11 insurgency in Swat is a result of centuries long religious historical, geo-political and social developments in the region. It was also an offshoot of attempts at *Shariatization*<sup>4</sup> of Malakand by the TNSM movement. Historically, the people of Swat have exhibited tendency of submission to the spiritual authorities whenever there was a threat of outside military intervention, as is evident from the episodes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when they lent support to *Jihadist* movements. The people have further historically experienced the leadership part played by Mullahs in choosing kings of Swat in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>5</sup> Thus, when Sufi Mohammad launched his drive for *Sharia* in 1989 through TNSM, the people of Malakand region gave him complete support. Religiously motivated people also responded

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<sup>1</sup>, Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan on the Brink: The future of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the West", (New York, Penguin Group, 2012), 139-144.

<sup>2</sup>Movement for Enforcement of *Sharia* of Mohammad (PBUH).

<sup>3</sup> Rasool Bakhsh Rais, "11 Corps Symposium", off air recording", (Peshawar Inter Services Public Relations. 16 April, 2012) 00:25.

<sup>4</sup>The term was used by Usama Butt, 'Pakistan's Quagmire', Continuum International 2010, p.10: 'The short-lived *Nizam-e-Adl* Regulation, coupled with Taliban's 'capture' of cities 'very close to Islamabad' sent shock waves globally, with a media frenzy focusing on the possible "*Shariatization*" of Pakistan.'

<sup>5</sup> Khalid Aziz, "The Main Causes of Breakdown of Governance and Rise of Militancy", (Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, (2009), 36-37.

wholeheartedly, when Sufi sought to mobilize his people to fight a holy war against the NATO forces in Afghanistan in the wake of US attack in November 2001. In the next phase, Mullah Fazlullah launched his violent fanaticism in 2004, many people in Swat supported the trumpeters of *Jihad* in the hope that another epoch of religious movement has started. Until this point, Pakistan was severely affected by the wave of terrorism which was unleashed by the reactionary and anarchist forces. Sufi Mohammad's *Sharia* movement became the catalyst for the violent and terrorism of Fazlullah in the valley.

Since 2005/06, the rise of the insurgency and subsequent military operations and the huge displacement of people created a humanitarian catastrophe in Malakand and Swat.<sup>6</sup> The first military operation in Swat was preceded by political efforts at settling the conflict in the period between July to November 2007, but to no avail.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, 17 Division of Pakistan Army launched operation in November 2007, which continued till January 2008. Political efforts and peace deals were conducted from March 2008 till June 2008. After a brief stalemate in violence, militancy resurged in June 2008. Resultantly, selected military operations restarted from June 2008 till January 2009. Simultaneously, peace negotiations between ANP led government and the militants continued from January 2009 to April 2009, however, these failed to reach any positive outcome. Resultantly, a full blown and decisive military operation code-named *Rah-e-Rast* was launched by the 37 Division and 17 Division with the support of Special Services Group (SSG), from May to July 2009.<sup>8</sup> The large-scale military operation, Operation *Rah-e-Rast*,<sup>9</sup> was successful in flushing out the militants with a heavy cost.<sup>10</sup> Headquarter 1 Corps from Mangla was called and tasked to maintain, manage and accommodate around two million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Swat into camps as a result of the operation *Rah-e-Rast* in Swat and Malakand region. From February 2009 to

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<sup>6</sup> Saira Bano Orakzai, "Conflict in the Swat Valley of Pakistan: Pakhtun Culture and Peace building Theory-Practice Application, Journal of Peace building & Development, 6(1), (2011).

<sup>7</sup> International Crises Group, "Pakistan: Countering Militancy in PATA", January, Brussels, (2013) retrieved from <https://counterideology2.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/icg-pakistan-countering-militancy-in-pata.pdf> accessed on 19 June 2017,

<sup>8</sup> The military operations were launched on three axes: first was Shangla – Khawaja Khela – Matta – Peochar; second axis was Malakand–Mingora–Kabbal; and third phase was Heli drop by SSG at Peochar and Auxiliary Effort in Dir & Bunir. There were 10 IDP camps established in 7 districts of KP, which accommodated around 2 million IDPs (Headquarter 11 Corps archives, May 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Meaning 'Righteous Path' - Military operation began in May 2009 for control of the Swat.

