
STATE FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN AND SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN

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The US policymakers regard failed and failing states such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan to be festering incubators of terrorism.

James A. Piazza

The above quotation sums up the Afghan situation most succinctly.

The failed state, being the harbinger of instability to neighbouring states, acts as a predator that is prone to both import as well as export of instability.

Such states suffer from coercive as well as administrative incapacity and do not measure up to Max Weber's definition of a modern nation state; i.e. "a state that can monopolize violence".¹ It has been empirically proved that states experiencing high degree of state failure are more prone to transnational terrorist attacks.² Afghanistan is an unfortunate victim that has been administered a generous dose of nostrums when it required panaceas. It earned the sobriquet of a "state sponsored by the terrorists"³ because of its internal politico-economic weaknesses. It has historically acted as a see-through black hole where the xenophobic atavism of its denizens competed with a semi-republican socio-political ethos of a tribal society. Notwithstanding scores of sociological studies (some of those predictive in nature), the absence of reliable, census-based data makes it very difficult to predict any fundamental change in the centuries old Afghan socio-political landscape.



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A country famished of resources and enervated by nearly three decades of continual turmoil represents the quintessential failed state with large swathes of territory controlled by warlords and non state actors. The present Afghan government cannot extend its writ

beyond Kabul and is dependent upon International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)/North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces for the defence of Kabul as well. In the absence of a de facto central state control, the de jure jurisdiction becomes meaningless. In order to understand the nature and magnitude of security challenges to Pakistan due to Afghan state failure with a view to recommend viable countermeasures, it is apposite to postulate a thesis.

State failure in Afghanistan, characterized by weak governance, rampant corruption, lawlessness, ineffective counter insurgency effort, uncontrolled organized crime/drug trafficking, and failure to deliver basic services, presents a clear and present danger to Pakistan's security and stability. Pakistan's geographically contiguous provinces with Afghanistan, like the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan, are beset with serious security challenges like insurgency in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)/Swat, socioeconomic instability, drug proliferation, influx of refugees, and a most virulent strain of religiously inspired terrorism. Pakistan can counter these challenges through an astute combination of politico-economic and military strategy, supported by a national political consensus in sync with international counter terrorism/insurgency efforts.

The identification and analysis of the reasons for state failure in Afghanistan are deemed essential to understand the extent of state failure and its fallout on Pakistan. Areas that need to be focused are the reasons of weak governance, effete counter insurgency response, corruption in state institutions (police, judiciary and civil services), uncontrolled organized crime/drug trafficking, and ineffective reconstruction/development efforts. The impact on Pakistan and her consequent response needs to be highlighted by focusing on the political, social, economic, and military dimensions of the security challenges with a view to offer sustainable and comprehensive solutions. Before undertaking an analysis of the factors contributing towards state failure and their impact upon security situation in Pakistan, a historical tour d' horizon of the Afghan situation is deemed pertinent.

May God save you from the claws of Tiger, the venom of Cobra and the vengeance of Afghan.

(An ancient Pushto prayer)

Background: Pre 9/11 Phase

Afghanistan has been the abode of some of the most truculent and iconoclastic tribes of the world for several centuries. It remained a part of the Mughal Empire in the subcontinent and was controlled for some time by Sikh rulers of Punjab. After the defeat of the Sikhs and annexation of Punjab by the British colonial power, Afghanistan was thrice invaded by the British. The first military campaign by the British to subjugate Afghanistan ended in a humiliating defeat for the British with only a lone survivor, a medical officer, out of the complete British contingent of 4500, to tell the tale after first Anglo- Afghan War in 1842.⁴ In order to protect their British-Indian empire from the depredations of Afghans and the expansionist ambitions of Czarist Russia, the British forced the Afghan Government, after the Second Anglo- Afghan War (1878-80), to sign the Treaty of Gandamak, and got the border delimited between Afghanistan and British India.⁵ The border was delimited under Mortimer Durand in 1893 and was consequently called the "Durand Line".

The area on the British-Indian side between the Indus River and the Durand Line was named North West Frontier Province (NWFP) by British Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1901. The area in the North West, starting from Chitral in the north to Dera Ismael Khan in south, was converted into a tribal area approximately the size of Belgium.⁶ The British accorded a special status to the area since they never expected to extract revenue from there and instead wanted it as a buffer zone or protective shield to preserve their imperial possessions. They instituted a draconian law i.e., "Frontier Crimes Regulation" (FCR), to control the refractory tribes. The legal status of the area was kept unchanged even after Pakistan's independence from British colonial rule. Law and order was enforced by a lightly armed militia called "Frontier Constabulary" supported by police in settled districts. The Army was kept in the selected cantonments as a force of last resort.

Constitutionally, the federally administered tribal area (FATA) of Pakistan enjoys semi-autonomous status and is directly administered by the President of Pakistan through the Governor of NWFP, who represents the Federal Government. FATA has traditionally been ruled by bureaucratic fiat and a restrictive FCR which is a kind of anachronism in this age of democracy.⁷ The area is inhabited by 61 fiercely independent and iconoclastic tribes who are deeply conservative and xenophobic in outlook. It constitutes one of the most inhospitable terrains in the world, where monitoring of cross-border movement is extremely difficult. Since British times certain "Easement Rights" have been given to the tribesmen on both sides of the border as a compensation for the arbitrary division of tribal lands and concomitant social dislocation. These rights are still in place and are availed by the people of FATA and Afghanistan for cross-border movement. Notwithstanding the actual purpose, the miscreants on both sides of the border exploit them for their own sinister ends.



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Despite being a "terra incognita" compared to the rest of the country, the area actually behaved like a "terra firma" in the absence of a major destabilizing catalyst, where tribes lived a semi primordial life according to their tribal code and traditions. The "entente cordiale" between a stoic people leading a frugal life under a colonial style bureaucracy continued without a glitch until 1979 when these areas began to be used as a staging post for anti-Soviet resistance by the Pakistan Government with active support of the USA and other countries like Saudi Arabia. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sponsored Jihad (Holy Struggle) attracted a polyglot group of religiously indoctrinated zealots from the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia. Osama bin Ladin was one such Jihadi who participated in the guerrilla struggle as a CIA protégé. A string of religious seminaries opened up, financed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and USA, and charged with the mission to provide religious indoctrination to potential Jihadis. This set the process of a rise of religious leaders as the local power brokers supplanting the traditional tribal leadership structures like the age old Malik system.⁸

The Soviet occupation and influx of refugees from Afghanistan brought about a complete transformation in the region. The use of religious ideology as a leaven to bind the fractious tribes in a common band against communism brought these simple-minded feral warriors in close touch with an atavistic and puritanical creed of religious militancy with transnational appeal.⁹ A network of religious seminaries was created that would act as nurseries for subsequent Taliban. The six long years of Afghan Jihad militarized the area with a surfeit of weapons, making the job of law enforcement agencies extremely difficult.

