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## LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN: REBUILDING IN JIMP ENVIRONMENT

Maj A.Z. Dogar

**JCSP 42**

**Service Paper**

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**PCEMI 42**

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES  
JCSP 42 – PCEMI 42  
2015 – 2016

JCSP SERVICE PAPER – PCEMI ÉTUDE MILITAIRE

**LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN: REBUILDING IN JIMP ENVIRONMENT**

Maj A.Z. Dogar

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Word Count: 2305

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## **LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN: REBUILDING IN JIMP ENVIRONMENT**

### **AIM**

1. Pakistan Army has for long been involved in Low Intensity Conflict. Its fight to free the country from network of different terrorist organizations is in final stages<sup>1</sup>. As the area is cleared from terrorists there is also an urgent requirement to rehabilitate these areas in a manner that the area remains stable and the writ of the political government is restored. Operation Zarb e Azab is the last offensive for this purpose launched by Pakistan Army, currently under progress in Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Before this operation Pakistan Army has also cleared agencies of Bajur, Orakzai and Swat region. After clearance, it remained involved in rehabilitation activities in close collaboration with other government departments in these regions. Valuable lessons were learnt in the process approaches to counterinsurgency was also modified. *The aim of this paper is to highlight those lessons learnt in a manner that they are helpful in resolving issues faced by Canada's Whole of Government Missions in other countries, like Afghanistan, Iraq or in a future conflict in support of peace.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

2. The operation Zarb e Azb is a joint military operation based on a four phased military action: strangulation, clearance, rebuilding, and handing over control to civil administration<sup>2</sup>. The operation was launched in June 2014<sup>3</sup>. In phase one the areas where the operation was to be conducted were sealed/ cordoned. Then all the population was screened and evicted to internally

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<sup>1</sup> The Express Tribune, "Operation Zarb e Zab in Final Stages: COAS". 12 August 2016

<sup>2</sup> Alymen Ejaz, "Operation Zarb e Azb: Security and Rehabilitation Challenges". Islamabad Policy Research Institute. Accessed on 4 February 2016. <http://www.ipripak.org/post-operation-zarb-e-azb-security-and-rehabilitation-challenges/#sthash.GYiW3U7K.7h1qmCnj.dpbs>

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Bodirsky, "Beyond operation Zarb e Azb in Northwest Pakistan". Accessed on 3 February 2016. <https://www.iiss.org/en/iiss%20voices/blogsections/iiss-voices-2015-dda3/december-5c5a/zarb-e-azb-72cf>

displaced people's camps. Few terrorists were also captured who tried to escape with the civil population. In the second phase offensive was launched for elimination of terrorists was launched in those areas which were cordoned off. Heavy fighting on numerous places took place, which resulted in damage to property of people who were living in internally displaced people's camps. However militarily it was a success, resulting in 2763 terrorists killed, 837 hideouts destroyed, 253 tons explosive recovered and zero noncombatants killed<sup>4</sup>.

3. However, like all military operations conducted in Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), the real test was in the third and fourth phase i.e. rebuilding and handing over control to civil administration<sup>5</sup>. It was in these phases that whole of government approach had to be enabled with the combined effort of not just the armed forces but also the other departments of the government. This required a coordinated and a cohesive effort aligned right from the strategic level to the tactical level. Government of Pakistan and the military had had experience of such kind of operations before. Keeping in view the lessons from those operations, the lead for these rebuild operations was given to the military and all other government departments were in support<sup>6</sup>. All activities and projects are coordinated, finalized and monitored at the operational level headquarters of Pakistan Army, which was also responsible for the conduct of phase one and two of the operation. These lessons will be discussed subsequently and may prove useful to enable better coordination in a Canadian Joint, Interagency, Multinational and Public (JIMP) operations, during the rebuild phase of counterinsurgency operations.

## **LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN TO ENABLE JIMP IN PEACE AND STABILITY**

### **OPERATIONS**

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<sup>4</sup> Sachchal Ahmad, "*Zarb e Azb: Now What?*". Stimson Centre. Accessed on 5 February 2016. <http://isnblog.ethz.ch/terrorism-technology/after-zarb-e-azb-now-what>

<sup>5</sup> Sampath Perera and Keith Jones, "Beyond Operation Zarb-e-Azb in northwest Pakistan". IISS Voices. <https://www.iiss.org/en/iiss%20voices/blogsections/iiss-voices-2015-dda3/december-5c5a/zarb-e-azb-72cf>

<sup>6</sup> The Express Tribune. 7 December 2010.

