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THE SOUTH ASIAN "COMPLEX INSURGENCY"

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Abstract

The concept of a complex insurgency is a relatively new one, manifested by the phenomenon we are now witnessing in Afghanistan, and the unmistakable linkages to other struggles such as that ongoing in Iraq and elsewhere. This paper explores the concept of "Complex Insurgency", and seeks to explain why it differs from a more conventional insurgency. Throughout this paper, we will look at different definitions of insurgency and complex insurgency, then look at its linkage with radical Islam. It looks inside the roots of a South Asian "complex insurgency", addressing the Taliban phenomenon and the catalyst provided by the introduction of Al Qa'ida and the terrorism to the equation. Further, this paper explores the current home to the nexus of this "complex insurgency"—Pakistan's Tribal Belt, complicated by the role of Islamic religious schools (madrassahs) and the role of Pakistan's military in perpetuating the problem. President Musharraf of Pakistan faces significant challenges in orchestrating Pakistan's response, which is explored. Lastly, the paper offers some "food for thought", some considerations to be addressed in formulating a possible solution to this difficult problem. The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into this new form of insurgency, and provide some considerations for the formulation of a counter-insurgency strategy. It is not the intent of this paper to put forth solutions, but to frame the debate and perhaps stimulate further thought on combating this "complex insurgency".

Introduction

Globalization has become a dominant factor in all we understand, to include warfare. Anyone can access and use to their advantage the power of the Internet, spreading and reinforcing diverse ideologies and thoughts. World-wide financial mechanisms, diverse methods of communications, unparalleled access to information, are all tremendous tools. The power of this access is an underpinning capability of a new adversary. When this power becomes available to a group intent on overthrowing an existing system of government, or an existing order, it represents a new and complex threat. This has enabled the rise of a complex insurgency.

The concept of a complex insurgency is a relatively new one, manifested by the phenomenon we are now witnessing in Afghanistan, and the unmistakable linkages to other struggles such as that ongoing in Iraq and elsewhere. Granted, classic insurgency is not gone. Many countries throughout the world continue to struggle against indigenous, and in this context, simple insurgencies, each with their own characteristics. This paper will explore the concept of "Complex Insurgency", and seeks to explain why it differs from a more conventional insurgency, albeit briefly. The purpose of this paper is not to compare and contrast the two, but hopefully provide insight into this new, and increasingly pervasive form of insurgency, and how the international community might try to defeat it. Sadly, the complex insurgency active in Afghanistan, with its global reach, continues to frustrate efforts to isolate or defeat it—it, fact, it represents the greatest threat facing world order on both a regional and global scale.

The "complex insurgency" phenomenon is quite complex, and we will explore it, but the following thesis perhaps narrows the topic a bit to provide a useful framework for further discussion:

This study will attempt to demonstrate that the nexus of this complex insurgency, namely Islamic Extremism (or radicalism), currently lies in Pakistan's Tribal Belt, with the most visible manifestations in the ongoing struggles in Afghanistan and Iraq. The underlying religious thread of each struggle ties the complex insurgency together, an ideological bridge which demands coordination and cooperation to defeat a common enemy—in this case, the U.S., as the de facto leader of western efforts to corrupt and undermine the purity of Islam. It is important to understand that:

This insurgency, from its roots to what it is today, is something that was created by external powers, each, for their own reasons, acting in support of a national interest. The United States (U.S.), Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are the principal actors in this drama.

This battle will not be won in Afghanistan, yet there are specific areas on which efforts can be focused internal to the country that will enhance the chances of success. The broader solution, if there is one, resides with the U.S. and international community's ability to help Pakistan, (which must accept the responsibility to help itself) gain control of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Tribal Areas to eliminate a sanctuary for this complex insurgency, while preventing an Islamic revolution in Pakistan.

What is a complex insurgency and what is new about it? What are its characteristics and how does it differ from insurgencies of the past? Importantly, what is the context of its emergence and operations and why does its current geographic nexus further its effectiveness? What challenges face a counter-insurgency effort when confronting this new type of threat and how can it be defeated? Academic thought and literature is just now, in a post 9/11 world, beginning to address this new reality, and too little thought has been given to its characteristics and on ways to counter it. Because this topic has not been sufficiently studied or discussed by modern scholars and military thinkers, this paper attempts to further a dialogue to not only offer a better understanding of the phenomenon of complex-insurgency but also to provide some thoughts on how to possibly defeat or marginalize it.[1]

As suggested in the thesis for this paper, the complex insurgency we are exploring is that comprised of the Taliban, Al Qa'ida, and other elements residual to the Afghan struggle against the Soviet occupation from 1979-1989, but it also includes disparate elements active in Iraq focused on undermining efforts to establish a stable, democratic government in the wake of the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein. Each, it can be argued, have different goals, but their interests are not necessarily divergent. Radical Islam acts, in this case, as a global force of convergence that helps these different groups overcome their political, ideological and geographical differences to focus on a common

[1] For clarity, it should be noted that the issue examined here is not Islam (a far too vast topic and certainly not our purpose). The basis of this "complex insurgency" is the ideology rooted in an extremist or radical interpretation of the tenants of Islam, which is not supported by the majority of the worlds' Muslim population.

goal. What began for many as a struggle against communism in Afghanistan, has become a struggle against westernization or a pollution of Islamic purity. Yet, this complex insurgency needs a home, a safe-haven, and the current environment points to the tribal belt of Pakistan as the ideal location. We will attempt to outline the respective objectives of each group, where they diverge and where they find common ground.

This paper will elaborate on the above thesis through discussion in the following areas. First, a conceptual framework for reaching a refined definition of complex insurgency, looking at former definitions of insurgency from a couple of select works on the topic. Second, the paper looks into the genesis of the current problem by exploring the Afghan mujahadin struggle against Soviet influence and occupation as well as the rise of the Taliban phenomenon. Without a basic understanding of the "jihad" waged by Afghan and Pakistani fighters against the Soviet backed government in Kabul in 1978 and the subsequent Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, it is difficult to understand what fuels the current insurgency.

The paper then focuses on the dynamics behind the introduction of terrorism and terrorist elements to Afghanistan. It can be argued that without the "terrorism" component, the Afghan insurgency differs little from other more conventional insurgencies. The presence of Al Qa'ida in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the key factor in the fabric of the "complex insurgency" operating in and emanating from the region.
Next, the exigencies of Pakistan's "tribal areas" are addressed, focusing necessary attention on the role of Madrassahs and of the Pakistani military as part of the problem,

or instruments supporting a solution to the problem. Both played a role in forming the insurgency, and both play a role in perpetuating it. Understanding this dynamic provides insight to potential solutions.

Lastly, the paper addresses the numerous challenges facing the Pakistani government, and in particular Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, as well as some thoughts on successfully combating this "complex insurgency." President Musharraf can in no way act with impunity in implementing changes of policy or directing military operations within the volatile tribal regions of his country. Understanding the political and cultural construct within he must act is key in the formulation of any viable courses of action aimed at defeating this "complex insurgency." It concludes with commentary of the U.S., international community's and, in particular, Pakistan's failure to properly address the problem and offers some thoughts on possible solutions.