<sup>10</sup> Rasool Adnan, "How Bad Governance Led to Conflict: The Case of Swat", Pakistan Center for Public Policy and Governance, MPRA Paper 35357 (F), (2012).

September 2009, more than two and half million inhabitants of Swat had to leave their homes and became Temporary Displaced Peoples (TDPs) in Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Swabi and Nowshera. It was one of the largest evacuation of people observed in humanitarian assistance work since the Second World War.<sup>11</sup>

The subject of insurgency and counterinsurgency (CI) in Pakistan has received scholarly attention from number of scholars, who have endeavored to theorize and comprehend Pakistan's CI paradigm. Numerous scholars have undertaken scholarly studies on the subject vis-à-vis the kinetic and non-kinetic operations. For the purpose of review, it is convenient to divide the scholars' writings on insurgency and CI into two broad groups: Those who explore the drivers of extremism and militancy as well as the underlying conditions of why people rallied behind the militants Noor, International Crisis Group, Khalid, Khalil, Rasool and Tabassum.<sup>12</sup> Those who studied the military operations as well as post conflict peace building initiatives in the wake of such insurgencies, David, Haider, Stephan, Nadeem, Rana & Sial, Christiane & Seth, Sameer, Shujja, Joshua, Douglas et al, Tariq and Shahzad.<sup>13</sup> The above mentioned (both) classifications may be further divided into two or three variants.

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<sup>11</sup> Khalid Aziz, "The Main Causes of Breakdown of Governance and Rise of Militancy".

<sup>12</sup> Noor Elahi, "Militancy Conflicts and Displacement in Swat Valley of Pakistan: Analysis of Transformation of Social and Cultural Network", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 5(3), (2015), 226-236; International Crises Group, "Pakistan: Countering Militancy in PATA", January, Brussels, (2013) retrieved from, <https://counterideology2.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/icg-pakistan-countering-militancy-in-pata.pdf> accessed on 19 June 2017; Khalid Aziz ; Khalil-ur-Rehman , Swat Valley: The Strategic Cap-Stone", *Journal of Dialogue*, VI(4) (2011)356-366; Rasool Adnan; Tabassum Majeed, "Insurgency in Swat: Conflict settlement and peace building 2001-2011, (Swat, Shoaib Sons publishers, ,2016).

<sup>13</sup>David Kilcullen, "The Accidental Guerilla", (London, C. Hurst & Co Publishers, 2009) ; Haider A H Mullick, "Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban: A Joint Action Agenda for USA and Pakistan", Institute for Social Policy and understanding, (2009), p.10, retrieved from, [http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPUHelpingPakistan0 Report.pdf](http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPUHelpingPakistan0%20Report.pdf) accessed on 12 February 2015; Stephan P Cohen, "The FATA Challenge", *Pakistan's Troubled Frontier: The Future of FATA and the NWFP*, (Washington, D.C, Jamestown Foundation Conference, 2009); Nadeem Ahmed, "COIN in Peace Building, PRISM Security Studies Journal, Sep, 2(4), (2011)4, 125-138; Christina Fair, & Seth Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Pakistan", Rand, National Security Research Division, Pittsburgh, (2010) accessed 18 July 2016, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND\\_MG982.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG982.pdf);

Sameer Lalwani, "Pakistan's COIN Flip: The Recent History of Pakistani Military Counterinsurgency Operations in the NWFP and FATA", *Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper*, New America Foundation, (2010), p.1; Shujja Nawaz, "Learning by Doing. The Pakistan Army's Experience with Counterinsurgency", February, South Asia Center of the Atlantic Council of the United States, (2011), accessed on 29 November 2016, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/126743/020111\\_ACUS\\_Nawaz\\_Pakistan](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/126743/020111_ACUS_Nawaz_Pakistan)

## Literature Review

The first category scholars such as Khalil, Khalid, Rasool, Noor, International Crisis Group and Tabassum either blame the insurgency's rise on the state's inappropriate contextual response to address the grievances of the local people, or the political cadre for its policy of appeasement in the form of non-effective peace deals and negotiations.<sup>14</sup> The second category discussed in the above para can be grouped into three: Those who view Pakistan's CI campaign in Swat in the light of its focus on military approach of excessive use of power, such as David, Haider, Sameer, Stephan, Christine and Seth<sup>15</sup>; or scholars, such as Shujja, Nadeem and Joshua who argue that the military has learnt the mechanics of CI by the process of 'learning by doing'; and finally, scholars view radicalization of society vis-à-vis the violence and insurgency, Raheem, Douglas et al, Siddiqa, Christine, Kaja, Azam, Shahzad, Corinne & Rebecca, Amir, Safdar and Abdul Basit.<sup>16</sup> This literature review critically evaluates some of the arguments of these scholars.

