

Pakistan's Dangerous Game

Seth G. Jones

The rising level of violence in Afghanistan has triggered widespread calls to increase NATO's role. As General David Richards, the British commander of NATO forces there, acknowledged: 'I haven't got enough [troops to] win this.'¹ There is growing evidence, however, that the solution lies not in Afghanistan, but across the Khyber Pass in Pakistan. The implications for NATO are profound. Increasing the number of foreign troops or improving the competence of Afghan forces are no longer sufficient. Success requires a difficult political and diplomatic feat: convincing the government of Pakistan to undermine the insurgent sanctuary on its soil.

I conducted extensive interviews with United States, NATO, United Nations and Afghan officials in Afghanistan in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. The conclusions are stark. There is significant evidence that the Taliban, Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), al-Qaeda, and other insurgent groups use Pakistan as a sanctuary for recruitment and support. In addition, there is virtual unanimity that Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has continued to provide assistance to Afghan insurgent groups.

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the United States and NATO had little choice but to adopt a convenient alliance with Pakistan to overthrow the Taliban government and help capture or kill key al-Qaeda terrorists. But the rising level of violence in Afghanistan has increasingly altered the United States' and Europe's cost-benefit calculus. Historical evidence suggests that the ability of insurgents to gain sanctuary in neighbouring states and secure assistance from state and non-state actors significantly increases their success. The cost of failing to clamp down on the insurgent sanc-

Seth G. Jones is a political scientist at the RAND Corporation and Adjunct Professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. He is the author most recently of *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

tuary in Pakistan is significant and rising. It virtually guarantees the continuing destabilisation of Afghanistan and threatens to uproot the fragile reconstruction effort orchestrated by the United States, NATO, United Nations and other international organisations since 2001. As one US Special Forces assessment concluded: ‘sanctuary provided by crossing into the Pakistan tribal areas ... or in the Baluchistan area, has contributed more to the survival of the insurgents than any other factor’.²

The deterioration of Afghanistan should give Washington and European capitals pause. Current policy toward Pakistan does not serve their interests in the ‘war on terrorism’ or in stabilising Afghanistan, the country most tightly linked to the 11 September attacks. It is thus time to fundamentally alter America’s and Europe’s approach. Policymakers should focus on a much tougher policy that pressures Pakistan to curb public recruitment campaigns for the Taliban, close training camps, and conduct a sustained unconventional campaign that undermines popular support for Afghan insurgents in Pakistan and captures or kills leaders and guerrillas. If Pakistan is unwilling to cooperate, the United States and Europe should fundamentally alter their increasingly inconvenient alliance with Islamabad.

External support

The ability of insurgent groups to gain external support is highly correlated with insurgent success. Research by the RAND Corporation, which examined 91 insurgencies since 1945, suggests that insurgencies that have gained and maintained state support have won more than half the time. Those with support from non-state actors and diaspora groups (but not state support) won a third of the time, and those with no external support at all won only 17% of the time.³

In addition, most insurgencies since 1945 have typically ended with a decisive military victory for one side or the other. In contests for control of the central state, either the government crushes the rebels (at least 40% of the time), or the rebels win control of the centre (at least 35% of the time). Thus, three-quarters of civil wars fought for control of the state end with a decisive military victory. In approximately half these cases, what makes decisive victory possible is the provision or withdrawal of support from a foreign power to the government or rebel side.⁴ In Malaya and the Philippines, for example, insurgents received no external military support and ultimately lost.⁵

External support can take at least two forms. The first includes foreign governments, diasporas and transnational terrorist and criminal networks that can provide direct assistance. This includes training, money, arms, logistics, diplomatic backing and other types of assistance.⁶ The rise of a transnational jihadi network has created particularly acute challenges when organisations such as

al-Qaeda can tap into local groups. These challenges include the flow of tactics, fighters, ideology and organisational method into and among local insurgencies; the increased resort to suicide operations; and the pivotal role of religious figures in fanning violence. Given the basic constraints posed by numerical weakness – the need to hide and not be located – insurgents need arms and materiel, money to buy them, or goods to trade for them. They need a supply of recruits, and they also need information and instruction in the practical details of running an insurgency. The second type of external support includes the use of foreign territory as a sanctuary. This is sometimes the result of a weak government. A territorial base outside of the state – or far from the state's centre – is correlated with the failure of counter-insurgency efforts.⁷

Insurgent groups have been successful at leveraging assistance from external states – especially in Pakistan. Pakistan's motives have largely been geostrategic. Pakistani dictator General Zia-ul-Haq once remarked to the head of the ISI, General Akhter Abdul Rehman, that 'the water [in Afghanistan] must boil at the right temperature'.⁸ The Pakistan government's strategy has for decades been to balance India and keep a foothold in Afghanistan.