The erstwhile “Mujahideen” or the “Holy Fighters”, who were once exalted as the “moral equivalent of founding fathers of America”, were jettisoned precipitately by their American mentors soon after the Soviet troops left Afghanistan. The sudden abandonment of Afghanistan by the USA resulted in a political vacuum that was exploited by Afghan warlords. When their infighting and depredations became intolerable, a group of teachers and students from religious seminaries arose from Kandahar and swept Afghanistan like a tornado. They were known as Taliban or “the seekers of knowledge.” They established initial order, but were led into a trap by foreign militants with cash to bankroll an insolvent state, and an ideology to inspire a universal concept of transnational jihad.

Post 9/11 Phase

The events of 9/11 and the Taliban Government’s refusal to hand over Osama bin Ladin to the USA proved its undoing. The Northern Alliance (NA) a group of Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara warlords were bonded together by the CIA to invade Kabul. According to ex-Director of the CIA George Tenet, “the NA had been nurtured for years by Pakistan’s mortal enemies the Indians and the Russians”.¹⁰ The US covert teams comprising 90 CIA paramilitary officers, along with a small number of Special Forces’ personnel, combined with Afghan militias to defeat the Taliban in less than two and a half months¹¹. They achieved this feat with overwhelming precision aerial bombardment directed by ground based covert operations teams. The crucial role played by Pakistan as a US ally on the war on terrorism brought it in direct confrontation with Al Qaeda and the remnants of the Taliban, who fomented an insidious insurgency in Afghanistan in collusion with their sympathizers in Pakistan’s FATA region and some settled districts of North West Province.



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Pakistan’s FATA region had already become a seedbed of radicalism, a veritable tinderbox vulnerable to a matchstick. This had happened slowly over two decades. One of the chief reasons for this environment was the non-reintegration of the ex-Mujahideen fighters who had remained true to their old vocation by offering services for jihad in Indian-held Kashmir. The security compulsions of Pakistan led to a tolerance of militancy as an expedient response to her security dilemma. The emergence of the Taliban as a political entity in Afghanistan invested these radicalized elements with visions of “Pan Islamicism” with religion as a supra-national entity sanctioning linkages with Taliban polity.

The Afghan Taliban and other resistance groups managed to recover from their initial collapse to organize an armed resistance against the US-installed Afghan Government in Kabul. The resistance acted as a role model for Pakistan-based radicalized foreign militants and their Pakistani sympathizers, who viewed Pakistan's support to coalition forces as an egregious sin. The Pakistan Army's efforts to quell the insurgency led to a further exacerbation of tensions that resulted in spread of insurgency to areas like Dir, Bajour, and Swat in addition to North and South Waziristan. The rise in Taliban insurgency was facilitated by the US decision to change the "schwerpunkt" of war on terrorism from Afghanistan to Iraq. The state failure in Afghanistan resulted in enhanced cross border movement of militants, criminals, drug traffickers, and arms smugglers that further destabilized Pakistan's FATA as well as some settled districts of NWFP.

State Failure in Afghanistan—Causes and Indicators

In order to develop a clear understanding of the impact of Afghan state failure on Pakistan, it is necessary to understand the factors that contributed towards failure of the state in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's roller coaster political transition, from a stable constitutional monarchy under King Zahir Shah to an unstable democracy followed by a Soviet backed quasi communist regime, had rendered the state extremely fragile and vulnerable. The anarchy of the post-Soviet withdrawal and the repressive Taliban rule had left the country bereft of institutions and centralized authority that an ineffective Afghan government, headed by President Karzai, has not been able to resuscitate. The tragedy of the present state of Afghanistan is that all initiatives to develop institutions and infrastructure like the "London Compact"¹² and "Interim Development Strategy" foundered on the rocks of the poor security situation. All aspects of stability envisioned in the "London Compact," i.e. security, governance, reconstruction, and narcotics control, have remained far short of the desired targets.

The Afghanistan war was primarily conceived as a counter-terrorism operation without any nation-building and reconstruction strategy.¹³ The US eagerness to open a second front against terrorism in Iraq relegated Afghanistan to a lower-priority undertaking. Resource diversion towards the Iraq war badly hit US counter terrorism efforts in Afghanistan, as personnel from the CIA, Delta Force, Navy Seals and Special Forces elements in 2002-3 were diverted to Iraq¹⁴. The remnants of the Taliban staged a comeback in 2002 in the southern as well as eastern provinces due to weak writ of government and lawlessness spawned by government sponsored warlords. The factors that led to Taliban resurgence include insufficient troops deployed in insurgency-prone regions, and restrictive rules of engagement by NATO/ISAF. The Taliban resistance that began in 2002 metamorphosed into an insurgency in 2006¹⁵. According to Seth G Jones, "the number of suicide attacks went up from 27 to 139, remotely detonated bombings more than doubled from 783 to 1677 and armed attacks tripled from 1558 to 4542."¹⁶ Before dilating on the manifestation and causes of state failure, it is apposite to cite a few failings of US/NATO/ISAF counter-insurgency efforts. According to a perceptive analyst of the Afghan situation, despite the role of foreign sponsors the insurgency would not have become anything more than an annoyance had it not been able to exploit the intrinsic weakness of the Afghan state.¹⁷ The ideologically motivated Taliban filled in the vacuum along with tribes and local warlords in the absence of a strong state.¹⁸ A perceptive analyst of the Afghan insurgency has rightly concluded that it was Afghan government's inability to provide essential services that marginalized the population and created a window of opportunity for insurgents.¹⁹