Part I: Conceptual Framework

1.1. Complex Insurgency Defined

It is conceptually helpful to this discussion to arrive at some refined explanation of what "complex insurgency" is or might be. If for no other reason, it provides a context for what differentiates it from other insurgencies. It will be argued that a complex insurgency is set apart from more conventional forms by its adaptability and agility in moving across numerous approaches or "lines of operation" to be successful. Currently,

the sanctuary provided in Pakistan's tribal belt provides the ideal environment to exercise training and planning necessary to execute this strategy.

It is useful to start with a basic definition of Insurgency, offered by Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, in a work done for the Strategic Studies Institute in November 1994. Insurgency "is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by quick seizure of power[2]." This is somewhat simplistic and unsatisfying, but a starting point. Any discussion of insurgency must recognize that it is complex by its very nature and no two insurgencies are the same. The United States Joint Publication JP 1-02 offers another definition: Insurgency is "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict[3]." This offers perhaps a more focused definition, identifying that insurgency is aimed at the overthrow of an established, and presumably legitimate, government. Neither aptly captures the intent of a complex insurgency, which, as we will see, has objectives which reach well beyond the overthrow of a government in Afghanistan, although this is certainly a goal for both the Taliban and its terrorist allies.

Insurgencies do share basic characteristics, as articulated in the recent U.S. Army Field Manual on Counterinsurgency. Insurgencies "normally seek to achieve one of two goals; to overthrow the existing social order and reallocate power within a single state, or to

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[2] Steven Metz and Raymond Miller, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response." *Monograph produced for Strategic Studies Institute, U.S Army War College*. Carlisle, PA. (November 2004): 2.

[3] Department of Defense, JP 1-02 *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C, 2007), 265.

break away from state control and form an autonomous entity or ungoverned space that they can control[4]." Clearly the Taliban seek the former objective, but as will be discussed further, their aim, and that of their allies within the insurgency, goes much further. The overarching goal of the Taliban, as stated by its leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, is not only to establish itself as the government of an Afghani caliphate[5], but to foster the spread of a radical Islamic ideology worldwide—and the defeat of America and its global influence is paramount. "This is not a matter of weapons. We are hopeful for God's help. The real matter is the extinction of America. And, God willing, it will fall to the ground[6]." From this it is clear that the aim of the Taliban's struggle is not simply ideological or religiously grounded. There is a political dynamic.

But what is a complex insurgency? John Mackinlay offers the following definition in his Whitehall Paper, "Defeating Complex Insurgency": "A complex insurgency is a campaign by globally dispersed activists and insurgents who seek to confront the culture and political ideals of a nation or group of nations that are seen to challenge their interests and way of life[7]." Mackinlay goes further in describing a virtual and transnational aspect of complex insurgency.

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[4] Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. (Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army, 2006), 1-2.

[5] A **caliphate** (from the Arabic خلافة or *khilaafah*), is the Islamic form of government representing the political unity and leadership of the Muslim world. The head of state's position *(Caliph)* is based on the notion of a successor to Prophet Muhammad's political authority; according to Sunnis ideally elected by the people or their representatives,[1] and according to the Shia an Imamate chosen from the Ahl ul-Bayt. From the time of Muhammad until 1924, successive caliphates were held by the Umayyad, Abbasid, and finally Ottoman dynasties. The caliphate is the only form of governance that has full approval in traditional Islamic theology, and "is the core political concept of Sunni Islam, by the consensus of the Muslim majority in the early centuries."[

[6] Review: People Profiles—Mullah Omar. *Aljazeera.com.* (January 2003): 2.

[7] Mackinlay, John. *"Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan."* RUSI Whitehall Paper 64. London: Stephen Austin & Sons Ltd, 2005): vii.

A "virtually organized insurgent structure, [would have] objectives in the virtual dimension: demoralize the populations of the contributing state; embolden the Muslim minorities within them; subvert the vulnerable; and galvanize the uncommitted to take action. Real life jihadists do not have such formal structures or deliberative approaches, but the natural energy of their movement and the proliferation of communication systems deliver many of these objectives for them in any case[8]."

Transnationally, "the global [complex] insurgent is an extremely modern phenomenon, a virus that has exploited global change, thrived in a networked environment and swiftly adapted to each new chapter of technical development, especially in the transfer and propagation of information[9]." This definition goes a good way toward describing the Pakistan-based complex insurgency, however; its objective is not to counter nations or groups of nations alone. Rather it seeks to counter and defeat opposing ideologies and re-establish an Islamic Caliphate . This is evidenced in a letter from Ayman Al Zawahiri, Al Qa'ida's leader second only to Osama Bin Laden, to the then leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the end-state envisioned goes well beyond Afghanistan. "If our intended goal in this age is the establishment of a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet and if we expect to establish its state predominantly-according to how it appears to us-in the heart of the Islamic world, then your efforts and sacrifices-God permitting-are a large step directly towards that goal[10]."

It is politically unpopular to characterize this insurgency as "Islamist", however; the reality is that this global movement is, in fact, rooted in radical Islam. The complex insurgency which is currently rooted in the tribal regions of Pakistan provides ideological

[8] Ibid. 37.
[9] Ibid. 19.
[10] English translation of Ayman Al-Zawahiri's letter to Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. *Weekly Standard.* (2005): 2.

fuel for loosely affiliated and non-affiliated, but sympathetic, home-grown extremist cells around the globe. It is in fact radical Islam, which provides the common thread that links like-minded insurgencies around the world, forming a global complex insurgency. It is capable, via current technologies, of advancing the ideology of extremism to an increasingly broader audience, providing a vast network for the infusion of money and other forms of support to the movement, and coordinating actions and attacks as part of a sophisticated plan to undermine western influence, first within the Muslim world, but ultimately the rest of the world community. The perpetrators of the March 2004 Madrid, Spain and 7 July 2005 London, U.K. bombings give evidence that while Afghanistan may be considered a central battleground upon which this insurgency operates, it's "theater of operations" is far more expansive[11].

But is there another definition or way of looking at this phenomenon? A consideration of the latest U.S. Field Manual on Counter-Insurgency may offer some insights. It provides a suggestion of a number of insurgent approaches: Conspiratorial, Military-focused, Urban, Protracted Popular War, Identity Focused and Composite/Coalition[12]. In the lexicon of many western militaries, these approaches could be considered "lines of operation, each with a different focus or area of emphasis. More conventional insurgencies might operate along one, possibly two, of such lines. This paper argues that the complex insurgency facing Coalition forces in Afghanistan, with connection to like elements in Iraq and elsewhere, spans every one of these approaches or lines of operation, some on a consistent basis, and others as the situation dictates. It is this adaptability and

[11] "Editorial: London Bombings." *Arab News.* (8 July 2005).
[12] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army, 2006. 1-5 – 1-8.

agile movement across lines that differentiate a complex insurgency from other ones. Here perhaps lies the flaw in current counterinsurgency efforts. While these complex insurgents wage their struggle at a strategic and global scale, counterinsurgency efforts are unfortunately limited to localized, operational and tactical level solutions.

1.2. Complex Insurgency Applied

As previously stated, this analysis of a complex insurgency focuses on the current global insurgent network rooted in radical or extremist Islam. This section looks at the application of the insurgent approaches identified in the U.S. Army Field Manual 34-2, "Counterinsurgency", to this complex insurgency to demonstrate that it has been seen to use each approach and many times, employ several of these approaches simultaneously in efforts to defeat counterinsurgency forces and achieve its overarching goals.