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Counterinsurgency.pdf; Joshua White n.d., "Applying Counterinsurgency Principles in Pakistan's Frontier", PhD, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Research Fellow, Institute For Global Engagement, Brookings Counterinsurgency and Pakistan Paper Series, No.2, 2012, accessed 21 December 2016, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0625\\_counterinsurgency\\_white.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0625_counterinsurgency_white.pdf); Douglas Johnston, Andrew McDonnell, Henry Burbridge and James Patton, "Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims", International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), (2016); Tariq Rahman, "Madrasahs: The Potential for Violence in Pakistan", October 2, Criterion Quarterly, Vol 2 No 2 (2013), retrieved from <http://www.criterion-quarterly.com/madrassas-the-potential-for-violence-in-pakistan/> accessed on 21 May 2017; Shehzad H. Qazi, "A War Without Bombs: Civil Society Initiatives Against Radicalization in Pakistan," Policy Brief No. 60, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, February, (2013) retrieved from, [www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU\\_Brief\\_Counter](http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_Counter), accessed on 21 November 2017 Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial; Abdul Basit, "Dynamics of Taliban insurgency in FATA", Pakistan Institutes of Peace Studies, Islamabad, (2010).

<sup>14</sup> Khalil Ur Rehman, "Valley: The Strategic Cap-Stone"; Rasool Adnan, "How Bad Governance Led to Conflict: The Case of Swat".

<sup>15</sup> David Kilcullen, "The Accidental Guerilla"; Haider A H Mullick, "Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban"; Stephan P Cohen, "The FATA Challenge"; Fair & Jones (2010) and Sameer Lalwani, "Pakistan's COIN Flip: The Recent History of Pakistani Military Counterinsurgency Operations in the NWFP and FATA".

<sup>16</sup> Raheem ul Haque, Youth Radicalization in Pakistan, United States Institute of Peace, peace brief 169, February 26 Washington, D.C, (2014). Douglas Johnston et al, Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims; Ayesha Siddiqa, "The Madressa Mix: Genesis and growth", Mar 03, Dawn News, (2015) retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1166039> accessed on 10 Mar 2015; Christina Fair, 2008, "The Madrasahs Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan", U.S. Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC, pp 67-

Several scholars and think tanks such as Khalil, Noor, Khalid, Rasool, International Crisis Group and Tabassum claim that a frail and wrecked judicial system, pitiable governance and an institutional void created the space for insurgents to gain ground in Swat. Violent religious extremism and militancy are driven by a number of factors, including region's economic disruption, illiteracy and strict traditional customs. The problems of Swat and that of its inhabitants are one more expression of Pakistan's cognitive dissonance. The dilemma of the valley also has its origin in the socio-economic and political deprivation phenomenon. To Rehman, it is micro of Pakistan's macro reductionism. Elahi explores the continued economic and political dominancy of the landlords and disparities in terms of resources sharing among different groups as widening the gap between the rich and the poor in Swat's case. To him, most of those who fought the state, did so to rise from their positions of peripheries, thus the fighting was an effort by the marginalized groups to be at par with the elites of the community. It became apparent that weak governance structures provided the space for the disillusioned to hold their grounds. The rank and file of the insurgents who defied the government mostly included individuals from relegated groups.<sup>17</sup> In the nutshell, Swat faces difficult challenges where the efforts of the deprived people function within the complex dynamics of a historical mindset attached in a Jihadist outline that is pulled by the rhetoric of the war on extremism.