According to Venda Felbab, "the post conflict Afghanistan had the lowest ratio of international peacekeeping troops to population as compared to other post conflict regions despite several heavily armed warlords."²⁰ The NATO led International Security Force (ISAF) comprises 53,000 soldiers. The countries contributing to the thirty-nine member coalition, besides the US and with the exception of Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands, operate under extremely restrictive rules of engagement or caveats that hamstringing their efficacy to counter the insurgency. Some of the caveats are as ludicrous as an inability to move after sunset and fighting in snow.²¹

The insufficiency of troops was brought to the fore by United States President George Bush during a NATO conference at Bucharest where he sought commitments for more troops by NATO members.²² The number of ISAF troops in Afghanistan was one third the number employed in Iraq “despite Afghanistan being twice the size of Iraq”.²³ The paucity of troops, vis à vis growing insurgency was encapsulated epigrammatically by a British commander who likened the situation to “Mowing the lawn that grows right back after a short interval”.²⁴ According to General James L. Jones “the coalition forces also suffered from overlapping of mandate and lack of unity of command.” He also “regarded 71 listed caveats as the operational cancer of NATO”.²⁵

The state failure of Afghanistan is borne out by the independent assessments of several think tanks. The Brookings institution ranks Afghanistan as the second weakest state amongst a total of 141.²⁶ The report analyzes the political, security and social indicators to establish the weakness quotient of states. The political indicators assess government’s accountability to the citizen, the rule of law, a corruption index and ability of bureaucracy to function independently. The security indicators focus on human rights abuses, physical security of citizens, and effects of violent conflict on population. The social indicators measure the state of basic human needs of citizen (i.e. nutrition), health, education, and access to clean water/sanitation.²⁷ According to the “Failed States Index” of the US Fund for Peace, Afghanistan figures seventh on the list of 60 weakest states of the world.²⁸

Dr Robert I. Rotberg, Director of the Belfer Center’s “Program on Interstate Conflict, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution” at Harvard University, concludes that state weakness is principally a consequence of ‘enduring conflict and human insecurity’.²⁹ Afghanistan has also been regarded as the most insecure state of the world, besides being the second-weakest state in the world.³⁰ Despite spending \$1.63 billion (US) on thirty-seven projects by the World Bank since 2002, “13% of Afghans have access to safe drinking water, 12% to adequate sanitation and 6% to electricity. 70% of the population is food insecure and only 40% of schools have buildings.”³¹

The weak governance of Afghanistan fuelled the insurgency and was a consequence of the wrong approach by the US government regarding nation-building and political stability of Afghanistan. President George Bush displayed a disdain for nation building by asserting that “US troops ought to be employed for fighting and winning wars.”³² According to George Friedman the Americans did not pay adequate attention to the vital task of government formation and rebuilding of Afghanistan right from the start of planning phase. “They neither had the resources nor the will to accomplish these tasks.”³³ Renowned Afghan analyst Ahmed Rashid states that, “it was unstated US strategy to leave Karzai ineffectual in the capital protected by foreign forces while relying on warlords to keep American influence in the countryside. It was a minimalist military intelligence driven strategy that ignored nation building and creation of state institutions.”³⁴

Currently, there are two insurgencies, the first led by Afghan Taliban in Kandahar and the second in eastern provinces led by a loose confederation of groups like Al Qaeda, Hizb-e- Islami , Gulbadin Hikmatyar and some Pakistan based non-state actors like Jaish-e- Muhammad, Lashkar-e-Tayabba and Tehrik-e- Nifaz-e- Shariat-e- Muhammadi. According to a report to US Congress in 2008, “the strength of the Taliban-led insurgency in Kandahar lies in its ability to regenerate combat power by leveraging tribal networks exploiting lack of governance and Afghan people’s inherent resistance to change.”³⁵ According to the same report, the principal vulnerability of both the insurgencies lies in their restrictive imposition of a medieval brand of religious code and failure to provide a modern sustainable mode of governance. Interestingly, the perceived vulnerability of the enemy has turned into US/ NATO’s own susceptibility due to the inability of the Afghan government to perform the basic functions of a state. The vacuum is being adroitly exploited by the Taliban through asymmetric warfare. An increased number of IED attacks (i.e. 2615 in 2007) is a clear example of the above.³⁶ These attacks have seriously curtailed the liberty of action of combat as well as the nation building echelons of the coalition.

Due to a failure of the bureaucracy, police, Afghan National Army and judiciary, the Afghan population, especially the rural segment, has become increasingly alienated and vulnerable to the propaganda of the Taliban. This has resulted in a public disenchantment with the government. A deeply conservative population that is left to fend for itself in a welter of lawlessness and human deprivation is fair game for the religious militants' propaganda apparatus. The failure of NATO/ISAF troops to operate without heavy reliance on airpower is leading towards a spiral of revulsion among the civil population due to their heavy casualties.³⁷ A total number of 3400 civilians died between October 2001 and March 2002 due to aerial attacks of US and NATO forces.³⁸ The 577 civilian deaths in Afghanistan due to US/NATO and Afghan air and ground actions in 2008 alone speak volumes about the civilian travails.³⁹

Most of the bureaucracy and government appointees in the provinces comprise either the local strongmen or their relatives. Of the first group of thirty-two provincial governors appointed in 2002, at least twenty were militia commanders and warlords.⁴⁰ In the presence of such elements it is easy to imagine the prevalence of corruption and misappropriation of development funds. There is a pervasive lawlessness with most of the highways connecting urban and rural centers under the control of militants who have made kidnapping for ransom a major source of their revenue.⁴¹ Up till September 2008, some "30 humanitarian aid workers had been killed and 90 abducted".⁴² Under these conditions, it is not difficult to imagine why development work has been virtually halted in rural areas.



