

Transnational Militancy: A Sociological Perspective

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Introduction

This paper examines the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan from a sociological perspective as opposed to conventional analysis that examines the issues from a security standpoint. The substantive argument being that if the immediate security and issues are dealt with, a most optimistic scenario, the root causes persist which would lead to a resurgence of militancy in the future.

The theoretical framework is transnationalism and social movements. Transnationalism refers to human interaction and communication over vast distance becomes routinized and natural for an exclusive group of actors operating within globally integrated sectors. In the real world, this can be seen as the flow of people, ideas, finance, images and technology no longer being fixed by boundaries established by nation states¹. Lubeck argues it is necessary to rethink the discourse of Islam within the process of social change emanating from globalization. Contemporary Islamic activism is neither local nor bound by nationality, but is multifaceted and potentially global. It merely capitalizes on the discontent created by the crisis of the neo-colonial state and champions anti-imperialism in resisting cosmopolitan globalization. In the political vacuum in which it operates, Islam becomes a major anti-imperialist player, drawing upon traditional forms, networks and ideologies, refashioning them into an alternative form of globalization. In Islam moral economy and discourse are represented by the ulama and shariat, which act as representatives and a panacea for the underprivileged and the poor. Meanwhile, the notion of Ummah can be viewed as one interconnecting component of an ideological and transnational framework, which is grounded and reinforced by various characteristics particular to the faith including pilgrimage, commonality of religious practice and universal (Muslim) tenets. These characteristics are reformulated by the information revolution, allowing new networks to emerge. It is the conflation of the technological revolution with globalized Islam that leads to the transnational jihadi movements. There can be no Al Qaeda without the Internet, satellite phones and television².

Islamic groups along with other social movements have a number of important differences with political parties. They don't have the same aims or operate in the way conventional political parties do. Social movements are single-issue mobilizations that have new collective identities and value systems, in this case, represented by the emergence of jihadi and sectarian organizations. Mobilization involves contestation and social movements are decentralized collectivities rooted in local structures. The focus on single issues allows for an inclusion of a diverse range of actors representing a wide range of

1 Arjun Appaduri (1990) 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in Mike Featherstone (ed) *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, Sage, London.

2 Paul Lubeck, Ronnie Lipschutz, and Erik Weeks (2003) 'The Globality of Islam: Sharia as a Nigerian "Self-Determination" Movement', Conference on Globalisation and Self-Determination, London, 4 April, Queen Elizabeth House, Working Paper Series QEHWPS 106 University of Oxford.

political opinion; ranging from formal political parties, sectarian organizations, jihadi outfits, educational and missionary groups. These differences are suppressed during mobilizations, which are loosely structured. Their agenda is normally not about capturing power but acting as a vector for social change, which in this case is the establishment of an Islamic state. The impact of mobilization is magnified by networks and members linked to localities, neighbourhoods and linguistic, tribal and ethnic affiliations³. Multiple crosscutting memberships allow individuals to belong to more than one social movement and this explains how mobilizations can grow rapidly by drawing wide ranging support to influence society. The Taliban or Al Qaeda for that matter are not organizations in the conventional sense and lack a central command structure, except in a rudimentary form, and operate in a decentralized manner⁴.

Afghan Intervention and its Relevance

The United States had a very clear agenda when the USSR occupied Afghanistan and they along with Pakistan pulled every trick in the book in defeating the Soviet Bear. The overall strategy, which the CIA was responsible for, was procurement of weapons, raising financial resources, providing intelligence, making available communication and propaganda material and importantly sub-contracting responsibility to the Pakistani intelligence who selected the groups to be equipped and resourced and trained them. The US and their allies encouraged Muslim radicals from the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East to go to Afghanistan to participate in the jihad. While they are no accurate records of the number of foreign mujahidin serving in Afghanistan it is estimated that the majority were Saudis, Yemenis, Algerians and Egyptians and that something in the region of 25,000 recruits passed through the camps⁵. Peshawar as well as Quetta, to a lesser degree, was turned into an international jihad market. Islamic charities, NGOs, foreign nationals from a wide range of Muslim countries came for training, exchanging ideas on jihad and participating in the conflict against the Soviet Union. The significance of this period was that all the transnational networks that are so problematic today were established then⁶.