Carrying forward the debate and widening such assumptions, scholars such as Manzoor & Mosab, Naveed and Lubna, claim that support of the political parties, especially the one in power in KP province also promoted militancy in the Malakand division.<sup>18</sup> It has been observed that successive

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68, viewed 20 April 2016, <https://bookstore.usip.org/books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=181109>, pp 67- 68; Kaja Borchgrevink 2010, "Beyond Borders: Diversity and Transnational Links in Afghan Religious Education", PRIO Paper, PRIO Oslo. P.55, viewed 25 October 2016, <https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=7212>, p.55; Azam Khan, "Not in the short term: Govt quietly dilutes its Counter-terrorism plan", The Express Tribune, March 8, (2015), retrieved from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/849724/not-in-the-short-term-govt-quietly-dilutes-its-counter-terrorism-plan/> accessed on 9 march 2015; Corinne Graff and Rebecca Winthrop, "Beyond Madrasas: Assessing the Links between Education and Militancy in Pakistan", SSRN Electronic Journal · June (2010), p.41; viewed 20 November 2016, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228313373>; Tariq, "Madrasas: The potential for violence in Pakistan", p.175; Shahzad Qazi; Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial, Abdul Basit, "Dynamics of Taliban insurgency in FATA".

<sup>17</sup> Khalid Aziz, "The Main Causes of Breakdown of Governance and Rise of Militancy".

<sup>18</sup> Manzoor Khan Afridi, & Musab Yousufi, "Military Operation in Malakand Division Pakistan: Causes and Implications," Department of Politics and International Relations, Islamabad International Islamic University, Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 3(3) (2014); Naveed Iqbal Khan and Lubna Abid Ali, "Tehreek-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi in Malakand Division (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa): A Case Study of

provincial governments and bureaucracy functioning under them, supported the rise of insurgency. The militancy's rise in Swat was made possible by the MMA's provincial government's compassionate attitude towards the insurgents. Moreover, poor administration and lack of good governance weakened the writ of government and paved way for the emergence of TNSM and *Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat* (TTS) in Malakand division. There are other scholars including Tabassum and Sultan, who not only acknowledge the above findings but also predict that if the governance is not improved significantly, similar conflict will re-emerge in Swat.<sup>19</sup> They add that the peace developed in post-conflict Swat is a kind of cold peace, where tensions are still present beneath the layer of apparent peace. The government has to address the very basic cause of conflict, i.e. the feeble and outmoded judicial and legal system.

Some scholars, including Joshua and Sameer argue that the insurgency in FATA and PATA blended Pashtun nationalism with religious extremism as an exceptional religio-culture ideology.<sup>20</sup> This assertion can be challenged on the grounds that the nationalists' parties such as ANP didn't have any identification with the cause of insurgents and did not give any support to their ideological cause. Perhaps, ANP bore massive brunt for their antagonism of militancy and incurred the wrath of insurgents in the form of suicide bombings and assassination of its leaders.

As far as the military component of CI is concerned, very few studies have comprehensively covered the kinetic aspect of CI in Swat. They include, Shujja, Manzoor & Musab, Khalil, David, Stephan, Christina & Seth, Joshua and Nadeem. Their research reveals divergent views. Some of them such as Nawaz argues that Pakistan Army has learned to counter the insurgency in the process of 'learning by doing'. General Nadeem articulates that the reasons for the success of the operation and response effort include, abundance of military assets, reformed training, articulate planning and organization, effective management of displaced people, public mobilization for local defense and good intelligence. Ahmed argues that the conflict in Swat was the first which the Pakistan Army had successfully undertaken a

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the Process of State Inversion", Pakistan Journal of History and Culture, Vol. XX XI, No.1,(2010),131-158.

<sup>19</sup> Sultan-e-Rome, S 2011, "Crisis and Reconciliation in Swat", Journal of Pakistan studies, Vol. 3, no.1. viewed 16 March 2016, <file:///C:/Users/Shahid/Downloads/101-107-1-PB.pdf>; Tabassum Majeed, "Insurgency in Swat: Conflict settlement and peace building".

<sup>20</sup> Joshua T White, "Applying Counterinsurgency Principles in Pakistan's Frontier", 'Candidate,' Brookings CI and Pakistan Paper Series, No. 2, 25 June, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Research Fellow, Institute for Global Engagement (2009); Sameer Lalwani, "Pakistani Capabilities for a CI Campaign: A Net Assessment" New America Foundation, publication of the counterterrorism strategy initiative, (2009),16.