4. For the lessons from Pakistan to be applicable in the Canadian JIMP environment in Afghanistan or similar situations in future, it is necessary that first the similarities be highlighted. Both these operations were taking place in regions where there was no writ of the government. Even after clearance of these areas limited support to terrorists could not be ruled out from local population. Resultantly, senior government officials avoided visiting these areas. Projects being undertaken and people involved in these projects often became targets of the terrorists, thereby requiring security. The governments were often focusing on quick impact projects to gain media attention. Senior government officials remain divorced from ground realities and often the operational and tactical commanders' interests and priorities did not align with the whole of governments approach and vice versa<sup>7</sup>.

5. The first phase of these kinds of operations is deployment and eradication of insurgents or terrorists, which is purely military in nature and generally well executed and coordinated as compared to the next and most important phase of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The lessons from Pakistan will be discussed for the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase only.

6. The model which has seen success in Pakistanis relies heavily on the efficiency of the operational level headquarters (HQ). Since this HQ is involved right from the outset in the operations it has also been entrusted with the responsibility of executing the rebuilding and rehabilitation of the conflict zone<sup>8</sup>. As the HQ is already conversant with ground realities and by this time has sufficient intelligence network to identify places and persons to go ahead with these projects. Other departments of the government are in support of this HQ and answerable as well to the degree of progress on assigned tasks. This HQ is also entrusted with resolution of conflicts

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<sup>7</sup> Kimberly Unterganschnigg, "*Canada's whole of Government Mission in Afghanistan – Lessons Learned*".

<sup>8</sup> Farrah Naz, "*Army To Continue Rehabilitation And Reconstruction Work In SWA: COAS*". Aikpakistan. <https://aikpakistan.wordpress.com/2012/06/19/army-to-continue-rehabilitation-and-reconstruction-work-in-swa-coas/>

between different departments if any. This does not mean that the army will have the projects of its own choosing without any government oversight or policy. But what it does is that all projects are divided in two categories. In category one, only mega projects are included which may include, building of highways, dams, etc. In category two projects which are of local nature and are designed to address local grievances are included. These projects include building of schools, health centers, etc. Projects of both these categories are executed by the operational level HQ, however for category one projects there is a greater oversight by the government but for category two projects only the results and progresses are shared with the government. The liaison officers of the other government departments continue to provide feedback to their departments also.

7. This approach has facilitated in winning loyalties of locals by the troops. As the military can launch projects intended to win loyalties of locals without hindrance from the civilian side. It has also helped in reducing the friction between the troops on ground and other government departments. It has also reduced the pressure on other departments, who find it hard to cope with this extra workload of reconstruction and they can focus their energies on mega projects only. The army has to share the work load but the operational level HQ with the right integration of representatives of other departments of the government can manage these projects efficiently. This also increases the speed of work as category two projects are dealt by military and senior civil bureaucrats can find time to focus on execution of mega projects only.

8. It has also been learnt with experience that these projects are targets of the insurgents<sup>9</sup>. It was difficult to provide security to these projects while focusing on other military tasks at hand. The local government was never in a position to ensure security, often even with the support of local populace. The government on the other hand wants to show results in an earlier timeframe. This often led to some projects like schools, water points, etc being constructed where there were

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<sup>9</sup> Asad Hashim, “*The fight for education in Pakistan's Swat*”. Aljazeera 15 October 2012.

no security mechanisms in place. Few of these were later destroyed by Taliban. The best place to make these projects initially is, in near vicinity of own deployment. At places where the quick reaction force can be effective within short period of time. This will give inherent security to these projects. More projects on places of local government's interest can be under taken as capacity of police and governance is built alongside.

9. Negotiations with the opponents should never be ruled out during the rebuilding stage.

Negotiations may be carried out at the tactical level with some splinter group or at higher level with head of a particular network. Terms for negotiating can be hard and of own choosing (like disarm before talks or unconditional seize fire before negotiations) but the door must never be closed for it. Political options and negotiations assist is avoidance of force heavy responses<sup>10</sup>.

Operational level HQ must have the initiative to conduct these negotiations. Limits for this need to be clearly spelled out from time to time as and when required.

10. Killing militants is never enough. Americans have killed thousands in Iraq<sup>11</sup>; Pakistan Army has also done the same in its conflict zone. The important thing is to neutralize the ideology. For this purpose de radicalization center need to be established in an earlier timeframe as part of category two projects, closely followed by schools for the children. The targets for the de radicalization center are young men and others who may be supportive of miscreant support. Strong intelligence at tactical level from local resources is required for identifying such persons. For these individuals to enroll in these centers support of locals and regional government is essential. This support is not always forthcoming. Efforts have to be made to harness their

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<sup>10</sup> Steth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, "*Counter Insurgency in Pakistan*". Published by National Security Research Division. Accessed on 2 February 2016. [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

<sup>11</sup> Shiraz Mehar, "*Viewpoint: Does strategy of killing militant leaders work?*" BBC News. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33154074>

support. Qualified individuals from the military need to be made part of all HQ being deployed to enable them to undertake these tasks at priority.