The Taliban phenomenon is discussed to a necessary degree later, but it is obvious that following initial successes, Taliban leadership adopted the conspiratorial approach to seizing power in Afghanistan. "A conspiratorial approach involves a few leaders and a militant cadre or activist party seizing control of government structures or exploiting a revolutionary situation[13]." Success on the battlefield led to an expansion of goals, from local stabilization to country-wide dominance, imposing a Taliban interpretation of Islamic order[14]. As military successes continued, the Taliban increasingly incorporated

[13] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army. (2006): 1-5.
[14] Matinuddin, Kamal. "*The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 34.

elements of Al Qa'ida into its "conspiracy". This linkage will be examined in more detail later in the paper.

The Taliban, in a very Afghan fashion, initially used a very military-focused approach to seizing power. "Users of military-focused approaches aim to create revolutionary possibilities or seize power primarily by applying military force[15]." The movement still uses this method to further the insurgency within Afghanistan, when the opportunity presents itself, but it has, by necessity, become more sophisticated in its methods. This is a direct response to the Taliban's military defeat in 2001 and a realization that a purely military insurgency is no longer viable, given the superior military capabilities of U.S. and coalition forces conducting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), as well as the multi-national forces of the NATO-led International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). It is a characteristic of the modern military environment that few, if any, countries or non-state actors can hope to fight and win a conventional test of arms against the U.S. or a coalition involving the U.S. For this reason, irregular or asymmetric approaches to warfare are increasingly the norm. The complex insurgency is a necessary evolution predicated on this reality.

For this reason, the Taliban and its supporters have adopted, as part of a greater strategy, an urban-terror approach. "The urban-terror approaches uses terrorist tactics in urban areas to—sow disorder, incite sectarian violence, weaken the government, intimidate the population, kill government and opposition leaders, fix and intimidate police and military

[15] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army. (2006): 1-5.

forces, and create government repression[16]." This reveals a connection between the South Asian elements of the insurgency and the broader struggle which has developed many technological innovations used for urban terror in Iraq. Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Car Bombings, and Suicide Bombers where not common tactics in Afghanistan prior to the war in Iraq, yet these methods have been imported from the broader "global insurgency", inflicting horrific casualties among members of OEF, ISAF, Afghan government officials, and the ever-suffering civilian population[17]. This is among the most obvious examples pointing to a linkage: between the insurgency in Afghanistan; the insurgency in Iraq which is typified by sectarian friction and violence as a means of undermining the authority of the Shi'a dominated fledgling government; and the global radical Islamist movement, all of which comprise this new complex insurgency.

After the Coalition attacks on Afghanistan in 2001 and the subsequent defeat of Taliban and Al Qa'ida forces, both have adopted a version of the protracted popular war methodology espoused and practiced by Mao Zedong in China, to combat a militarily superior coalition presence in Afghanistan. In Mao's own words, "the first stage covers the period of the enemy's strategic offensive and our strategic defensive. The second stage will be the period of the enemy's strategic consolidation and our preparation for the counter-offensive. The third stage will be the period of our strategic counter-offensive

[16] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army. (2006): 1-6.
[17] Rubin, Barnett R. "Saving Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 86 Issue 1 (January/February 2007): 57-58.

and the enemy's strategic retreat[18]." This again reflects on the reality that a conventional military struggle to defeat U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere is firmly recognized by the leadership of the insurgency, hence the introduction of different strategies and tactics.

A tendency toward adoption of this doctrine has been articulated in recent Al Qa'ida statements[19]. However, there has been a modern adaptation to Mao's construct. As a classic insurgency, the Taliban's first stage ended with their defeat by coalition forces in 2001, yet the complex insurgency of which it is a part, continues activities that clearly hint of stage three operations. As a whole, the insurgency can most closely be associated with Mao's stage two preparations for the counter-offensive. Given the current circumstances, and assuming the commitment of the international community will continue (which is in no way assured), it is likely that the complex insurgency threatening President Karzai's government in Kabul and that of Prime Minister Maliki in Iraq, will continue in this phase for some time to come. Yet, the global capabilities of a complex insurgency as evidenced today indicate that it can also move between these stages, something that sets it apart from a classical insurgency.

The Taliban and Al Qa'ida insurgency efforts against any sitting government in Kabul have always been identity-focused, the fourth approach suggested by the U.S. Counter-insurgency manual. "The identity-focused approach mobilizes support based on the

[18] Tse-tung, Mao. *"On Protracted War."* From Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung; Vol. II, pp. 113-194. Foreign Language Press: Peking. (1967): 136-137.
[19] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army, 2006. 1-6.

common identity of religious affiliation, clan, tribe, or ethnic group. Some movements may be based on an appeal to a religious identity, either separately from or as part of other identities[20]." Afghanistan and Iraq are countries which exemplify the complexities of ethnic, tribal and religious forces that influence the loyalties and actions of the populace. This is strongest in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, which are dominated by the Pashtun tribes, members of which continue to constitute the overwhelming majority of the original Taliban movement. The fierce independence of the Pashtun tribes has plagued all would-be rulers of Afghanistan, and because the Pashtun tribal areas extend well into Pakistan, they have historically represented a troublesome influence on the government of Pakistan. This dynamic is explored further later in the paper.

Evident in both Afghanistan and in Iraq, this complex insurgency uses composite approaches and coalitions to further its aims. As mentioned earlier, there is ample evidence that lessons learned in Iraq have influenced a change of tactics in Afghanistan. As noted by retired U.S. Army General Barry McCaffrey following a visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2007, there has been a 700% increase in attacks employing Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and 140 suicide bombings in 2006[21]. Prior to 2006, suicide bombings were virtually unheard of in Afghanistan, even during the protracted struggle against the Soviets[22]. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the insurgency has evolved and introduced increasing more lethal asymmetric threats while capitalizing on the reach of

[20] United States. Department of the Army. FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5) *Counterinsurgency*. Washington, D.C.: HQ Department of the Army. (2006): 1-8.
[21] McCaffrey, Barry R. "After Action Report: Visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan 16-23 February 2007". (26 February 200.7): 3
[22] Rashid, Ahmed. "Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning?" *Current History* (January 2007): 17.

global communications to foster cooperation and coordination amongst the entities comprising the complex insurgency[23]. Likewise, the Taliban and Al Qa'ida shift tactics and engage in coalitions of convenience when it serves a purpose. For instance, Gulbuddin Hetmakyar, like Mullah Omar a former mujahadin commander, but no friend of the Taliban prior to 2001, is allowed to operate from the same sanctuary in the Pakistani tribal belt because he and his followers are determined to undermine the legitimacy and authority of the Karzai government in Kabul[24].

So what does this mean? It is clear from this analysis that "complex insurgency" in this context, is one which exhibits characteristics of all of the various approaches identified in FM 3-24, shifting emphasis between each depending upon the opportunities the tactical, operational and strategic situation presents. This complex insurgency operates at all three levels, understanding and seizing upon gaps in coalition efforts. The adaptability and agility demonstrated by the various elements of the insurgency reinforces the argument concerning the difficulty faced by the U.S. and the international community on how to defeat it.