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The Afghan police is poorly trained, unmotivated, and steeped in corruption. Out of 433 Afghanistan National Police units, "zero are fully capable, 3% are capable with coalition support, 4% are only partially capable and 77% are not capable at all."⁴³ The Afghan Defence Minister had recommended an increase of the police force from the current strength of 55,000 to 150,000.⁴⁴ Afghan police ratio (i.e. 180/100,000) is lowest in the region which needs to be raised to 250/100,000.⁴⁵ The quality of the manpower recruited for the police duties leaves much to be desired. Human Rights Watch, a US based watchdog group, issued a statement in May 2008 asking "President Hamid Karzai to stop appointing former human rights abusers as law enforcement officers".⁴⁶ The Afghan Border Police (ABP) is also poorly equipped and short of manpower. Resultantly the drug runners, arms smugglers, and criminals operate with total freedom.⁴⁷

The poor state of the Afghan National Army (ANA) is evidenced by a report in "The Herald." According to one article, "less than half of ANA's British and US trained soldiers

have chosen to re enlist after three years in uniform.”⁴⁸ The efficacy of an army that can hardly operate without its embedded trainers can be gauged by the fact that so far only one combat battalion (kandaq) can operate independently.⁴⁹ The ANA’s helplessness in combating militants is evidenced by a recent Taliban attack in which they claim to have killed 30 members of the ANA travelling on Kandahar Helmand highway.⁵⁰ Though the Afghan Ministry of Defence desired a 200,000 strong ANA,⁵¹ it was very difficult under current conditions to even raise it to a level of 70,000 as planned by the coalition and the Afghan government.



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The condition of the Afghan judiciary also presents a sorry spectacle. Most of the judges are appointed due to political linkages and only 20% are qualified for the job⁵². Judges are tainted with corruption and incompetence. The appointments of judges are usually made upon political considerations and the recommendations of the warlords. According to a World Bank report, Afghanistan is in the bottom 1% of the world as far as the rule of law is concerned.⁵³ The emasculated judiciary poses no challenge to the depredations of criminals who spawn a culture of violence in cahoots with militants. As a result the people, especially in rural areas, have no option but to turn to informal justice mechanisms.⁵⁴

Since the fall of Taliban the incidence of kidnapping for ransom, drug abuse, violent crime and smuggling has increased manifold.⁵⁵ US had allied itself with warlords like Rashid Dostum, Ismael Khan, Hazrat Ali, Muhammad Fahim and Gul Agha Shirazi. These are men with known violent past and were used as a countervailing force against Taliban.⁵⁶ Despite such expedient alliances, the Taliban have been sedulously extending their influence over most of Afghanistan. A prime reason for such a rise in influence is the establishment of strongholds with public support in Afghanistan’s rural areas.⁵⁷ The above data gives lie to the fact that the Afghan insurgency’s focus lies inside the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Without understanding the underlying reasons for the motivation of the insurgents, the US and the coalition’s focus appears to have turned towards a military, technological solution, the indubitable nemesis of a sound counter insurgency strategy. The insurgents’ motivation springs from core religious beliefs that the terrorists have tapped into with great skill in the absence of a government that could provide security, political stability and socio-economic development. The failure to employ an efficacious nation-building approach feeds into a public disenchantment that wooed people towards the insurgents.⁵⁸ The opportunity to win

the peace after winning the war was lost, due to an inadequate attention to nation-building and reconstruction strategy; the veritable “deus ex machina” in every counter-insurgency effort.⁵⁹

The insurgency inside Afghanistan gets sustenance through its financial resources. In addition to external funding, the bulk of finances by insurgents are being generated through drug money. It is an interesting fact that under the repressive Taliban regime the poppy production had slumped to 185 tons in 2001 which climbed up to 8200 tons in 2007.⁶⁰ Afghanistan supplies world's 93% of the heroin and the Taliban garner revenue by taxing poppy farmers and smuggling heroin. There are around 920,000 users of illicit drugs in Afghanistan representing 8% of the adult population. President Karzai's inability to control his brother's drug dealings is an incentive for criminal mafia. His government's seriousness in combating corruption is evidenced by the appointment of Mr Izzatullah Wasifi as head of country's anti corruption administration, a person who was convicted for selling heroin.⁶¹

Now, as the country is awash in drug money and illegal arms, NATO/ISAF has failed to develop an ideological counter-point to the Taliban. In 2007, a total of 137 suicide attacks led to 1730 casualties compared to 141 attacks and 1100 casualties in 2006.⁶² There have been 1445 civilian casualties till mid September 2008, a 40% increase over the same period in 2007.⁶³ International troops were held responsible for 577 deaths, 395 of those caused by air strikes.⁶⁴ With insurgents in full control of Southern and Eastern provinces, President Hamid Karzai's influence hardly extends beyond Kabul, a fact corroborated by NATO's refusal to hand over defence of Kabul to him.⁶⁵

Hobbled by his puppet status and frustrated due to an abject state failure, President Karzai and former Northern Alliance members are refusing to bring Afghan opposition on board and persist with their metronomic accusations about Pakistan's inability to stop cross-border movement of Taliban members.⁶⁶ The scenario is fraught with serious security repercussions both for Afghanistan and Pakistan if the “March of Folly” continues. After gaining an insight into causes and manifestations of Afghan state failure, it is deemed pertinent to have a peep into its impact on Pakistan.

Security Challenges for Pakistan

The security environment in FATA was vitiated due to Pakistan's support to coalition operations in Afghanistan in 2001. Pakistan's support for the US-led war on terrorism infuriated the religious militants and Taliban sympathizers who started networking in an anti-coalition resistance using Pakistan's territory as a base. The armed militants outmatched the tribal chiefs who could not stand up to them due to a religiously charged atmosphere. The militants in FATA have killed approximately 120 tribal chiefs on charges of being Pakistani and American sympathizers.⁶⁷ The reasons for the present state of extremism, terrorism and violent insurgency include the failure to reintegrate the ex Mujahideen after the ouster of Soviets, failure to improve the socio economic conditions, loose writ of government and an anachronistic political exclusion of the people.