Pakistan and India have long been involved in a balance-of-power struggle in South Asia. Both lay claim to the Kashmir region, and have fought three wars over Kashmir since 1947. Since 11 September, India has provided several hundred million dollars in financial assistance to Afghanistan, and provided assistance to Afghan political candidates during the 2004 presidential and 2005 parliamentary elections. It helped fund construction of the new Afghan parliament building, and provided financial assistance to elected legislators.⁹ A significant point of contention was India's road construction near the Pakistan border. These projects were run by the Indian state-owned Border Roads Organisation, whose publicly acknowledged mission is to 'support the [Indian] armed forces [and] meet their strategic needs by committed, dedicated and cost-effective development and sustenance of the infrastructure'.¹⁰ Finally, India established several consulates in such Afghan cities as Jalalabad, Kandahar and Herat. Pakistan accused India of using these consulates for 'terrorist activities' inside Pakistan, such as fomenting unrest in the province of Baluchistan. The Indian–Afghan axis left Pakistan isolated in South Asia. In 2001, Pakistan had a close relationship with the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which it had nurtured since the Soviet wars. Half a decade later, Pakistan was surrounded by hostile neighbours.

According to some US military officials, the tipping point for Pakistan was in 2005. US policymakers publicly stated that they were decreasing the number

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of American troops in Afghanistan and handing over authority to NATO. As General John P. Abizaid, head of the United States Central Command, said in late 2005, 'it makes sense that as NATO forces go in, and they're more in numbers, that we could drop some of the U.S. requirements somewhat'.¹¹ Pakistani (and Afghan) government officials interpreted this statement as a signal that the US commitment to Afghanistan was waning. It encouraged Afghan government officials to increasingly turn to India as its long-term strategic partner. And it encouraged Pakistani government officials to counter this trend by supporting the Taliban.¹²

Pakistani assistance

There is virtual unanimity among United States, NATO, UN and Afghan officials that Pakistani assistance is significant. The ISI has reportedly provided weapons and ammunition to the Taliban, and paid the medical bills of some wounded Taliban fighters. The ISI has reportedly helped train Taliban and other insurgents destined for Afghanistan and Kashmir in Quetta, Mansehra, Shamshattu, Parachinar and other areas in Pakistan. In order to minimise detectability, the ISI has also supplied indirect assistance – including financial assistance – to Taliban training camps. United States and NATO officials have uncovered several instances in which the ISI has provided intelligence to Taliban insurgents at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. ISI agents have reportedly tipped off Taliban forces about the location and movement of Afghan and coalition forces, which has undermined several anti-Taliban military operations. Some Pakistan intelligence officials appear to be involved in directing suicide operatives into the Afghan theatre. Most of the assistance appears to come directly from individuals at the mid- and lower-levels of the ISI. But there is evidence that senior officials of the ISI and Pakistan government are aware of the ISI's role and may be actively encouraging it.¹³

Retired Pakistani Lieutenant-General Hamid Gul and Colonel Sultan Amir Imam, pro-Taliban and pro-al-Qaeda former leaders, have given widely reported speeches at Pakistani government and military institutions calling for jihad against the United States and the Afghan government.¹⁴ This assistance is consistent with the Pakistan government's past behaviour, especially the ISI's. Throughout the 1990s, Pakistan's military and intelligence service provided arms, ammunition, supplies, financial aid and training to the Taliban and Afghan warlord Gullbuddin Hekmatyar. Pakistan also helped recruit fighters for the Taliban, sometimes working with domestic religious associations.¹⁵