CI campaign. On the contrary, such claims have been contested by various scholars. Khalil, David, Stephan, Haider, Christine and Seth, Sameer and White claim in their research that the Pakistan military adopted a profoundly kinetic firepower-centered methodology to defeat the insurgency. In their opinion, Pakistan has failed to wage ‘population-centric’ CI in the PATA, FATA and KP and is instead using harsh conventional approaches that thwart long-term victory. They also point out that Pakistan’s military had launched high intensity and heavy-firepower campaign that ended up with millions of IDPs and there was little modification in its CI approach over a period of time.<sup>21</sup> Some writers went harsher in criticism of Pakistan Policy such as Haider. To quote him, Pakistan Army operations have brutally suppressed full-blown insurgencies into —dormant ones. Pakistan has primarily followed the —coercion or ‘out-terrorize the terrorist’ school of thought.<sup>22</sup> It is also argued that Pakistan’s efforts are hindered by the orthodox makeup of the Pakistani military, which yields a heavy-handed tactical approach. With regards to training of Pakistan Army, David acknowledges Pakistan Army’s shortfall in weapons, equipment and inadequate training of paramilitary forces in CI operations, before 2009. He mentions that Pakistan’s military improved its training and to some degree overcame the deficiency of such weapons and equipment in its CI operations in post 2009 period. Having debated the above arguments, Erika and Imtiaz acknowledge the limitation of research in this field and say that it holds true that no researcher has comprehensively evaluated the Pakistan CI’s practices prescribed by existing population-centric CI literature.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the literature debates the Pakistan Army’s CI campaigns in relation to the number of troops in proportion to the local population in insurgency stricken areas. About the nature of force deployment in CI operations, Sameer claims that between 370,000 and 430,000 more troops would be needed in FATA, PATA and KP for success in CI campaign. Iqbal

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<sup>21</sup>Manzoor Afridi & Musab Yousafi, “Military Operation in Malakand Division Pakistan: Causes and Implications”, Khalil Ur Rehman; David Kilcullen, “Accidental Guerilla”, p.46; Joshua White, Christine Fair and Seth Jones; Nadeem Ahmed; Ahmed Rashid., pp.139-144); Stephan P Cohen, and Shujja Nawaz, “Mastering Counterinsurgency: A Workshop Report”, The Brookings Institution, 7 July, (2009), retrieved from [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/0707\\_counterinsurgency\\_cohen.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/0707_counterinsurgency_cohen.aspx), accessed on 3 July 2018; Christine and Jones; Sameer Lalwani.

<sup>22</sup> Haider, “Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban: A Joint Action Agenda for USA and Pakistan”.

<sup>23</sup> Erika Renno, B.S., “Swatting at Flies: Pakistan’s Use of Counterinsurgency”, A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University, Washington, DC April 16 (2010) retrieved from [https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553566/rennoErik\\_a.pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553566/rennoErik_a.pdf?sequence=1) accessed on 17 December 2018; Imtiaz Gul, “The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan’s lawless frontier”, (India Penguin group, 2010).



provides a current estimate of around 170,000 troops deployed in FATA and KP. However, these figures seem far less than the desired number of troops in such areas. A similar reservation was brought up in a recent study by the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis which argues that KP and the FATA collectively report a population estimate of 26 million which, on a force to population ratio of 20:1000, requires a field force of approximately 5,20,000 troops. The above-mentioned researchers in these studies drew their analysis primarily in the light of the research carried out by James, where he emphasized the 20:1000 force into population ratio.<sup>24</sup>

Some studies analyze the structural orientation of the security institutions that are involved in the CI operations, such as the Frontier Corps (FC) and its ethnic positioning as a factor of influence in CI campaign of Pakistan. About FC, Mike and Tariq, in their research argue that ethnic Pashtuns from FC are led by Punjabi outsiders, with little identification in local culture. They also contend that FC men possess strong familial and societal ties to the population and militants, which results in low morale for fighting the militants.<sup>25</sup> However, FC units, despite being historically commanded by officers of various Ethnicities since British times, have nonetheless given a good account of themselves. Moreover, since the creation of Pakistan, many of the FC officers at junior and senior levels constitute Pashtuns themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Some scholars have deliberated upon the informational and psychological warfare methodology of both militants and the government such as Malik and Shams. The esoteric appeals to the common people transmitted through media especially the radio, created a competing constituency for the