The slow but sure groundswell of sympathy for the Taliban resulted in coalescing around forty disparate militant commanders into a loosely organized resistance organization called “Tehrik-e-Taliban”.⁶⁸ The influence of the Afghan insurgency on Pakistani Taliban can be understood through the history of ideological affinity between the two. Around 60,000 Pakistani Taliban from religious seminaries called “Madressahs” had fought alongside Afghan Taliban in the 1990s during the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan.⁶⁹ In 2007, a Taliban spring offensive in Afghanistan increased violence in Waziristan as well as the capital city of Islamabad, where red mosque clerics openly challenged the government writ.⁷⁰ By the end of winter of 2007, the level of violence in Afghanistan's eastern provinces was down by 40% because the Taliban were concentrating all their efforts on destabilizing Pakistan.⁷¹

The Pakistan Army has deployed 112,000 troops in FATA and has conducted over 100 operations so far, losing over 1200 lives.⁷² The state of casualties and apprehensions

is given at Annex B. The insurgency earlier confined to FATA has also spread to Swat in the NWFP where approximately three divisions of Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps are battling the insurgents. There are reports of a regular influx of foreign militants from Central Asia especially from Tajikistan and Kunar/Nuristan provinces of Afghanistan. According to some reports around 3000 Afghan Taliban are hiding in Orakzai agency, the presence of which has resulted in the local tribe Alizai's declaration of war against them.⁷³

The uncontrolled Afghan insurgency has led to a continual rise in the acts of terrorism and violence in Pakistan. The acts of terrorism in Pakistan by Al Qaeda/Taliban militants have so far consumed 11,129 innocent lives.⁷⁴ In the first nine months of 2008, there have been 683 bomb blasts resulting in 4141 casualties. The state of casualties has been on continual rise, with "189, 863, 648, 1471, 3599 and 4141 (to date) casualties in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008".⁷⁵ The insurgency in Pakistan's tribal areas gets sustenance from a ready supply of drug money, arms, and manpower from Afghanistan. The bandwagon effect of the insurgency in FATA has started encouraging recourse to violence by ethno-cultural particularists in Balochistan. The insurgency is also a role model for radicalized religious and sectarian elements. The Red Mosque episode in Islamabad, where religious zealots openly challenged government's writ, is a case in point.⁷⁶

The polarization of society is being imperceptibly brought about due to a wave of sympathy for militants generated through regular civilian casualties from collation air strikes. The antipathy for US actions and suspicion about her motives is running deep and pervasive in Pakistani society due to past US actions, such as leaving Afghanistan in the lurch after Soviet withdrawal, the inability to help resolve the Kashmir dispute, cutting off arms supplies to Pakistan during 1965 Indo-Pak war, and her growing strategic relationship with India. The US has also been accused of supporting terrorist organizations like Jandullah using Pakistani territory as a base.⁷⁷ A vast majority of Pakistanis also view America as a country driven by imperial ambitions and a global anti-Muslim Jewish agenda. The dominant view in the Pakistan's government and armed forces circles about the US promotion of Indian ambitions in Afghanistan, as driven by a Jewish agenda of denuclearization of the only Muslim nuclear power, is also not helping the matters.⁷⁸ Though a return to representative rule in Pakistan has resulted in political stability, the situation is still fraught with risks due to expedient partisan politics by opposition parties.⁷⁹ The right wing-dominated national print and electronic media is also chary and suspicious of US motives in the war on terrorism.

Due to polarization in society on the issue of war on terrorism, the armed forces and the government run the risk of losing public support. There is divisiveness and confusion in the Pakistani population regarding the US war on terrorism, due to which, until recent past, it was in a state of veritable denial about the gravity of the threat. A large majority under the influence of pervasive anti-Americanism believes that the Taliban's acts of terrorism are not inspired by political ambitions of ideologically driven obscurantists, but a natural response to US occupation of Afghanistan. This thinking, in large measure, has been responsible for a lack of public support in the past for the war on terrorism, resulting in a tardy and ambivalent government response to an existential threat to national security.⁸⁰ The badly needed national consensus is regrettably being continually eroded, due to civilian casualties in Afghanistan and Pakistan's FATA region.

Though the rise of religious militancy has disrupted the traditional social structure in FATA, the majority of people do not consider religious parties as the solution to their problems. 86% of the FATA residents believe that blowing up music shops and the girls' schools is not fair.⁸¹ In the general mayhem around FATA is this silent majority, wallowing in poverty and deprivation that needs to be rescued from the clutches of militancy. Pakistan has to contend with a hostile Afghan government, primarily due to elements of ex-Northern Alliance out to seek personal vendettas. India, unfortunately, instead of acting as a stabilizing factor has also started fishing in troubled waters. The opening of six consulates along Pak-Afghan border is being construed as an attempt to create a two-front threat situation for Pakistan. The role of Iran has also come in for a lot of criticism in the context of support to ethnic separatists in Balochistan.⁸² Iran views Pak-US cooperation with trepidation, a reason that has kept it estranged from Pakistan.

Pakistan is facing an energy crisis that is getting worse, due to growing consumer demand. The economic meltdown that is being prognosticated by the economic Cassandras is going to be a consequence of rising energy costs and concomitant shortage, if it ever comes about. The most economical gas pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan, which was being actively considered as a project in 2001, has been in limbo due to security situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan can act as the veritable geographical pivot of Eurasia in South Asia, linking it with West Asia.⁸³ It cannot actualize its above potential due to instability in Afghanistan. An example is the Gwadar port that was expected to serve as a strategic outlet for Central Asian energy exports and trade but has remained under developed due to intractable Afghan conflict.

The economic effects of drug proliferation in Afghanistan and the country's two million refugees also weigh heavily in these straitened economic circumstances. The number of drug addicts is increasing 7% annually, leading to a rise in crime. Thirty-six percent of total drug supply passes through Pakistan, a fact that portends an insidious symbiosis between crime syndicates and drug smugglers.⁸⁴ The drug money has financed criminals and smugglers besides acting as a lifeline for ethnic and sectarian particularists.⁸⁵ And the impact of this activity near Pakistan's border has aggravated Pakistan's problems, a fact evidenced by the UNODC's report regarding cultivation of 70% of Afghanistan's opium in five Afghan provinces bordering Pakistan.⁸⁶



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Pakistan is still saddled with two million Afghan refugees who are reluctant to move back to Afghanistan due to the worsening security situation there. After 2001, there was another movement of refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan that further complicated the repatriation of refugees. The costs of maintaining the refugees include environmental degradation, depletion of renewable energy resources, and a rise in crime.⁸⁷ In addition to the Afghan refugees, the government has been burdened with the cost of maintaining 19,000 internally displaced people from FATA.⁸⁸

The organized crime and lawlessness in Afghanistan have encouraged similar activities in adjoining Pakistani territories in FATA and Swat. Criminal activities like kidnapping for ransom are also on the rise. The criminal activities of tribal strongmen like Mangal Bagh and Haji Namdar in Khyber Agency of FATA bore a very strong resemblance to warlords of Afghanistan and had to be checked by a military operation by Frontier Corps.⁸⁹

Encouraged by the vigilante actions of Afghan warlords, the local clerics like Mufti Munir Shakir (Lashkar-e Islam) and Pir Saif-ur-Rehman (Ansar-ul-Islam) began a turf war near Peshawar, the provincial capital of NWFP, which had to be dealt through force by Pakistani law enforcement agencies. In Swat which was known as a tourist paradise until the recent past, Maulvi Fazal-ullah carved out a fiefdom terrorizing local population and kidnapping foreigners. The modus operandi, motivation and stratagems of such criminal activities were copied chapter and verse from the Afghan criminal gangs.⁹⁰ The unchecked crime in Afghanistan needs to be controlled by Afghan government and NATO/ISAF/US forces before it is metastasized into a social cancer in both countries.