Insurgent groups also have substantial freedom to operate in Pakistan, despite several efforts by Pakistan's military to negotiate ceasefires with militants in

such tribal regions as North Waziristan.¹⁶ Afghan insurgents have used Pakistan as a staging area for offensive operations. Taliban insurgents that operate in the southern Afghan provinces of Kandahar, Oruzgan, Helmand and Zabol have significant support networks in such Pakistani provinces as Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, including Waziristan. They have found common ethnic and political support from some of Pakistan's Pashtun tribes.¹⁷ For example, Taliban commanders have been using such roads as Highway 4 to come into – and out of – Kandahar province from Pakistan with impunity. A large percentage of suicide bombers have come into Afghanistan from refugee camps in Pakistan. In addition, components for improvised explosive devices have been smuggled from Pakistan into such provinces as Kandahar, where they are assembled at safe houses. The Taliban conduct much of their financing and recruiting operations on the Pakistani side of the border.¹⁸ There is also significant evidence that the Taliban leadership has a support base in Quetta, Pakistan.¹⁹ As Ali Jalali, former Afghan interior minister, notes:

The Taliban have training camps, staging areas, recruiting centers (*madrassas*), and safe havens in Pakistan. The operations of a 70,000-strong Pakistani military force, deployed in the border region, mostly in the Waziristan tribal areas, have been effective against al Qaeda and non-Pakistani militants, but they have not done much toward containing the Taliban.²⁰

Zalmay Khalilzad, former US ambassador to Afghanistan, similarly noted:

Mullah Omar and other Taliban leaders are probably in Pakistan. [Mullah Akhtar] Usmani, who is one of the Taliban leaders, spoke to Pakistan's Geo TV at a time when the Pakistani intelligence services claimed that they did not know where they were. If a TV company could find him, how is it that the intelligence service of a country which has nuclear bombs and a lot of security and military forces cannot find them?²¹

Islamabad has consistently maintained it has done everything possible to target terrorists and Afghan insurgents in Pakistan. It has deployed more than 70,000 of its troops to the Afghan border and has launched dozens of operations against foreign terrorists – especially Central Asians and Arabs – in such areas as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.²² Several hundred Pakistan army and paramilitary troops have been killed, and an even larger number have been injured. In addition, Pakistan has provided intelligence to Western governments and helped capture several of al-Qaeda's top leaders in Pakistan. The country has also banned or placed on watch lists a large



number of sectarian and militant organisations. It has enacted numerous anti-terrorism laws, freezing dozens of bank accounts suspected of belonging to terrorist organisations.

But Islamabad has been largely reluctant to conduct operations against Taliban insurgents or their support network in Pakistan.²³ Virtually no middle- or upper-level Taliban official has been captured or killed in Pakistan. As one Pakistani journalist argued, the Pakistan government ‘plunges into action when they know they can lay their hands on a foreign militant but they are still reluctant to proceed against the Taliban’.²⁴

Afghan insurgent groups fall into three loose fronts along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border (see Map 1). The *northern front*, which includes a large HIG

presence, is based in such Afghan provinces as Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar, as well as across the border in Pakistan. The *central front* includes a loose amalgam of foreign fighters, including Central Asians and Arabs. They are located in a swath of territory extending from Bajaur to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan, and such Afghan provinces as Khowst, Paktia and Paktika. Mujahideen leader Jalaluddin Haqqani has been active in the central front against Afghan and coalition forces. Finally, the *southern front*, which includes a large Taliban presence, is based in Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, as well as such Afghan provinces as Helmand, Kandahar, Oruzgan, Zabol and Paktika. In addition to the Taliban, a number of drug-trafficking and tribal groups have also been active in the southern front. All of these fronts enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan.

Jihadi assistance

Another source of support for Afghan insurgents is the international jihadi network, which has deep roots in Pakistan. It has enabled the Taliban and other groups to sustain their operations and become more lethal in killing Afghans and coalition forces. This support comes from a variety of sources. One is from organisations such as the international al-Qaeda network, including its organisation in Iraq. Afghan insurgents groups have also received assistance from the collection of *zakat* (the tithe) at mosques in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the broader Muslim world. Finally, much of the jihadi funding comes from wealthy Muslims abroad, especially from such Gulf states as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Al-Qaeda personnel have met with wealthy Arab businessmen during the Tabligh Jamaat annual meeting in Raiwind, Pakistan, which attracts one of the largest concentrations of Muslims after the hajj.²⁵