This offers another definition of "complex insurgency". A complex insurgency, aimed at removing a legitimate government in a particular country, which also has a goal of forwarding a global promulgation of a particular ideology, is a very adaptable and agile adversary, empowered by innovative applications of technology and global

[23] Rubin, Barnett R. "Saving Afghanistan." *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 86 Issue 1 (January/February 2007): 57-58.
[24] Rashid, Ahmed. "Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning?" *Current History* (January 2007): 19.

communications, capable of operating along multiple lines of operation simultaneously, depending upon strategic, operational and tactical situations. It exploits the Global Information Environment to coordinate efforts across a wide geographic area, to coordinate insurgent efforts, while reinforcing and spreading an underlying ideology, unencumbered by law and rules which constrain and restrain counterinsurgency forces.

Part II: Complex Insurgency Applied

2.1. The Roots of the Complex Insurgency

This section provides an analysis of the roots of the complex insurgency, exploring how the current global radical Islamist movement began. Its beginnings are unmistakably a product of the struggle against Communist influence upon and later occupation of Afghanistan by forces of the Soviet Union, which spanned the 1980's. Examination of this period and the roles of the various actors demonstrate how and why the tribal belt of Pakistan came to provide the seemingly impenetrable sanctuary the current insurgent movement enjoys. The following discussion explains the roles of each of these external powers, and how the infusion of weapons, material, training, technology, and vast amounts of money to the mujahadin laid the foundation for the complex insurgency we know today.

It must be recognized that on many levels, the U.S. and its allies are combating a phenomenon which the U.S., Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia created. As noted by Brigadier

General Vijay Singh of the Indian Army in 2001, one of the more frightful aspects of the current insurgency which began during the years of combating the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is the "chilling transformation of a purely defensive mobilization of the religious orthodoxy to one of offensive religious fundamentalism with pan-Islamic overtones, capable of conducting global terrorism.[25]" For Pakistan's part, as will be explored further, this is a problem which has in many respects, come "home to roost". It is Pakistan's and the international community's inability to effectively address this problem which will, unless things change, ensure the survival of the complex insurgency.

It should be recognized that it has always been difficult to unite an Afghan people comprised of a diverse mix of ethnic, tribal and religious identities and beliefs. In fact, it has often been said that the o82s alt ttruo82o unitn Afghs re

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Khan in 1978 was fractured and the various Islamic "parties" were often at odds with each other. It was the Soviet invasion on 1979 that galvanized Afghani and Islamic opposition to the Communist, and decidedly un-Islamic, influences that the government and the occupiers represented.

The current complex insurgency indicates that the struggle against Communism has simply been displaced by a struggle to eliminate western or non-Islamic presence and influence in historic Muslim domains. Yet while the mujahadin jihad against the Soviets was very much focused within the geographic confines of Afghanistan, the new complex insurgent movement seeks to combat and eradicate western influence throughout the Muslim world---and as evidenced by recent terrorist attacks in America, the United Kingdom and Spain, among others---to further the cause globally.

The indigenous Afghan opposition and the Arabic and other Muslim support that flocked to the cause in the early months and years of the "jihad" against the Soviets, would, however, probably have ultimately failed in their desire to expel the invaders. It simply did not have access to the necessary resources to conduct a protracted struggle against the sophisticated, well-equipped and trained forces of one of the two cold-war superpowers. Outside assistance was needed and for a variety of reasons, some simple and some complex, Pakistan, the United States and Saudi Arabia (the big three) saw great opportunity in assisting the mujahadin combat the Soviets. We'll explore briefly some of these reasons as context for our argument that the current insurgency is, in fact, something created by these "helpful" external powers.

The role of Pakistan is particularly important, because the infrastructure that provided manpower, training, sanctuary and materiel support to the mujahadin during the 1980's is the same infrastructure underpinning the current complex insurgency, yet it has evolved over time and become more capable, both in its ability to supply the movement with the tools of war and, perhaps more importantly, in providing a seemingly endless supply of manpower eager to fight for the cause.

When the Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan in late April 1978, Pakistan had been under the military rule of General Zia ul-Haq for a little less than a year.[27] Pakistan's options on what to possibly do about the problem, according to Robert Wirsing, "presented Zia and his advisors with Pakistan's most formidable foreign policy problem.[28]" He sums up Zia's decision to become involved as three-fold: to defend the integrity of the Afghan/Pakistan border which has historically been a source of tremendous animosity and distrust[29]; to mitigate the severity of any Soviet threat to Pakistan, either military or political; and lastly, Zia saw an opportunity to gain better access benefits deriving from improved relations with the west, and particularly, the United States.[30]

[27] Wirsing, Robert G. *"Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 1977-1988: The Policy Imperatives of a Peripheral Asian State."* New York: St. Martin's Press, (1991): 27.
[28] Ibid.
[29] The 1510-mile western border of Pakistan, often referred to as the Durand Line. This will be discussed further when looking more closely at the Tribal Areas of western Pakistan.
[30] Wirsing. 28.

The U.S, as discussed in so many published works, seeing an opportunity to counter Soviet influence in what was perceived as a vital South Asian region, chose to undertake the most extensive covert operation in the history to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Pakistan provided the best inroad for such an operation, and Pakistan's military ruler, President Zia, a devout Islamist, proved to be an ardent supporter[31]. He may, in fact, have been the pivotal player in support of the jihad, a strategy he apparently embraced slowly over time, yet without his support for the movement, as noted by Steve Coll in his book "Ghost Wars", it stood little chance of succeeding[32] Under Zia, a vast proliferation of madrassahs began, with state support underpinned with religious zeal[33]. Unchecked even now, the madrassahs of the tribal region flourish. This will be examined in more detail later in the paper.

U.S. support started small, with flows of unsophisticated arms and supplies, but later there was the introduction of more advanced military capability, most notably, the provision of the STINGER anti-aircraft missile to the mujahadin in the summer of 1986[34]. The decision to provide this sophisticated weapon resulted from recognition that changing Soviet tactics were beginning to have significant effect against the freedom fighters. The Soviet Special Forces (SPETZNAZ), supported by attack helicopters were beginning to have tremendous success combating the mujaheddin, targeting not only Afghan fighter positions in country, but also training camps in and fighter and supply

[31] Coll, Steve. "Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001." New York: The Penguin Press, (2004): 61..
[32] Ibid. 61.
[33] "Pakistan's Religion and Madrassahs." *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*. (January 2005): 12-13.
[34] Cooley, John. "*Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*." London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, (2002): 144..

convoys from Pakistan. The effect on the anti-communist insurgency was devastating, causing huge casualties and impacting the morale of the mujaheddin. The first success with the STINGER was the shoot down of Soviet helicopters in September 1986, with the mujahadin enjoying tremendous success over the next ten months[35]. This introduction of the STINGER could be credited with turning the tide of an ever increasing Soviet advantage in the conflict and played a significant role in the eventual withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan on 15 February1989[36]. Later, the U.S. realized that the remaining STINGER missiles in the hands of various Mujaheddin factions posed a precarious problem, and initiated a program to try and "buy" them back.[37] Despite the relative success of the buy-back program, details of which are undoubtedly classified, "the world is awash with these STINGER-type missiles, including ones made in the United States, Russia, China, the former Yugoslavia, and North Korea, and many more may have gotten loose during the fighting in Iraq[38]." This is a good example of the access to sophisticated military weaponry which adds to the lethality of the global "complex insurgency".