The economic cost to Pakistan due to the backlash of terrorism is considerable. This is a consequence of strong support to international coalition in countering terrorism in Afghanistan by the Pakistani government and the armed forces. The Marriot Hotel bombing in Islamabad is a clear example of terrorists' attempts at weakening the anti-terrorism resolve of the nation. After the Marriot Hotel bombing by the terrorists in Islamabad on 20 September 2008, the volume of trading in shares plummeted to an all time low of 2.67 million on 26 September from 4.309 million on 19 September 2008. The low investor confidence and stagnant foreign investment bodes ill for an economy struggling to find its feet.⁹¹ The losses to business, tourism, and industrial activity in NWFP are staggering. The foreign exchange earnings due to tourism went down in the first six months of 2008 by 8%.⁹² Organized criminal activities like kidnapping for ransom are also on the rise. The frequent kidnapping of Chinese engineers have led to halt in several development and mining projects.

Pakistan's Response

In order to counter the above security challenges arising out of the Afghan situation, an efficacious political response at the national and international level is de rigueur. Tardiness and ambivalence due to lack of national consensus in combating terrorism and insurgency should now be a relic of the past in the presence of a genuinely representative government with a liberal outlook. At the international level, the resolution of all outstanding issues with India, especially the Kashmir conflict, needs to be pursued vigorously and sincerely. An entente cordiale between the two nuclear-armed countries is the surest sign of peace and stability, in the absence of which the region shall remain hostage to an arms race, nuclear proliferation and adversarial politics. The success of peace efforts is contingent upon the maturity of the political leadership of both countries and the sincere interest of the international community.

Pakistan needs to adopt a sustainable liberal and pluralistic polity based upon the strength of institutions and a true democratic culture. The grandiose strategic notions, like strategic depth, need to be shelved in favour of a cooperative engagement with all neighbouring countries including India. The reorientation of national security and foreign policy should be accompanied by a commitment to renounce proxy warfare through militant outfits.⁹³ There is an urgent need to forge a consensus against religious extremism and ethno-sectarian particularism by taking all political parties on board. The politicians should be charged with the responsibility of galvanizing their constituents against forces of extremism feeding into terrorism.⁹⁴ A liberal and pluralistic polity aimed at strengthening the federation through a correct balance between the powers of provinces and centre should be sedulously cultivated. The institution building and distributive justice should be the credo of national polity that should help present a united front against internal and external threats. The political consensus should get translated into a clear policy direction to evolve a comprehensive national anti terrorism strategy.

The geopolitical dividend Pakistan enjoyed due to its geostrategic location has been compromised because of Al Queda's control of Pakistani Taliban.⁹⁵ Along with military response, political integration of the region has become a compulsion for Pakistan. The anachronistic status of FATA needs to be abolished and the region merged with NWFP

through extension of political parties and judicial acts to all tribal areas. The political integration shall finish the enclaves of lawlessness where all criminals seek refuge claiming immunity from the law of the land. It is time these enclaves of instability were wooed away from a primitive medievalism masquerading as a time honoured highland warrior code.

On the social plane, the soft power of the state needs to be marshalled in support of the war on terrorism. The media, with pro militant sympathies, needs to be firmly weaned away from an irrational advocacy of extremism through a combination of persuasion and reprisals. In addition, the most powerful motivational tool in society (i.e., the moderate religious scholars) should be co-opted in the struggle against extremism. The state should sponsor such scholars and help in dissemination of their moderate views to counter the pernicious influence of hate material of extremists. The orchestration of US soft power, in line with its declared policy of reaching out to the voice of reason the world over, should be ensured to win over moderate religious scholars in the ranks of Taliban.⁹⁶ The fountainhead of Muslim radicalism in South Asia (i.e. Deoband seminary's recent edict against terrorism) should be propagated as a paradigm shift in Muslim concept of jihad.⁹⁷ The religious seminaries that indoctrinate an individual into extremism need to be monitored and reformed. Pakistan can attain all the above objectives despite the pervasive instability, provided the government displays a consistent resolve for their achievement.



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In order to isolate the incorrigible militants, a general amnesty should be offered to the more amenable segment and negotiations held to conclude sustainable peace agreements. Care should be taken that the agreements are conducted on government terms and are enforceable. The fate of previous peace talks with the militants' (i.e. Ladha in 2004, Sarorogha in 2005, North Waziristan in 2006 and Swat in 2008) should be kept in perspective.⁹⁸ A strategy to marginalize the most violent factions of the militants needs to be assiduously followed. A similar strategy should be replicated in Afghanistan by US/ISAF in order to "dry the swamp that breeds militancy".⁹⁹ Unenforceable and expedient deals that achieve nothing except temporary reprieve for the militants should be eschewed as a matter of policy.

The military action against insurgents in FATA and Swat needs to be undertaken with full vigour by the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps in order to sanitize the areas of their presence. The local tribes like Salarzai in Bajaur and Alizai in Orakzai that have evinced a desire to fight the insurgents should be coopted in a proper plan with the regular forces.¹⁰⁰ The military operations should be carried out in synchronization with US intelligence and coalition forces. Aerial attacks and predator strikes should only be executed on the request of Pakistan Army in order to avoid accidental friendly fire and the civilian casualties. The Pakistan Army needs to enhance its force quantum to make a quick impact in insurgent controlled areas. Operations would be time consuming and slow but need to be followed with determination. In addition to conventional attacks and raids, the insurgents' leadership should be targeted, backed up by effective intelligence inputs, through Special Operation Forces.