The Taliban and other insurgent groups have a major support base through their cooperation with Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam, a political party in Pakistan, which has roots in the Deobandi movement. It has a following largely confined to the Pashtun border belt in Pakistan, although it also has support in several urban centres. Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam is split into two factions, led by Maulana Fazal ur-Rehman and Samiul Haq (a fervent supporter of Osama bin Laden). They ran an extensive network of madrassas that trained most of the leadership and much of the early rank and file of the Taliban. Party links with the Taliban are believed to remain close despite President Pervez Musharraf's talk of reforming the madrassas. Indeed, two insurgent targets of recruitment are at madrassas and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan.²⁶

Insurgent groups have used this support to construct increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices, including remote control detonators.²⁷

There are a handful of al-Qaeda-run training facilities and improvised-explosive factories in such places as North and South Waziristan. They range from small facilities hidden within compounds that build the devices, to much larger 'IED factories' which double as training centres and labs where recruits experiment with improvised-explosive technology. These facilities have been located in such places as the Bush mountains, Khamran mountains and Shakai valley. Al-Qaeda has received operational and financial support from local

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clerics and Taliban commanders in Waziristan. They recruit young Pashtuns from the local madrassas and finance their activities through 'religious racket' – forced religious contribution, often accompanied with death threats. Some of this explosives expertise has come from Iraqi groups, who have provided information to Afghan groups on making and using various kinds of remote-controlled devices and timers. There is further evidence of cooperation between insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan. Islamic militants in Iraq have provided information on tactics through the Internet and face-to-face visits to Taliban, HIG and foreign fighters from eastern and southern Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal

areas. Moreover, there is some evidence that a small number of Pakistani and Afghan militants have received military training in Iraq; Iraqi fighters have met with Afghan and Pakistani extremists in Pakistan; and militants in Afghanistan increasingly used homemade bombs, suicide attacks and other tactics honed in Iraq.²⁸

One effective improvised explosive device used in Afghanistan has been the 'TV bomb', first developed by Iraqi groups. It is a shaped-charge mechanism that can be hidden under brush or debris on a roadside and set off by remote control from more than 300 metres away. There is some evidence that individuals such as Hamza Sangari, a Taliban commander from Khowst Province, received information from Iraqi groups on improving the Taliban's ability to make armour-penetrating weapons by disassembling rockets and rocket-propelled grenade rounds, removing the explosives and propellants, and repacking them with high-velocity 'shaped' charges.²⁹ In addition, Afghan groups have occasionally adopted brutal tactics – such as beheadings – used by Iraqi groups. In December 2005, insurgents posted on al-Qaeda-linked websites the first-ever published video showing the beheading of an Afghan hostage.³⁰ The Taliban also developed or acquired new commercial communications gear and new field equipment, and appeared to have received good tactical, camouflage and marksmanship training.

Afghan insurgents have increasingly adopted suicide tactics, especially in such major cities as Kandahar and Kabul.³¹ The number of suicide attacks increased from one in 2002 to two in 2003, six in 2004 and 21 in 2005. There were over 100 suicide terrorist attacks in Afghanistan in 2006, more than the total committed in the entire history of the country. The use of suicide attacks has been encouraged by al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, who argued for the 'need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the Mujahedin in terms of casualties'.³² Several factors have contributed to the rise in suicide attacks.³³

First, the Taliban have successfully tapped into the expertise and training of the broader jihadi community, especially al-Qaeda. These militants have helped supply a steady stream of suicide bombers. Secondly, al-Qaeda and the Taliban have concluded that suicide bombing is more effective than other tactics in killing Afghan and coalition forces. This is a direct result of the success of such groups as Hamas in the Palestinian territories, Hizbullah in Lebanon, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, and Iraqi groups.³⁴ Suicide attacks allow insurgents to achieve maximum impact with minimal resources. Data show that when the insurgents fight US and coalition forces directly in Afghanistan, there is only a 5% probability of inflicting casualties. With suicide attacks, the chance of killing people and instilling fear increases severalfold.³⁵ Thirdly, al-Qaeda and the Taliban believe that suicide attacks have increased the level of insecurity among the Afghan population. This has caused some Afghans to question the government's ability to protect them and has further destabilised the authority of local government institutions. Consequently, the distance between the Afghan government and the population in specific areas is widening. Finally, suicide attacks have provided renewed visibility for the Taliban and al-Qaeda, which previous guerrilla attacks did not generate. Because they are lethal and dramatic, suicide attacks are nearly always reported in the national and international media.