Saudi Arabia had several reasons for becoming involved in the Afghan jihad, some religious, others more pragmatically rooted in security and economics. The Saudi ruling family "viewed Soviet communism as heresy. A Soviet drive toward the Persian Gulf threatened the Saudi elite's oil wealth. Leading Saudi princes embraced the American

[35] Cooley, John. "*Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*." London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, (2002): 144.
[36] Coll, Steve. "Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001." New York: The Penguin Press. (2004): 185.
[37] Ibid. 12-13.
[38] Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *"The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America."* Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York, (2003): 477.

view of Pakistan as a frontline state in the worldwide effort to contain Soviet ambitions[39]." Like the U.S., the Saudi's viewed Pakistan as the best conduit for providing support to the anti-Soviet jihad[40]. Millions of dollars of support flowed to the mujahadin, from a variety of sources, much of which was invisible to the U.S. They enriched mujaheddin fighters to further their own interests, funding jihad leaders that are engaged in the insurgency plaguing Afghanistan today. And there is no reason to believe that funding has ceased. Saudi Arabia still is invested in the proliferation of the austere fundamentalist Wahhabist Sunni ideology that underpins Saudi society, and which is embraced by many of the complex insurgency, including Osama bin Laden and others. The thinly veiled Saudi Arabian support for the goals of the complex insurgency is something that will need to be addressed in the development of any efforts to defeat the movement.

2.2. The Taliban

Much has been said about the rise of the phenomenon we now know as the Taliban. To understand the current complex insurgency, we must examine the past and present roles of the Taliban within Afghanistan. As the most visible element of the broader insurgency, the Taliban is largely misunderstood. Arriving on the scene in 1994, the Taliban essentially began as a reaction to the lawlessness and warlordism that defined Afghanistan in the aftermath of the jihad that forced the Soviet withdrawal from the

[39] Coll, Steve. "Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001." New York: The Penguin Press. (2004): 72.
[40] Ibid. 81.

country[41]. As for the initial acceptance, or acquiescence on the part of Afghani's to the Taliban, the fundamental desire of the Afghan population is peace, or an elimination of the turmoil that plagued the country, particularly following the withdrawal of Soviet forces. This is what made the "Taliban solution" attractive. Despite the introduction of draconian Islamic practices under the Taliban, they were largely successful in eradicating the lawlessness and warlordism that preyed upon the people of Afghanistan.

By all accounts the Taliban had "humble" beginnings, taking advantage of a chaotic situation and stepping in to fill a void. A civil war raged after the collapse of a loose coalition government comprised of mujaheddin leaders and the country was gripped by anarchy. It is said that Mullah Omar reacted to the abdication and intended rape of young boys and girls in Kandahar by a local warlord. He gathered other Islamic students (Talib) and freed the children, hanging the warlord and his accomplices. This is but one of the popular tales surrounding the birth of the Taliban movement.[42]

There is no evidence that Mullah Omar began his movement with intent to take control of Afghanistan, much less having the world-view now espoused by the Taliban, yet he and those that flocked to follow him did envision a purpose of the movement. The immediate goals of the newly-formed organization were to: (1) disarm all rival militia, (2) fight against those who did not accept their request to give up weapons, (3) enforce Islamic

[41] Rashid, Ahmed. "*Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*." New Haven & New York: Yale University Press, 2001. 22.
[42] Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *"The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America."* Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York. (2003): 135.

laws in the areas they 'liberated', and (4) retain all areas the Taliban captured[43]." The movement, fueled by a very fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, enjoyed early and repeated success combating the numerous warlords controlling the south of Afghanistan. As the movement fought to cleanse Afghanistan of non-Islamic influences, the south of the country quickly fell under their control. At this point, Omar might have taken on a bigger vision, seeking to bring all of Afghanistan under a fundamentalist Islamic structure, governed by a strict Islamic interpretation of the Koran and Sharia. From this we can draw the conclusion that the initial aims of the Taliban movement were focused internal to Afghanistan, and measured by their assessment of what they could reasonably achieve. The course of events, however, made the prospect of establishing a Taliban government to rule Afghanistan viable.

Despite the military defeat suffered at the hands of the U.S.-led coalition in late-2001, the fact remains that the Taliban insurgent movement has not been defeated and it is not going away. There is little chance (rather no chance) of a negotiated reconciliation between the Taliban and an Afghani government which is viewed as a puppet of the U.S. and which exerts little effective governance outside of the capital, Kabul. If the current sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal region, this "nexus of the complex insurgency", is not denied them, the Taliban will plague Afghanistan and Pakistan for years to come.

2.3. Al Qa'ida and the Terrorist Presence in Afghanistan

[43] Matinuddin, Kamal. "*The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*." Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2002): 26.

"Armies achieve victory only when the infantry takes and holds land--Likewise, the mujahid Islamic movement will not triumph against the world coalition unless it possesses a fundamentalist base in the heart of the Muslim world."

Ayman al-Zawahiri[44]

This statement by Ayman al-Zawahiri, widely recognized as the second most influencial leader of Al Qa'ida, does not negate the thesis of this paper that the current nexus of the complex insurgency is in Pakistan's tribal belt. It does, however, identify recognition that for the movement to survive and flourish, it requires a secure sanctuary in a predominately Muslim land, which is sympathetic to its cause. Afghanistan prior to coalition attacks and defeat of the Al Qa'ida and the Taliban simply drove them elsewhere. If this is denied to them, the movement will go elsewhere, with Iraq looking most promising, of late.

From this current safehaven, Al Qa'ida is free to recruit, train, and equip its members and plan attacks against western influence and presence in the Muslim world. Prior to the U.S. led coalition defeat of the Taliban, Afghanistan provided that sanctuary. Today, Al Qa'ida enjoys similar sanctuary in the tribal region of Pakistan, harbored by a predominately Pashtun population which openly professes reverence toward and support for Osama Bin Laden and his worldview.

The marriage of the Taliban and Al Qa'ida began, perhaps, as one of convenience, something that is being embraced by extremists around the globe. The Taliban was not

[44] Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *"The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America."* Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York. (2003): 134.

at its inception a terrorist organization, but it assumed control of a country already rife with terrorist elements, most rooted in the jihad against the Soviets. This could have taken many turns, yet Taliban leader Mullah Omar chose, post 9/11, to defy western demands and provide sanctuary for these elements, including Osama Bin Laden and Al Qa'ida. Pashtun tradition and the fact that during the late 1990's Bin Laden married Omar's oldest daughter both undoubtedly played a part in this decision.[45]

While the Pakistani Islamist party, the Muslim Brotherhood inspired Jamaat-I Islami, since the beginning of the anti-Soviet jihad, brought many Arab fighters to the cause; Saudi Arabia was directly involved via "the largest private recruitment organization, Al Qa'ida, based in Peshawar, Pakistan, financed by the Saudi intelligence service headed by Prince Turki al-Faisal.[46] Traveling to Afghanistan during the earliest days of the mujaheddin struggle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Osama Bin Laden, helping to administer Al Qa'ida, used personal wealth and ideological association to establish lasting contacts with various mujaheddin factions, the Pakistani ISI and non-Afghan Arabs fighting in Afghanistan.[47] Thus upon his return in 1996, Bin Laden had many friends and supporters in both countries.