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An indirect approach strategy needs to be adopted wherein the sources of logistics and finances are choked through combined US- Pakistan covert operations. This, however, is a difficult undertaking given the state of drug trafficking, lawlessness, and insurgency in Afghanistan. It however, should be noted that through use of the military instrument, the insurgency can be managed but not entirely eradicated. The political instrument that is vital to complement the gains of the military instrument, however, is hamstrung due to destabilizing political vacuum and weak governance in Afghanistan.

Since the Afghan insurgency and state failure directly impact upon insurgency in FATA, it is necessary for US/NATO to increase the quantum of combat and nation building resources. According to Carl Robichaud, "the per capita expenditure on stability in Afghanistan, i.e.. \$57, was the lowest compared to other such operations like \$679 for Bosnia, \$526 for Kosovo and \$233 for East Timor."¹⁰¹ The insurgency on the east of Pak-Afghan border cannot be stamped out if it remains uncontrolled on the western side. Pakistan and Afghanistan need to share the responsibility to control cross border movement by deploying optimum necessary troops to survey the border. The disparity in deployed resources (i.e. over 1000 Pakistan posts vis a vis 100 Afghan posts) needs to be addressed.¹⁰²

The socio-economic development of FATA should be undertaken as per the needs and aspirations of the people of FATA. An overriding craving for education in the region needs

to be assuaged.¹⁰³ The provincial government of NWFP should expedite the initiation and implementation of all development plans, e.g. a \$2 billion Sustainable Development Fund for FATA that could not be earlier implemented. The funding from the Islamic states in the Gulf and their participation in the development works should be explored, and these might sit well with the religious sensibilities of the deeply conservative population of FATA.¹⁰⁴

The challenge of drug trafficking through Pakistan can be countered through greater funding for counter-narcotics efforts and the strengthening of border control/surveillance. The anti-drug measures have to be synchronized with international drug control efforts. Stricter checks at ports, airports, and border check-posts should be ensured by employing modern equipment. Pakistan needs international help to build the capacity of its law enforcement and drug control organization to block the drug flow chain emanating from Afghanistan. A hundred percent success in this endeavour is, however, a questionable proposition without dealing effectively with the drug proliferation in Afghanistan.

The economic cost of the Afghan situation, FATA insurgency, and sporadic acts of terrorism to Pakistan, can be minimized through a determined pursuance of an anti terrorism strategy backed by a national consensus. Investor confidence can be restored by special protection arrangements for business and financial centers. The losses to tourism, business, and industry in NWFP are a direct consequence of insurgency and terrorism. The speed of revival of business and industrial activity shall be directly proportional to the efficacy of the counter insurgency efforts. Novel incentives like Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZ) in FATA, with tax concessions, can only be brought to fruition in a secure environment. Without munificent and sustained economic support by international community, however, no meaningful development in FATA can take place.

There is a requirement of improving the coordination between US/NATO/ISAF, the Afghan government, and Pakistan in several aspects like border control, counter narcotics, intelligence sharing, and conduct of counter-insurgency operations. For optimizing the counter insurgency response, the capacity-building of Pakistan's army and paramilitary forces should be accorded top priority.

Pakistan, as well as coalition members, should fully understand that without winning the hearts and minds of the population, the support base of Afghan's insurgency will never be reduced. Holsti's idea, that the population can only be won over by a genuinely representative government, enjoying vertical as well as horizontal legitimacy, holds good for government in Kabul.¹⁰⁵ Eradication of corruption, good governance, and delivery of basic services to population are the prerequisites to win the public support. Crime and drugs, the two chief financiers of insurgents, need to be tackled with missionary zeal through combined efforts of Afghan Army/Police and US/NATO forces.

Since the insurgencies on both sides of the Pak/Afghan border are interlinked, the responses should be interlinked. It was Afghanistan where the insurgency first started before destabilizing Pakistan's tribal areas, and it is there that it was supposed to end first. Similarly all the partners in war on terrorism should understand that a simultaneous engagement of corrigible militants amongst the Taliban ranks should be carried out in Afghanistan as well as FATA. The political engagement of Taliban should preferably be carried out in Afghanistan. Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations Special Representative for Afghanistan, acknowledged his inability to win over the Taliban in 2002 and 2003 as his biggest mistake.¹⁰⁶ The Afghan officials who criticized the Pakistan Government for peace deals with tribal militants were quite supportive of a similar deal in Helmand's Musa Qila between Taliban and NATO forces.¹⁰⁷ Following a three-tiered broad strategy to deal with security challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan is recommended:

Tier 1—Political engagement with corrigible militants

Tier 2—Counter insurgency operations against incorrigible militants

Tier 3—Comprehensive nation building and reconstruction

Some writers have argued that the antidote to the current insurgency and instability is the revival of centuries old tribal social and power structures.¹⁰⁸ While denigrating the deification of tribal iconoclasm by Western scholars as “Victorian Pulp Fiction”, these writers cannot help falling in the same pitfall of projecting a fossilized culture as a panacea for all ills. All stake holders in the Afghan game must understand that the wounded tribal structure, medieval in practice and precept, had become effete even prior to rise of Islamic radicalism. That the Islamic radicalism has supplanted that structure is testament to the bankruptcy of intellectual vision of those social engineers who misdirected the social capital of a population, struggling to find a new meaning to its existence, towards religious obscurantism.



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Pakistan’s security milieu has been intertwined with the Afghan situation since 1979. Twice the country has rendered itself a close ally of the US in wars of national survival in Afghanistan. The first was against the Soviet Union and its puppet regime in Kabul in the eighties, and the second against Taliban/Al Qaeda in 2001. In both wars Pakistan not only was the closest ally but the worst sufferer as well. War against the Soviet Union left Afghanistan with a legacy of religious militancy, narco–trafficking, and arms influx, all adding to a combustible mix in the ungoverned tribal areas of its North West Frontier Province. The war against the Taliban in 2001 left it in an even more difficult situation with poorly governed and insurgency hit Afghanistan fuelling lawlessness, insurgency and terrorism in Pakistan. Countries like India, Iran and Russia have joined in an attempt to maximize their interests at the cost of stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The above is hardly a just recompense for the efforts of a US ally whose cooperation was cited as one of the three reasons for US success against the terrorist threat.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to identify the nature and extent of state failure in Afghanistan and its adverse fallout on Pakistan’s security. The collapse of state institutions, weak governance, rampant corruption, lawlessness, and under resourced counter-insurgency efforts have emerged as the main reasons, leading towards an estrangement of local population and strengthening of insurgents. The failure of international community to win

the hearts and minds of population in South and East has given an edge to the insurgents who are capitalizing on an ever spiralling wave of public anger for the losses suffered due to coalition's air and artillery attacks. The Afghan Army and Police have also failed to develop into a potent force capable of dealing with insurgents and criminals.