Suicide bombers have included Afghans, Pakistanis and some foreigners.³⁶ A number of Afghan refugees have attended Pakistani madrassas, where they were radicalised and immersed in extremist ideologies. And al-Qaeda continues to spread its extremist global ideology in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The organisation has played a critical role in providing information and impetus for the use of suicide attacks and sophisticated improvised explosive devices. Al-Qaeda has also paid up to several thousand dollars to the families of suicide bombers it uses in operations in Afghanistan. Some Taliban units have included al-Qaeda members or other Arab fighters, who have brought tactics employed in such places as Iraq and Chechnya.³⁷

Changing the cost–benefit calculation

The rise in violence in Afghanistan and the existence of a sanctuary in Pakistan threatens US and NATO efforts in Afghanistan. If unchecked, it will destroy the fragile political, social and economic progress that Afghanistan has experienced since 2001. Since the Afghan insurgency began in 2002, there has been a gradual deterioration in the security environment – especially in the south and east along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. The number of suicide attacks increased from 27 in 2005 to 139 in 2006, remotely detonated bombings more than doubled from 783 to 1,677, and armed attacks nearly tripled from 1,558 to 4,542. The violence led to more than 4,000 deaths in Afghanistan in 2006, the bloodiest year in the country since 2001.³⁸ The climate of insecurity is stark. As one report by the Afghan National Directorate for Security concluded:

Individuals who flirt with the government truly get frightened as the Afghan security forces are currently incapable of providing police and protection for each village ... When villagers and rural communities seek protection from police either it arrives late or arrives in a wrong way.³⁹

Promoting disorder is a key objective for most insurgents. Disrupting the economy and decreasing security helps produce discontent within the government and undermines its strength and legitimacy. Once insurgents have established a hold over the population in certain areas, the portion that was loyal to the government becomes invisible. Some of its members may be eliminated, providing an example to others. Some may escape abroad. Still others may be cowed into hiding their true feelings and melt into the majority.⁴⁰

In past insurgencies, border areas and neighbouring countries have been a major source of weakness for indigenous governments, and were often exploited by insurgents. By establishing a sanctuary, insurgents make it more difficult for counter-insurgent forces to target them. They also make it easier to regroup, resupply and recruit new members. Mountainous terrain can be particularly useful for insurgent groups because it is difficult for indigenous and external forces to navigate and easier for insurgents to hide in.⁴¹ This presents a particular challenge in Afghanistan, since the border areas and sanctuary in Pakistan include rugged, mountainous terrain. In short, insurgencies with well-established infrastructures and base areas, which can operate in protective terrain, have historically been difficult to defeat.⁴²

Success in Afghanistan will require a much more sustained effort by the government of Pakistan to capture or kill insurgents and undermine their support base. To date, Islamabad has calculated that the costs of conducting a sustained campaign against Afghan insurgents are too high and the benefits too low. But

the rising violence in Afghanistan and the increasing use of Pakistan as a sanctuary have fundamentally changed the strategic environment. US and NATO strategy needs to change this cost-benefit calculation. Islamabad's counter-insurgency operations, with support from the United States, must separate Afghan insurgents from their support base in Pakistan. The United States and NATO should do several things.

They should insist that public recruitment campaigns for the Taliban and pro-Taliban speeches at government institutions come to an end. American and European intelligence officials claim that Islamabad has repeatedly failed to act on information concerning the whereabouts of Taliban leaders in the country, especially those based in Quetta.⁴³ Washington should also insist on closing training camps in such areas as Quetta, Mansehra, Shamshattu and Parachinar; reining in former ISI members like Gul and Imam who have publicly supported the Taliban; cutting off all benefits to retired military engaged in supporting the Taliban; and arresting Taliban leaders in Pakistan.

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The most difficult component of this strategy will be for the Pakistan government to conduct a sustained law-enforcement and military campaign against the Taliban and other insurgents. The objectives should be to undermine popular support for the insurgents in Pakistan, capture or kill leaders and guerrillas, and destroy their support network. Operating behind the scenes in deference to Pakistan sensitivities, the United States and NATO should help by providing intelligence and surveillance during the campaign.