As noted in the quote by Al-Zawahiri above, Al Qa'ida sought a sanctuary from which to expand the movement, recruit and train followers, and further its aim of re-establishing

[45] Cooley, John. "*Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*." London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press. (2002): 203.
[46] Ibid. 109.
[47] Griffin, Michael. *"Reaping the Whirlwind: Afghanistan, Al Qa'ida and the Holy War."* Revised Edition. London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, 2003: 110.

the caliphate on behalf of the Muslim world. Bin Laden thought he had found such a place in Sudan, but he and the government of Sudan came to have divergent views. Sudan expelled Bin Laden and his followers and Bin Laden reluctantly returned to Afghanistan in May 1996.[48]

Simply put, Osama Bin Laden, no longer welcome in Sudan, needed a place to go. Mullah Omar and the Taliban needed money and fighters, both of which Bin Laden could provide. Bin Laden also brought connectivity to a world-wide network of resources, including access to technology unknown in Afghanistan. Al Qa'ida gave the Taliban access to modernity, and the Taliban gave Bin Laden and his follower's the fundamentalist base they required to continue their jihad against the non-Muslim world

This alliance between Al Qa'ida and the Taliban constitutes the emergence of a complex insurgency, bringing together the Taliban's local insurgent movement within Afghanistan and Bin Laden's more expansive goals of "larger jihads to come against the impious Arab governments which, he felt, were beholden to the corrupt and satanic United States[49]".

2.4. Pakistan and the Tribal Belt

One of the key aspects of Afghan history is the role played by ethnic groups, families and tribes. Geographic borders have little significance compared to the enduring tribal relationships that span them, such as those that cross between Afghanistan and Pakistan.[50]

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[48] Benjamin, Daniel and Steven Simon. *"The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America."* Random House Trade Paperbacks: New York. (2003): 134-135.
[49] Cooley, John. "*Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*." London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, (2002): 203.
[50] "Tribal Structures and Demographics in Afghanistan." *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst* (March 2006): 1.

The section provides a description of the tribal belt of Pakistan, the Northwest Frontier province and what are known as the Federally Tribal Areas (FATA), and explains why this area is ideal as a sanctuary or "nexus" for the complex insurgencies administration, recruitment of new fighters, and base for planning continued operations against the counterinsurgency forces of OEF and ISAF, as well as future attacks against Al Qa'ida's enemies in Arab countries and the west.

What is now known as the western border region of Pakistan, and often referred to as the tribal belt, is also reputed to be one of the most difficult areas in the world for a colonial or other governing power to control. The last great power to attempt to control the fiercely independent, largely Pashtun tribes that have historically inhabited the area which is now the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan and the easternmost of Pakistan's four provinces, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, were the British, who suffered two horrific defeats at the hands of these tribes in 1839 and 1878.[51] What became known as the Durand Line, named after the British Foreign Secretary or the colonial government in India in 1893, Sir Mortimer Durand, was a line roughly demarcating a border that would separate the British colony of India from Afghanistan and the people the British had probably by this time come to accept as indomitable.[52] One could argue that the demarcation was somewhat arbitrary, using the very mountainous terrain typifying much of the border area adjacent the NWFP as a natural feature on which to establish a border. However, the Durand Line cuts directly

[51] Weaver, Mary Anne. *Pakistan: In the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002: 59.
[52] Ibid. 59-60.

through a region previously known as Pashtunistan, for its dominant and independent tribes. It can be argued equally well that the demarcation was an attempt to fracture the cohesiveness of the tribal confederation, thereby weakening its threat to centralized rule in Afghanistan and Pakistan[53]. The fact that Pakistan, and in particular, Afghanistan have never recognized the legitimacy of the Durand Line as the official border between the two countries has been an enduring source of animosity that continues to exacerbate historically poor relations.[54]

The NWFP and, in particular the FATA, have been virtually bereft of governmental control, since Pakistan's partition from India in 1947. What control exists is delivered through "colonial era administration and judicial systems unsuited to modern governance[55]. The tribal belt is in reality governed by tribal and religious leaders, most of whom are sympathetic to the Taliban cause[56]. Many are beholden to Al Qa'ida for generous monetary grants[57] and are obligated to harbor these elements through Pashtun or Pakhtun tribal code (Pakhtunwali)[58]. This was not insignificant in Mullah Omar's

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[53] Zissis, Carin. "The Tribal Areas of Pakistan." *Council on Foreign Relations*. (9 November 2006). Journal on-line; available from http://www.cfr.org/publication/11973/tribal_areas_of_pakistan.html; Internet; accessed 17 January 2007: 2.

[54] Wirsing, Robert G. *"Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 1977-1988: The Policy Imperatives of a Peripheral Asian State."* New York: St. Martin's Press, (1991): 28

[55] "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militant." International Crisis Group. (11 December 2006): *i*.

[56] Rashid, Ahmed. "Who's Winning the War on Terror? *YaleGlobal*. (5 September 2003): 2.

[57] "How Al-Qaeda Bankrolls Terrorism." *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*. (May 2005): 13..

[58] پښتونولي Pakhtunwali (Pakhtun waala) This is an unwritten code controlling, guiding and balancing, to large extent, the form, character and discipline of the Pathan way of life. It is the name of the traditional customary law, which has been adopted by Pathans from times immemorial. This code requires as Afghan to defend his motherland, to grand asylum to fugitives irrespective of their creed or caste to take revenge, mostly more and harsher than mere Qisas, to offer protection, even to his deadly enemy, and wipe out insult with insult. And above all, death to anyone who molests his woman. These values are embodied in Pakhtunwali, which literally means Nang-i-Pakhtun, the way of the Pakhtun. At the same time these traits are true reflections of Islam but since Pathans claim their origin well before the advent of Islam, it can safely be surmised that the Pathan is a Muslim by virtue of his very blood.

refusal to turn over Osama Bin Laden, a non-Pashtun, in the face of U.S. demands in late 2001.

In fact, the tribal belt of Pakistan is the perfect sanctuary for the Taliban, Al Qa'ida and other groups that espouse a like ideology. In September 2007, the UN special representative for Afghanistan described to the Security Council a very organized insurgency with "five distinct leadership centers.[59]" In addition to three Taliban commands, there are an additional two under former mujahadin commanders and Taliban allies, Gulbuddin Hetmakyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani.[60] U.S. and NATO intelligence estimates both contend that all of the leaders of these various "fronts" enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan.[61]

In a sense, the diverse inhabitants of the NWFP in particular, and Balochistan to a somewhat lesser degree, represent somewhat of a here-to-fore slow simmering insurgency, with tribal and religious factions that impact broader political decisions and elections through threats of either direct action against the government or by their ability to put large mobs of people onto the streets of many major cities, with the possibility of broader unrest. The October 2002 elections bode poorly for Musharraf's efforts to reduce support for the Taliban and Al Qa'ida within the tribal regions. An alliance party, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), formed from the countries six major sectiarian parties, following unprecedented electoral success for a religious party in Pakistan, now controls

[59] Rashid, Ahmed. "Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning?" *Current History* (January 2007): 18-19.
[60] Ibid. 19.
[61] Ibid. 19.

the government of the NWFP and shares power with the more centrist "pro-military Muslim League – Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q) in Baluchistan.[62] Given a decidedly anti-U.S. stance, the MMA promises to cause Musharraf considerable problems enacting any reforms it does not support. The challenges facing President Musharraf are addressed further in a later section of the paper.