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<sup>24</sup> Sameer Lalwani ;Iqbal, A 2014, "Drone issue to be discussed during Army Chief's US visit", Dawn News, October 30, viewed 4 August 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1141259>; Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, 2010, "Wither Pakistan: Growing instability and implications for India", New Delhi; James T. Quinlivan "Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations", Rand Review, summer, 27(2) (2003) pp. 28-29, retrieved from, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/corporate\\_pubs/2007/rand\\_cp22-2003-08.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/corporate_pubs/2007/rand_cp22-2003-08.pdf). accessed on 9 August 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Tariq Mahmud Ashraf, "Military Operations in FATA: Eliminating Terrorism or Preventing the Balkanization of Pakistan? 'Terrorism Monitor, 6(12) (2008) viewed 14 November 2014, <https://jamestown.org/program/military-operations-in-fata-eliminating-terrorism-or-preventing-the-balkanization-of-pakistan/>; Mike Koprowski, "Defeating the FATA insurgency", Yale Journal of International Affairs, (2009) retrieved from <http://yalejournal.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/01/094206koprowski.pdf> accessed on 23 June 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Majority of the Inspector Generals of Frontier Corps in the last decade were Pashtuns like, Maj Gen Fazal-e-Ghafoor, Maj Gen Taj-Ul-Haq, Maj Gen Tariq Khan, Maj Gen Alam Khattak, Maj Gen Tayyab, Maj Gen Ghayur, Maj Gen Ubaid Khattak, Maj Gen Saddaqt Ali Khan.

Fazlullah's *Tehreek-e-Taliban Swat* (TTS).<sup>27</sup> Bakht quotes Fazlullah in an audio tape (TR001), saying, "Those who believes in Quran, they must know that Jihad is the command of ALLAH and shortest way to Jannah. .... therefore, there is need for training and fighting against the infidel democratic setup and to enforce the Sharia."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the appeal to people's religious sentiments of Jihad was made to justify the violence against the state and its institutions. On the contrary, the anti-Taliban discourse in the pre and post operation *Rah-e-Rast*, as intended by the Pakistan military in its information campaign, was directed at denigrating the insurgents in order to build support for the kinetic operations. The militants were portrayed as evil, barbaric and vicious terrorists, who don't have any interest in Sharia imposition but instead aimed at spreading anarchy through terrorism.

Scholars, such as Erika, Christine and Seth have studied the conflict in Swat in the context of US and NATO's interests in Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> US and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are have a serious interest in Pakistan's ability to efficiently wage CI, because NATO forces in Afghanistan are unable to check the infiltration of insurgents into Afghanistan due to NATO's limited manpower. History shows that the success of CI in Afghanistan is greatly dependent on building the cooperative security structures between Pakistan and Afghan/US forces. Therefore, Erika, Christine and Seth analyzed in 2010 that Pakistan's alliance is essential but success may ultimately depend on a strategic decision by Pakistan military to continue boosting its CI capability and converting its military into a hybrid power capable of proficiently engaging in CI warfare.

For scholars, such as Shujja and Shahzad the success of Pakistan's CI campaign rests on the ability of its civilian and military institutions to collaborate and strategize from a united platform. Unless the civilian and military approaches weave and turn into supportive and mutually helpful, the military will have to fight and re-fight its CI operations for years and years.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sajjad Malik, "Media and Militancy: Case Study use of FM Radio By Taliban In Swat", IPRI Journal XIII, no 1,(2013), 77-96, retrieved from <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/art5sajw13.pdf> accessed 15 November 2017; Shamil Shams, "The Clash of Narratives Swat Military Operation against the Taliban", Working Paper, Series 120 October (2011), retrieved from <http://www.a-id.org/pdf/the-clash-of-narratives-swat-military-operation-against-the-taliban.pdf> accessed on 19 November 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Bakht Zaman, "Role of illegal FM radio stations in Pakistan, with special focus on the effects of Fazal Ullah Radio and its role in rising militancy in the Swat valley", (unpublished Phil Thesis, Department of Journalism and University of Peshawar, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Erika Renno, B.S., "Swatting at Flies: Pakistan's Use of Counterinsurgency".