Ending ISI support to the Taliban and arresting key middle- and upper-level Taliban officials should be sufficient to undermine the insurgency. If not, however, NATO should be prepared to assist the Pakistani government to conduct a sustained law-enforcement and military campaign against the Taliban in limited areas of Pakistan. The objective should be to undermine the insurgent support network in Pakistan. Hopefully, this step will not be necessary. But Pakistan and NATO should be prepared to do this as a last resort.

One of the most successful strategies used by US special forces on the Afghan side has been 'clear and hold'. This has involved consolidating and holding territory where the local population supports the Afghan government or is neutral, deploying police and military forces to conduct offensive operations in contested areas, and providing sufficient numbers of forces to hold the areas.⁴⁴ Police, military and allied tribal militias in Pakistan's border areas would need to consolidate and hold areas that are already hostile to insurgents, protect lines of communication and secure major towns and cities, and conduct

offensive operations in contested areas along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. It will be critical to co-opt and work with local tribes, since these areas have been ruled indigenously for hundreds of years. And tribes often regard outside forces, including the Pakistani military, as unwelcome foreigners. Deploying forces into insurgent areas should be designed to deny sanctuary and eradicate popular support for Afghan insurgent groups. It will require patience and discrete intelligence work – which the United States and NATO can support – to ascertain the locations of insurgents, weapons caches, safe houses and logistics support systems.

Carrots and sticks

To encourage Islamabad to take these actions, the United States and NATO can provide incentives for cooperation. One step could be to support the development of businesses in Pakistan by lifting all restrictions on the imports of textiles into the United States. This would likely benefit Pakistani civil society more than the military and be more effective than official aid.

Washington should also encourage Afghanistan and Pakistan to settle their border disagreement, siding with Pakistan. No government of Afghanistan has ever formally recognised the British-drawn Durand Line that divides control over Pashtun territories. The Durand Line refers to the line drawn by the British and signed in 1893 with the Afghan ruler, Amir Abdur Rehman Khan. It divided Afghanistan and what was then British India (which now is the North West Frontier Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Baluchistan areas of Pakistan). The Durand Line continues to be a source of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Settling the border will require coordinated investments in the underdeveloped areas on both sides. Such coordination is impossible while the border remains unrecognised and un-demarcated. Ignoring the disagreement preserves one of the region's chronic sources of turmoil. The negotiations – which the United States and NATO can help facilitate – should ultimately aim to establish an outcome in which Afghanistan recognises the current internationally recognised border, the tribal territories of Pakistan are integrated into and receive a full range of services from the Pakistan state, and the border area becomes a region for cooperative development rather than insecurity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the United States should help alleviate some of Pakistan's concerns about Indian encroachment. India has become Afghanistan's closest ally in the region, providing over \$600 million in financial and military assistance since 2001.⁴⁵ Key areas of assistance include infrastructure, food assistance, educational scholarships and special training

programmes for Afghan nationals. The United States should encourage India to tone down financial and other assistance to Afghanistan, which understandably increases Pakistan's sense of encirclement. Washington should also consider pushing the Afghan government to terminate Border Roads Organisation work and scale back Indian consulates near the Afghanistan–Pakistan border.

Pushing Musharraf to conduct a sustained campaign against insurgents will also require finding pressure points that raise the costs of failure. Perhaps the most significant is tying current American assistance to cooperation. The United States gives Pakistan over \$1 billion in military and economic assistance each year. This assistance covers such areas as health, economic development, trade and law enforcement. The United States should tie assistance in some of these areas – as well as implicit American support in multilateral bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – to progress in defeating Afghan insurgents and their support network.

The United States and NATO can also focus on a second pressure point. Musharraf wields power through a military government that seized control in 1999 following a bloodless coup. The military continues to exercise control over the structures of government. The constitution and other laws authorise the government to curb freedom of speech on subjects including the constitution, the armed forces, the judiciary and religion. Blasphemy laws have also been used to suppress the media. On numerous occasions, police or security forces have subjected journalists to physical attacks, intimidation and arbitrary arrest. The executive branch has extended its influence over the judiciary by using the appointments system to remove independent judges, fill key positions with political allies, and reward those who issue judgments favourable to the government.