The unholy nexus between insurgents and criminals has led to a spurt in the drug trade, gun running, and kidnappings for ransom due. And this has provided the insurgency steady ground. The lack of operational synergy between ISAF/NATO, and the US, as well as the self imposed limitations by most NATO members, has given operational space to the insurgents which they are exploiting quite skilfully. The impact of Afghan state failure on Pakistan is evident in the shape of a full blown insurgency in FATA and Swat, besides a pervasive incidence of terrorism and suicide bombings. The consequent deterioration in the security environment has resulted in business losses and crippling losses to economy. The rise in crime, drug trafficking, and kidnappings have created a climate of insecurity to the detriment of business/industrial activity. Besides this problem, there is the adverse impact on the energy situation of Pakistan due to the virtual impossibility of energy flow from Central Asia and Iran due to security situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's ability to deal with these challenges depends upon adoption of a holistic approach with a long term vision, fully leveraging the strengths of a nascent democracy, national political consensus, and astute diplomacy. A combination of bold political reforms, economic incentives, social initiatives and determined law enforcement measures in FATA/NWFP is required to counter the present challenges. The political and military instruments are required to work in close harmony in order to eradicate the insurgency. The help of international community, including NGOs with neutral credentials, is also de rigueur for socio economic uplift and development of insurgency prone areas.

Coordination with US and NATO is vital in coping with the security challenges in the spheres of intelligence sharing, counter insurgency, joint covert operations, border control, and anti drug operations. US/NATO also needs to avoid indiscriminate aerial attacks and overcome a reluctance to employ ground troops for fear of casualties. Better coordination between Pakistan and US intelligence operatives can and should minimize the possibilities of civilian casualties, the most potent source of public antipathy towards the US war on terrorism.

The future of FATA and Afghanistan lies in genuine representative rule, untrammelled by the totalitarianism of tribalism. Genuine democracy, good governance, rule of law and massive investment in infrastructure and human development, highlighted earlier in this paper, are the obligations that Pakistan, the United States and the international community owe to FATA and Afghanistan. The crisis of FATA is an opportunity which, if "not seized at the flood, shall condemn both countries' voyage to a trough of instability with concomitant adverse security implications for entire South Asia. It is up to the international community to take the current when it serves or lose its venture."¹⁰

About the Author ...

Brigadier Raashid Wali Janjua is currently a student in the National Security Program at Canadian Forces College Toronto. He joined Pakistan Military Academy in 1978, and was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in 1982. He underwent basic infantry and combat engineering courses from the School of Infantry & Tactics Quetta and Military College of Engineering (MCE) Risalpur. He distinguished himself by securing first position in Junior Officers' Leadership Course at School of Infantry & Tactics Quetta in 1983. He joined Officers' Engineering Degree Course at MCE Risalpur in 1983 and graduated with Bachelor in Science Civil Engineering Degree in 1987. He served as a company grade officer in an engineer battalion where he was exposed to field command environment in an infantry division as well as the elite Frontier Works Organization. He was later posted as GSO 3 Operations & Intelligence in an independent infantry brigade group. During this tenure he participated in the largest army level field exercise meant to validate a new defensive offensive operational concept that brought about a

paradigm shift in the army's strategic orientation. He served as an instructor in the elite Pakistan Military Academy at Kakul for two years, after which he was selected for the Command and Staff College Quetta from where he graduated in 1993 with distinction. He was subsequently posted as a Brigade Major (Chief of Staff) in an infantry brigade of a Strike Corps. After two years as Brigade Major he was posted as Deputy Assistant Military Secretary at General Headquarters (Military Secretary's Branch) where he was responsible for the policy formation about the career planning of the officers. Upon promotion as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1998, he was upgraded as Assistant Military Secretary on the same assignment. The officer was given the command of his parent battalion in a deployed formation in Northern Areas in 2000. During this command tenure the officer was exposed to the operational dynamics of the combat in the wake of the Kargil Conflict. Under his watch, his battalion completed some extremely challenging projects under most hazardous weather and terrain conditions. He was awarded "Chief of the Army Staff's Commendation Certificate", for displaying outstanding leadership qualities and enhancing the overall operational efficiency of a deployed infantry formation. He was posted to the prestigious Command and Staff College Quetta in 2001, where he performed the duties of a Directing Staff (DS). During this tenure in addition to routine instructional responsibilities of a DS he also performed the duties as editor of "The Citadel", the prestigious professional magazine of the college. In 2003 he was appointed the "Director of the Faculty of Research and Doctrinal Affairs" of the College. He was selected for the armed forces war course (afwc) at National Defence University Islamabad in 2004 from where he graduated in 2005. He was promoted as a Brigadier in one step during the course and was retained as the member of the faculty of research in NDU. He was posted to a deployed infantry brigade in Kashmir on his first command assignment in October 2005. During an eventful command tenure on Line of Control, he encountered the devastating earthquake that accounted for over 80,000 lives. During this period he worked closely with the NATO rescue/relief contingent and several other international organizations besides coordinating activities of various government agencies operating in the area. After completion of his command tenure in 2007, the officer was appointed as Commander Corps Engineers (CCE) of the largest Corps of the Army, a position that he held for over a year before being posted as Director Planning Cell in the Chief of Army Staff's Secretariat. After completing this assignment he was selected for the National Security Programme at Canadian Forces College Toronto in August 2008 where he is presently employed. Brigadier Janjua holds masters degrees in war and defence studies from the Command and Staff College Quetta, and Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad respectively. In addition, he holds masters in arts degree in international relations from Balochistan University.

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