<sup>30</sup> Shujja Nawaz, "Mastering Counterinsurgency: A Workshop Report"; Shehzad H. Qazi, "A War Without Bombs: Civil Society Initiatives Against Radicalization in Pakistan".

In particular, the lack of an all-inclusive CI strategy comprising the civil administration, political leadership and the military has meant that whatsoever tactical successes they might have had, were largely ineffective in the long run. The transfer of authority to accountable and the concerned civilians' institutions would lead to better governance and public confidence. That implies wide-ranging restructuring to end PATA's constitutional and legal obscurities with granting the fundamental human rights to its people. There is equally a need for developing localized infrastructures for peace and development, including the transformation of the *Jirgas* from political/judicial forums to that of social interaction and reconciliation and implementing judicial reforms to respond to the people's demands for speedy justice.<sup>31</sup> Such processes should take place in tandem with rebuilding the economic infrastructure and taking a generational approach to peacebuilding.

De-radicalization as one of the most important component of Pakistan CI doctrine has been critically studied on by some scholars, including Zille-Huma & Ahmed, Rana and Sial, Abdul Basit, Qazi, Douglas Johnston ,Andrew Mcdonnell, Henry Burbridge and James Patton.<sup>32</sup> To Rana (2011), the inability to prosecute the militants due to lack of evidence or due to underage status of child militants led to the concept of de-radicalization and rehabilitation. The de-radicalization initiatives undertaken by Pakistan Army largely focused on drawing comparison with other models of de-radicalization in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Morocco, Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia. They emphasize that the rehabilitation and de-radicalization program aimed at deactivating terrorists' threats require a high level of expertise and experience.<sup>33</sup> Scholars such as Douglas, Andrew, Henry and James and Raheem argue about the religious basis and grounding of radicalization in Pakistan. However, others, including, Abdul Basit differ with the assumptions that youth radicalization in Pakistan emerges from

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<sup>31</sup> Saira Bano Orakzai, "Conflict in the Swat Valley of Pakistan: Pakhtun Culture and Peace building Theory-Practice Application".

<sup>32</sup>Zil-e-Huma Rafique & Mughees Ahmed, "De-Radicalization and Rehabilitation Efforts: Analysis of Anti-Terrorism Activities in Pakistan", International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 2, Issues, February, 115-124, (2013), retrieved from [https://www.counterextremism.org/download\\_file/48/134/270/3](https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/48/134/270/3) accessed on 20 March 2017; Abdul Basit, "Countering Violent Extremism: Evaluating Pakistan's Counter-Radicalization and De-Radicalization Initiatives", IPRI Journal XV, no. 2 (Summer) (2015): pp.44-68, retrieved from , <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/3-art-s-15.pdf>, accessed on 25 November 2018Douglas Johnston ,Andrew Mcdonnell, Henry Burbridge and James Patton, "Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims".

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial, Abdul Basit, "Dynamics of Taliban insurgency in FATA", pp.138-148.

Islamic identity.<sup>34</sup> He argues that violent radicalism in Pakistan is certainly not limited to faith based militancy and terrorism only; it is prevalent widely at all levels of the society.

Madrassas are often labelled as incubators of vicious radicalism also characterized occasionally as —weapons of mass instruction or —factories for global Jihad.<sup>35</sup> However, a number of local and foreign scholars strongly reject the myth that militancy is being driven solely from the religious sources or Madrassas. Few of the militants were Madrassas' pupils and that recruitment by the militant groups materializes not just through Madrassas, but a number of other sources.<sup>36</sup> Similar views are further reinforced by the findings of scholar such as Tariq who claim in his research that Madrassas are not the only sources for radicalization in Pakistan; intolerant and extreme worldviews are also nurtured through the curriculum in the schools as well.<sup>37</sup> This situation was also confirmed by Rahim Ullah Yousafzai, as he argued that not only from Madrassa but people from all walks of life, young and old, joined the insurgents in Swat.<sup>38</sup> Some well-known militants, such as Muslim Khan and Sirajudin were not of Madrassa origin. This to some scholars is alarming. As Rana argues that the tendencies of non-violent extremism ultimately leading to violent radicalism amongst educated youth are great cause of concern as such qualified individuals inject new renewed wave of radicalization in the ideological folds of militancy.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars like Nadeem, Farzana Bari and Zaman, discuss the role of women in radicalization. Women have been actively supporting the insurgency and

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<sup>34</sup> Douglas Johnston, et al, "Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan Strategies for Engaging Conservative Muslims".