The United States and Europe have been remarkably quiet about the shortcomings of democracy in Pakistan. In the absence of cooperation against Afghan insurgent groups and their support network in Pakistan, they should increase pressure on Pakistan to pursue democratic reforms. The United States and European countries can encourage Musharraf to make the political process more inclusive, open and legitimate. Throughout Musharraf's tenure, the United States and Europe have calculated that security interests in Pakistan are more important than democratisation efforts. In a war against global terrorist groups, this strategy may be necessary over the short term. But the rising levels of violence in Afghanistan and the growing militant sanctuary in Pakistan suggest that the United States and Europe have failed to achieve even their security objectives.

Moving forward

One of the benefits of this strategy is that performance measures are relatively easy to gauge. United States and European government officials are acutely aware of the role of Pakistan in the insurgency, and of some key questions. Are Pakistan's border forces willing and able to interdict insurgent groups moving from Pakistan to Afghanistan and vice versa? NATO military and intelligence units in the Afghanistan–Pakistan border regions have become deeply frustrated that most Pakistani border guards knowingly allow Taliban and other insurgents to cross the border. Are Pakistani security forces willing to arrest or kill key insurgents and their leaders residing in Pakistan, such as Omar, Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani? To date, they have been unwilling to target most Taliban forces and personnel. Is ISI support to the Taliban declining? Are Pakistani military forces conducting a sustained counter-insurgency campaign against Taliban forces in areas such as Baluchistan?

Sceptics might argue that this strategy would be too costly. Such measures by Islamabad could cause significant bloodshed. Pakistan has a weak institutional architecture, an underdeveloped economy, simmering internal tensions, and nuclear weapons. A sustained effort by Musharraf to stop funding insurgents and to crack down on them in areas such as Baluchistan, the North West Frontier Province, and the Federal Administered Tribal Areas could trigger major violence. Yet the military has conducted a number of large sweeps in North and South Waziristan against foreign fighters, without coming close to triggering a major civil war. Fighting against the Taliban and other insurgents would likely be contained to specific safe havens, such as the tribal areas. Concerns that an offensive by Pakistan would bring radical Islamist organisations such as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal into power are also exaggerated. They ignore the fact that Pakistan is not a democracy. In a crisis, the military would likely become involved, as General Mirza Aslam Baig did in 1988 after Zia-ul-Haq's death. Some might also argue that the United States and Europe need Pakistan to hunt for Osama bin Laden and other terrorists on Pakistani territory, and to help stabilise Afghanistan. But Pakistan has done little of either in recent years. Despite numerous reports that bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, travel in a rectangular area north of Peshawar, Pakistan has failed to capture or kill either of them.

During the Cold War, successive US administrations understood the changing nature of international politics. When US and Egyptian interests began to diverge in the 1950s as Gamal Abdel Nasser gravitated toward the Soviet Union, President Dwight D. Eisenhower cut ties and moved on. NATO is at an important crossroads with Pakistan today. The rising level of violence in Afghanistan

has fundamentally altered NATO's cost-benefit calculus. Afghanistan has made notable strides since 2001. It would be a tragedy and a disaster to see this progress unravel at least partly because of the failure of Pakistan to act, and of the United States and Europe to do anything about it.