Ahmed Rashid, a noted expert and frequent writer on the Taliban, Al Qa'ida, Pakistan nexus, sums up the current situation in his January 2007 article in the publication "Current History":

Since 9-11 the Pakistani military and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) have deliberately allowed "talibanization" to take place along the 1,600-mile-long Pakistan-Afghanistan border, both sides of which are populated by Pashtun tribes. Tens of thousands of Afghan Taliban retreated into Pakistan after their defeat in 2001. The radical Islamic schools and parties in Pakistan, which had supported their cause since 1994, gave them shelter. And they were joined by Pakistani Taliban, young Pashtun men who had been indoctrinated by the same madrassas. Today, hundreds of Pakistani Taliban join in attacks inside Afghanistan.[63]

Without direct and concerted Pakistani governmental intervention in the tribal areas, which will require both a subtle hand and significant external assistance, the complex insurgency will continue to flourish in this volatile region. Counterinsurgency efforts are significantly hampered by the fact that this region is located within the boundaries of a sovereign state, which is considered by the U.S. to be a vital ally in the war on terror. Intervention by external counterinsurgency forces in the tribal region to locate and

[62] "Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military." International Crisis Group: ICG Asia Report No. 49; Islamabad, Brussels. (20 March 2003): *i*.
[63] Rashid, Ahmed. "Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning?" *Current History* (January 2007): 18.

dismantle the various elements of the insurgency would almost certainly be met by open revolt and local tribal resistance along side Taliban and Al Qa'ida elements. Likewise, external intervention in Pakistan could provide the catalyst for coalescing many Islamist factions in a concerted effort to remove Musharraf from power and establish a true Islamic state based on very fundamentalist interpretations of the Koran and a strict adherence to Sharia law.

2.5. The Madrassah Factor

This section explores one aspect of Islam that has received considerable attention from the world media and one which is the source of grave concern to the U.S. administration and other western governments—the madrassah and its role in the teaching and proliferation of extremist Islam[64]. While not exclusive to the Islam of the South Asian region, this paper focuses on the madrassahs of Pakistan's tribal belt, those operating in the NWFP and FATA, and to a somewhat lesser degree, the Pakistani province of Balochistan.

"Beginning with the establishment of the Deoband Madrassa in 1867 [in India]—the madrassa system has played an important historical role by preserving the orthodox tradition of Islam in the wake of the downfall of Muslim political power; by training generations of Islamic religious scholars and functionaries; by providing vigorous religio-political leadership; and more importantly by reawakening the consciousness of Islamic solidarity and the Islamic way of life among the Muslims of South Asia[65]."

[64] A madrassah is an Islamic school. Certainly not a Pakistani or South Asian phenomenon, over the years madrassahs have provided

[65] Ahmad Mumtaz. "Madrassa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh." *Global Web Post*. 101-102.

Post 9/11, the Madrassah system, particularly the one operating in Pakistan, has increasingly been viewed as the breeding ground of Islamic extremism, providing radical Islamic students who are readily recruited into the ranks of the Taliban, Al Qa'ida and similar extremist groups[66]. This is certainly true of the hundred's of madrassah's which have proliferated in Pakistan's tribal regions since the beginning of the Afghan jihad against the Soviets, a fact admitted by Mumtaz Ahmad in his exploration of the role of madrassah's in educating young students on jihad and extremist interpretations of Islam. But he also provides a context for the development of this phenomenon:

"Most of the madrassas associated with militancy and terrorism after the mid-1990s were established in the 1980s—the point is that they were not the institutions originally conceived as madrassa that later turned into terrorist training camps; they were, from their very inception, conceived as militant training camps and were given a cover of a madrassa to Islamically legitimize their operations and to solicit funds from all over the Muslim world. The story of these madrassas is thus integrally linked with the story of Afghan jihad of the 1980s and of the Cold War that created the political conditions for this jihad[67]

It must be noted, however, that the madrassah provides a valuable social and educational service in a country where the public education system was allowed to atrophy to the point of ineffectiveness. Madrassah's have historically taken in the poor and disenfranchised, providing accommodations, food and other basic needs, as well as an education, which is based on Qur'anic lessons and Arabic texts[68].

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[66] Riaz, Ali. "Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassahs in Pakistan." *Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies*. (August 2005): 1,4.
[67] Mumtaz Ahmad, "Madrassa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh," in *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia,* ed. Robert Wirsing and Mohan Malik, 101-118 (Honolulu: APCSS, 2004), 115.
[68] "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military." International Crisis Group; ICG Asia Report No. 36; Islamabad, Brussels. (29 July 2002): 3.

President Musharraf has had little success in reforming the Madrassah system in Pakistan despite his stated program for reform[69], and the schools located throughout the country continue to educate Pakistani youth in the spirit of jihad.

2.6. The Role of Pakistan's Military

To understand the role Pakistan's military now plays in both supporting the Taliban and its reported efforts to capture or kill Al Qa'ida elements operating in Pakistan in support of the "Global War on Terror, as pledged by President Musharraf[70], it is important to understand both the history of its involvement in the Afghan jihad of the 1980s and its historical relationship with Pakistan's religious conservative elements.

The military, since the country's formation in 1947, has been the instrument of central control, guardian of the state and defender of the Islamic Pakistan against its Hindu neighbor, India. "The religious right is, therefore, the military's natural ally.[71] This alliance is not a comforting reality, as the ultra-conservative Islamist political factions within Pakistan, such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F), are the same groups which were ardent supporters of the Afghan mujahadin, currently provide sanctuary to the Taliban, Al Qa'ida and other elements of the complex insurgency, but also represent an ongoing, simmering opposition to efforts

[69] "Pakistan: Teacher, Don't Leave Them Kids Alone." The Economist. April 7 -13. 42.
[70] Musharraf, Pervez. "President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan 's Address to the Coalition," Headquarters, US Central Command, 19 September 2005.
[71] "Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military." International Crisis Group: ICG Asia Report No. 49; Islamabad, Brussels. (20 March 2003): 2.

on the part of President Musharraf to enact reforms—most importantly in the madrassah system and the governance of the NWFP and tribal areas.

Pakistani Military support for the Taliban is deeply rooted in its principal role in orchestrating Pakistan's materiel and ideological support to the Mujahadin factions fighting against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan's military "provided the guerrilla forces with sanctuary, unrestricted access to the refugee camps for recruitment, and almost complete freedom of movement across the international border—it imparted intelligence, training in weapons, as well as operational and logistical support to the guerrillas[72]." The military's intelligence wing, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate was, and some still contend, is at the forefront of past and continuing support to first, select party factions, and since at least 1995, the Taliban.

Part II: The State of Play and Musharraf's Challenge

"President Pervez Musharraf finds himself squeezed between U.S. demands to control militants in the tribal lands and opposition from his own Army against fighting the region's predominately ethnic Pashtuns, who have strongly resisted Pakistani rule just as they fought British control during colonial times."

Carin Zissis[73]

President General Pervez Musharraf seized power in Pakistan from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 12 October 1999, following an attempt by Sharif to oust Musharraf from his powerful position as Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff, always a significantly

[72] Wirsing, Robert G. *"Pakistan's Security Under Zia, 1977-1988: The Policy Imperatives of a Peripheral Asian State."* New York: St. Martin's Press, (1991): 54.
[73] Zissis, Carin. "The Tribal Areas of Pakistan." *Council on Foreign Relations*. (9 November 2006): 1.

influential position in a country that has experienced military rule several times since its inception in 1947. Despite his tremendous popularity and support within the military, Musharraf was confronted immediately by the diverse social and political forces that make Pakistan an instable, relatively poor and ever-struggling country. He faces long-standing internal unrest, which has only been exacerbated by his September 2001 pronouncement that Pakistan would support U.S. efforts in the war on terrorism.