<sup>35</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report, "The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (New York, 2004) p. 367; Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture", *Foreign Affairs*,79(6) (2000), pp.115-126; Jamal Malik, "Introduction" in J. Malik (ed), *Madrassas in South Asia. Teaching terror?* (London and New York, Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series,2008); Ahmed Rashid, "Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia", (New Haven, Conn, Yale University Press, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Asad Ullah Khan, "Radicalization: A Dilemma of Pakistan", Institute of Strategic Studies, Institute of Strategic studies (ISSI) August 19, Issue Brief, pp.3-4, retrieved from, <http://issi.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Final-Issue-brief-dated-19-8-2015.pdf> accessed on 23 August 2018; Ayesha Sadiqqa, Christine Fair (2008, p.67-68), Kaja (2010, p.55); Corinne Graff and Rebecca Winthrop, "Beyond Madrasas: Assessing the Links between Education and Militancy in Pakistan".

<sup>37</sup> Tariq Rahman, "Madrassas: The Potential for Violence in Pakistan", p.175).

<sup>38</sup> Rahim Ullah Yousafzai interviewed by author, Peshawar, KP, Pakistan, 23 October, 2016. He is a renowned journalist and the resident of daily journal, 'The News' Peshawar.

<sup>39</sup> Mohammd Amir Rana, "Extremist minds on campus" September 10, (2017), Dawn News, retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1356677> accessed on 11 September 2017.

especially the TNSM and Fazlullah in Swat and it is naive to conceptualize women only as victims of terrorism. Additionally, the stereotype perception of women being the victims and oppressed, denies them the ability to play a role in peace-building and post-conflict development. With the launch of their latest offline magazine *Sunnat-e- Khaulā* on August 1 2017, TTP endeavors to target urban Pakistani woman, inviting them to adopt the Jihadi way of life. The magazine urges women to learn to operate weapons and grenades and become lady Jihadists.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

To sum up, the available literature on insurgency and CI in Swat is of considerable value, however, there is a lack of an in-depth and integrated work based on empirical evidences. The orthodox academic research is restricted to an examination of Pakistan's traditional national security doctrine. Indeed, great deal of research has been carried out on the insurgency paradigm, focusing on the militants' ideology, recruitment, social expansion etc. However, CI's strategic and tactical operations have been given minimal attention due to various reasons such as limited access to the conflict zone, state's security control over the dissemination of data and information.

Pakistan Army evolved a new strategy of CI in Swat after earlier setbacks, which needs to be discussed on theoretical and practical perspectives. Another limitation of the existing literature on CI in KP and erstwhile FATA is that the contemporary nature of existing literature is descriptive and editorial rather than scholarly and analytical. While the various journal articles, monographs, treatises and public debates document the CI experiences, nonetheless, they do so in a piecemeal style. Since Pakistan is encircled by forces hostile to its existence and therefore, to certain extent, the organizational secrecy of Pakistan Army precludes sharing of its CI experience (both kinetic and non-kinetic operations). That is another reason that no holistic and comprehensive CI study has been carried out covering both kinetic and non-kinetic aspects of CI operations in Swat and Malakand region. Therefore, there is a need to do research incorporating all the logical lines of operations such as economic, political, social, informational and military. From Military perspective, there is a need of further deliberation on how different is the Swat military operations from the others in North and South Waziristan and Khyber agencies. From social and political angle, it is highly important to ascertain whether the grievances of Sufi Mohammad TNSM which was 'speedy justice' (later hijacked by Fazlullah terrorists' approach) was appropriately addressed.

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<sup>40</sup> Meera Nadeem, "Women in the TTP: recruiting across the gender divide", Opinion, (The Express Tribune, 10 August 2017), <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1477711/women-ttp-recruiting-across-gender-divide/>; Farzana Bari(n.d.); Zaman (2016).

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