11. Local governments are invariably ineffective and corrupt in the conflict zone. Most of the time they have their own agendas to follow. To harness their support it is necessary to use a policy of carrot and stick from the tactical to the strategic level. To induce the political will in support of own rebuild projects, first the sticks are to be used. There is a range of instruments ranging from political, economic to military which can be used for this purpose. At tactical level these can be threat of use of force, enforcing curfew, closing of some routes for transit by locals, establishing check points, restricting access to projects undertaken by own military/ government, etc. At the strategic and operational level these can be suspension of aid, freezing of financial assets, “shaming” by revealing embarrassing information, aid to targets adversary<sup>12</sup>, etc. Civil staff from other government departments attached with the operational level HQ plays a pivotal role in this aspect.

12. Stick alone will never work. A carrot is also necessary to influence the political will and will of the locals as well. Carrot at tactical level can be reduction in curfew timings, construction of schools, establishment of clean water points, provision of health facilities, provision of food and clothing, etc. At operational and tactical level it can be construction of highways, construction of dams, assistance in training of various departments (judiciary, police, doctors, nurses, etc), assistance in acquiring loans from International Monetary Fund, etc. For this to be effective it is essential that the strategic level should be aligned down to the tactical level. It must be ensured that the start in rebuild is from small projects (category two projects: schools, de radicalization centers, water points, etc). The expertise, the labor and resources used must be of

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<sup>12</sup> Steth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, “*Counter Insurgency in Pakistan*”. Published by National Security Research Division. Accessed on 2 February 2016. [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)



local origin; as much as possible. Starting small; in this manner will have a direct impact on the local population and resultant impact on the host government. These projects would be easily manageable by the tactical and operational level HQ and will also set the stage for the mega projects having complexities, requiring skillful labor and expertise from abroad.

13. There is also a dire requirement to ensure that the money provided as carrot or for undertaking of a specific project are not misused. Although corruption must not be tolerated but support has to be given in a culturally aware environment. Invariably the governments in countries of conflict will have massive corruption. At the tactical level corruption may be controlled by supporting the most progressive or least corrupt leader<sup>13</sup>. All projects may be undertaken through them at this level. Operational control of these projects with the military will greatly assist in facilitating this approach. At the strategic level money trail should be followed from the top level, down to the contractor or project in charge. Civilian staff at higher level and troops on ground at tactical level will assist in following this rail. However, there is a requirement of a balanced approach as too strict an approach may complicate the situation resulting in bureaucratic hurdles. Cultural awareness from the top to bottom is the key to have success with the local populace.

14. For the rebuild phase to be successful it is imperative to ensure that the local governance improves and becomes effective to take control of these projects. For this purpose first the laws of the country/ region need to be amended where required. Second is the requirement of equipping and building a potent police force. Third is the requirement to free the judicial system of the country from political hold and make it effective. The police force needs to be supported

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Galasz Nielsen, Mahroona Hussain Syed & David Vestenskov, “*Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism: Sharing Experiences in Afghanistan and Pakistan*”. Accessed on 3 February 2016.  
<http://www.fak.dk/publikationer/Documents/Sharing%20Experiences%20in%20Afghanistan%20and%20Pakistan.pdf>

by the tactical military forces on ground for training as well as in apprehension of militants living within the population, initially. The operational level HQ is consultation with other departments should work on amendment of constitution, enabling judiciary and for free election to ensure a government of the people to transfer power to subsequently.

15. The role of the media assumes greater responsibility. It needs to be used effectively at the tactical level to show the military victories and impact of the category two projects being undertaken. At the same time it should be used to educate the local government about the strategic vision and category one projects being undertaken and their impact on country's economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

16. Lessons from Pakistan have been learnt over a decade with nonstop fighting against the militants in its Federally Administered Tribal Areas. They have been refined and have been tested in during operation Zarb e Azb. The major lesson or the key to success for Canadian Forces in counterinsurgency operations is the alignment and close cooperation between the military and other departments of the government. Pakistan's success during the rebuild phase has been because of the effectiveness of the operational level HQ, which has been able to ensure that civil and military officials remain on the same page. For Canada adoption of these lessons learnt will definitely help improve JIMP coordination during rebuild phase of the country, where ever they are employed in future.

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<sup>1</sup> Shiraz Mehar, “*Viewpoint: Does strategy of killing militant leaders work?*” BBC News.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Bodirsky, “*Beyond operation Zarb e Azb in Northwest Pakistan*”. Accessed on 3 February 2016. <https://www.iiss.org/en/iiss%20voices/blogsections/iiss-voices-2015-dda3/december-5c5a/zarb-e-azb-72cf>

<sup>1</sup> Sachchal Ahmad, “*Zarb e Azb: Now What?*”. Stimson Centre. Accessed on 5 February 2016. <http://isnblog.ethz.ch/terrorism-technology/after-zarb-e-azb-now-what>

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