Notes

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- Local Mujahideen N.W.F.P, Atmanzai Tribe.
- 17 Author interview with Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Washington DC, July 2006; Lieutenant-General David W. Barno, *Afghanistan: The Security Outlook* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004); *Ranger Observations From OEF and OIF: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2005), p. 21; David L. Buffaloe, *Conventional Forces in Low-Intensity Conflict: The 82nd Airborne in Firebase Shkin* (Arlington, VA: Association of the United States Army, Institute of Land Warfare, 2004), pp. 16–17.
- 18 Ahmed Rashid, 'Who's Winning the War on Terror?' *YaleGlobal*, 5 September 2003.
- 19 Author interview with officials from several Western government agencies, 2005 and 2006.
- 20 Ali Jalali, 'The Future of Afghanistan', *Parameters*, vol. 36, no. 1, Spring 2006, p. 8.
- 21 'Outgoing U.S. Envoy Enthusiastic about Afghanistan's Future', Sherberghan Jowzjan Aina Television, 18 June 2005. Ambassador Khalilzad's comments were supported by President Karzai's office in 'Afghan Spokesman Calls on Pakistan to Curb Taliban Activities', Kabul Tolu Television, 21 June 2005.
- 22 'Pakistan Strikes Suspected al Qaeda Camp', Associated Press, 1 March 2006.
- 23 There have been some notable exceptions, such as the Pakistani government's capture of Taliban spokesman Abdol Latifollah Hakimi in October 2005. The Pakistani government has also closed a few businesses owned by Taliban-linked traders. In January 2006, for example, the Pakistani government closed Haji Abdul Bari's Special Company in Peshawar and the Maria Food Company in Islamabad, and froze \$5 million in their accounts, because the owners helped finance Taliban fighters.
- 24 Intikhab Amir, 'Waziristan: No Man's Land', *The Herald (Pakistan)*, April 2006, p. 78.
- 25 Alex Alexiev, 'Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions', *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 1, Winter 2005. On *zakat* and jihad, also see Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
- 26 Author interviews with Afghan, US, European and Pakistani government officials, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- 27 Author interviews with European, Afghan and Pakistani government officials, 2004, 2005 and 2006. Also see Ali Jalali, 'The Future of Afghanistan', *Parameters*, vol. 36, no. 1, Spring 2006, p. 8.
- 28 Author interviews with US government officials in Shkin, Afghanistan, April 2006. Al-Jazeera interview with Mullah Dadullah, July 2005. Also see such press accounts as Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, 'Unholy Allies', *Newsweek*, 26 September 2005, pp. 40–42.
- 29 Author interviews with Afghan government officials, Kabul, Afghanistan, August 2006. Al-Jazeera interview with Dadullah, July 2005. Also see such press accounts as Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, 'Unholy Allies', *Newsweek*, 26 September 2005, pp. 40–42.
- 30 In what appeared as a forced confession, Saeed Allah Khan stated: 'I worked as a spy for the Americans along with four other people. The

- group received \$45,000 and my share is \$7,000.' Hekmat Karzai, *Afghanistan and the Globalisation of Terrorist Tactics* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, January 2006), p. 2.
- ³¹ On the rationale for suicide bombers, see al-Jazeera interview with Dadullah, February 2006.
- ³² Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights under the Prophets Banner*, December 2001, part 11.
- ³³ Hekmat Karzai, *Afghanistan and the Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, March 2006); 'Taliban Claim Responsibility for Suicide Bomb Attack in Afghan Kandahar Province', *Peshawar Afghan Islamic Press*, 9 October 2005; 'Pajhwok News Describes Video of Afghan Beheading by "Masked Arabs", Taliban', *Kabul Pajhwok Afghan News*, 9 October 2005; 'Canadian Soldier Dies in Suicide Attack in Kandahar', *Afghan Islamic Press*, 3 March 2006; 'Taliban Claim Attack on Police in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province', *Kabul National TV*, 7 January 2006.
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- ³⁵ Hekmat Karzai and Seth G. Jones, 'How to Curb Rising Suicide Terrorism in Afghanistan', *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 July 2006.
- ³⁶ In its public rhetoric, the Taliban has tended to identify the suicide bombers as Afghans, since it suggests there is a significant indigenous component of the insurgency.
- ³⁷ Author interview with US government officials, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 2005.
- ³⁸ This finding is consistent with the testimony of key US officials, such as Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lieutenant-General Michael D. Maples. See Lieutenant-General Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Armed Services Committee, 28 February 2006.
- ³⁹ Amrullah Saleh, *Strategy of Insurgents and Terrorists in Afghanistan* (Kabul: National Directorate for Security, 2006), p. 4.
- ⁴⁰ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, pp. 11–12, 78–9.
- ⁴¹ Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', pp. 75–90; Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, pp. 35–7.
- ⁴² Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Army's Role in Counterinsurgency and Insurgency* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1990), pp. 30–31; Daniel Byman *et al.*, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001); Byman, *Deadly Connections*.
- ⁴³ Author interviews with US and European intelligence officials, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- ⁴⁴ Celeski, *Operationalizing COIN*.
- ⁴⁵ Mulford, *Afghanistan Has Made a Remarkable Transition*.