The Afghanistan that existed when the U.S. began combat operations against Al Qa'ida and the Taliban in October 2001 is much changed, but in many ways the same. The Taliban are certainly no longer the sitting government, legitimately or otherwise, yet the movement and its allies within the complex insurgency still exert significant influence throughout the country. Despite the efforts of the U.S. and the coalition of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and now with the ongoing operations of the International Security and Assistance force run by NATO with endorsement by the United Nations, there is growing sentiment that the tide is once again turning in favor of the insurgents[74]. Afghanistan's President Karzai, despite his stated support of democratic reform within his country, still must contend with the reality of centuries of social and religious customs that underpin the Afghan culture. A December 2005 article in Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst put it this way:

His [Karzai's] country's basic social customs are based on centuries of blended religious and cultural developments, with the former ever increasing. There can be no compromise between the zealots' interpretation of the country's governing principles and

[74] Rashid, Ahmed. "Letter from Afghanistan: Are the Taliban Winning?" *Current History* (January 2007): 17.

the aspirations of moderates who seek to bring Western-style democracy to Afghanistan.[75]

Mark Mazzetti and David Rohde, writing for the New York Times on 19 February 2007 cite American officials claiming that Al Qa'ida is busily reinforcing its infrastructure in the North Waziristan district of the FATA. Their operations are more than ever not confined to Afghanistan.[76] This represents clear evidence that counter-insurgency efforts that continue to fall short of addressing in an assertive way the roots of the complex insurgency in Pakistan's tribal belt will ultimately result in failure.

Prior to attempting to formulate any possible solutions to this problem, one must gain an appreciation for the significant challenges facing Pakistan's President Musharraf. U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice was quoted in January of 2007 saying "Pakistan needs to do more to prevent the Taliban and Al Qa'ida from using the tribal areas as a safe haven[77]", however; she offers little advice on just how President Musharraf is to effectively do this. To suggest that simply ratcheting up the pressure for him to take necessary action or impose penalties or punitive fiscal measures, as has been suggested by certain members of the U.S. Congress in February 2007[78], belies a real ignorance of the dynamics of Pakistan itself and of the many political and non-political factors with which President Musharraf must contend.

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[75] "Kabul Under the Thumb of Hardliners?" *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*. (December 2005): 11-12.

[76] Mazzetti, Mark and David Rohde. "Terror Officials See Al Qa'ida Chiefs Regaining Power." The New York Times. (19 February 2007): 1-2.

[77] Iqbal, Anwar. "Pakistan Needs to Do More, Says US." *Dawn*. 14 January 2007. Magazine on-line; available from http://www.dawn.com/2007/01/14/top8.htm; Internet; accessed 15 January 2007.

[78] "Pressure Grows on Musharraf After U.S. Vice-President's Visit." *Radio Free Europe.* 26 February 2007. Newsletter on-line; available from http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/02/ca3a7fe2-b4d1-45cc-9c41-14dac04d5b10.html; accessed 4 April 2007.

Part III: Conclusion and Considerations

This paper explores "complex insurgency", the Taliban, the introduction of terrorism to the equation, and the regional dynamics which converge to provide sanctuary for the insurgency. Lastly, it looks at the immense challenges facing the U.S. and international community, and in particular, Pakistan, in combating this complex insurgency. What this paper does not do, as was never the purpose, is present a roadmap for solving the problem. This is undoubtedly a subject outside the context of this discourse, however, the following considerations provide for food thought for those who, given a new perspective on the problem which this paper hopefully provides, look to craft a strategy for addressing and defeating a "complex insurgency".

Based upon the analysis presented in this paper, the prospect of a solution to this problem is predicated on an acknowledgement that we are not combating an insurgency as traditionally understood. The adversary is a complex insurgency, globally connected and operational, but with a nexus in a sovereign, allied nation. This poses significantly more different challenges then those facing conventional counterinsurgency operations. To combat a global insurgency, what is needed is a global response, however, this requires a more sophisticated and open-minded approach to the problem. Many nations are engaged to differing degrees in this effort, but most are constrained by a lack of understanding of the adversary or by national legislative restraints which inhibit effective action. This must be overcome.

Arguably, any solution to this problem should not be led, or seen to be led, by the U.S. This presents an immediate credibility problem, given the perception of the U.S. throughout the "radical" Muslim world. It needs to also be noted, that there is no purely military solution to this problem. In addition, many pundits have said that pressure needs to be applied to Pakistan to deal with the problem in the Tribal Areas bordering Afghanistan, but they conveniently ignore the complicity of the issue.

It's easy to say it, but much more difficult to do. President Mussharraf, or any prospective ruler of Pakistan, faces an enormous challenge, balancing a desire to enjoy the benefits of alliance with the western world, particularly the U.S., and the real threats posed by Islamic Parties within Pakistan which have long been allied with Islamist mujahadin in the Afghan jihad and currently identify with the Taliban and Al Qa'ida cause.

Clearly, Pakistan's government must gain control of the NWFP and Tribal Areas to eliminate the insurgency's sanctuary, while, and no less importantly, preventing an Islamic revolution in Pakistan. It is indeed a stretch to contend that defeating the Pakistani based insurgent camp will also provide a solution to the sectarian violence in Iraq, however, it will go a long way toward diminishing Al Qa'ida's influence there. Stripping the Taliban of its support network and sanctuary in Pakistan may be pivotal in winning the counterinsurgency fight in Afghanistan.

Likewise, without a secure base of operations in Pakistan from which it operates the levers of its global network, Al Qa'ida's ability to focus operations in Iraq may be diminished. This conceivably allows the U.S.-led coalition more flexibility, in conjunction with Iraqi security forces, to more aggressively address an intimately Iraqi sectarian struggle, which accounts for the majority of deaths in that country.
Pakistan must assume definitive governmental control of the tribal belt (the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)), eliminating the currently impenetrable sanctuary that harbors elements of this complex insurgency. But it will need significant help, replacing admonishment with real assistance.

Instead of looking to punish President Musharraf, for a perceived or actual lack of action, by withholding aid or imposing sanctions, both of which could diminish the central governments ability to provide for the most basic needs of the population, the international community might look for new and innovative ways to provide Pakistan with greater assistance, but much more focused aid that will give the central government a chance to diminish or eliminate the tribal and religious influences which currently dominate the Pakistani tribal belt.

Musharraf and his government must sincerely want to find a solution, which inevitably involves coming to grips with two troublesome provinces, but the tribal belt in particular, which since partition the central government has decided to remain outside its sphere of real control. No solution will be easy or bloodless.

That said, a possible solution resides with the U.N or another multi-national effort, not led by the U.S, although extensive U.S. assistance will be required—perhaps "leading from behind". Pakistan needs massive development assistance, with a focus on the tribal areas. In essence, this area is a separate "failed state" and should be viewed that way in a U.N. context. Education is hostage to the radical madrassah's, a product of the Afghan jihad. Unemployment is rampant, substituted by smuggling in guns and drugs. The government is apprehensive to take a heavy hand, unwilling to anger the increasingly radical Islamist elements. It must be observed that the military, many of whom have ethnic/tribal affinity with the Pashtun majority in the tribal belt, are hesitant, even viscerally opposed, to taking action against their countrymen. All of this must be considered in constructing a viable construct for combating this "complex insurgency".

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