The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate favoured Gulbudin Hekmatyar and most of the resistance to the Soviets was concentrated around the territory of the Ghilzai Pukhtuns in Central and North Eastern Afghanistan and was headquartered in Peshawar. When Hekmatyar's repeated attempts to dislodge President Rabbani from power failed Pakistan began to look for alternatives and by 1994 he lost the support of the ISI and he had earlier lost Saudi support for refusing to support them in the first Gulf War. He eventually lost his base to the Taliban, fled to Iran was expelled from there in 2002 and US tried to assassinate him on his return. This led him to ally himself with the Taliban, however, in March 2007 he opened dialogue with the Karzai regime and detached himself from the Taliban⁷.

3 Donatella Della Porta, and Mario Diani, M. (1999) *Social Movements – An Introduction*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford

4 Oliver Roy, (1991) *The lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, Adelphi Papers, No 259, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

Jason Burke, (2004) *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*. Penguin Books: London.

Fawaz A. Gerges (2005) *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Farhad Khosrokhavar (2005) *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, Pluto Press, London.

5 Lt General (Retd) Assad Durrani (2004) Interview, Rawalpindi, 14 January

6 Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin (2001) *Afghanistan – The Bear Trap. The Defeat of a Superpower*, pp. 39-40, Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

7 Peter Marsden (2002) *The Taliban – War and Religion in Afghanistan*, Zed Books, London.

Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin (2001) *Afghanistan – The Bear Trap. The Defeat of a Superpower*, Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

The demise Hekmatyar influence in Afghanistan was also associated with political shifts within Pakistan that accompanied the death of General Zia-ul-Haq and the rise of Benazir Bhutto. Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam allied itself with the PPP to become part of the ruling coalition in 1993. During the previous decade Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam had minimal influence during the campaign against the Soviets. Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam influence was in the among the Durrani Pukhtuns who dominated the south west and Kandahar. Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam throughout the 1980s worked quietly building up a support based among the Durrani Pukhtuns on both sides of the border. Afghan refugees were students in the numerous madrassas. The madrassas of Maulana Samiul Haq, Darul Ulum Haqqaniya in Akora Khattack near Peshawar would normally have Afghans in its student intake and during the war against the Soviets this intake was as high as 60% with eight Taliban ministers graduating from Akora Khattack. Maulana Fazlur Rahman was made chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and gradually cultivated support within the regime and among the Gulf Arabs for a change in direction. He was responsible for arranging Prince Turki's secret visit to Pakistan in July 1996, which led to Saudi Arabia becoming the principal financial backer of the Taliban. The Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam 's increasing influence and the Pakistan administration desire to have stable pro-Pakistani government made them turn to the Taliban. Naseerulah Babar, Minister of the Interior, was looking for alternatives to Hekmatyar, provided the logistics necessary for the emergence of the Taliban from the madrassas of the Jamiat-Ulama-i-Islam⁸.

The emergence of the Taliban was a demonstration of social change among the Afghan tribes. Power during the Afghan intervention had shifted from the landed elites and tribal chiefs to the religious leadership. The Taliban was not, however, simply a religious movement it contained powerful Pukhtun nationalist impulses. There were three strands within the Taliban movement, there was the Talibs, students from the madrassas, former mujahidins, Pukhtuns from notable backgrounds such as Hamid Karzai who was the treasurer and Pukhtun ex-communists who previously worked for the Soviet backed regime. The Taliban wove these different filaments into a canopy of nationalism and religious fervor. The declared aims of the Taliban were to restore peace, after the chaos caused by the collapse of the Soviet backed regime in Kabul, disarm the population and enforce the shariat. They saw themselves as cleansers and purifiers of a struggle that has gone astray, a society that had deviated from Islam and compromised themselves and were corrupted. It was a rural Pukhtun movement led by students giving it an Islamic veneer,⁹ which tried to impose on the country a village interpretation of Islam.

The rise of Taliban was through combination of complex interplay of social and political conditions in Southern Afghanistan. The exhaustion and political and moral bankruptcy of local mujahidin commanders created the conditions for the meteoric rise of the Taliban. The rapid expansion from Kandahar to Kabul and then on to Mazar-i-Sharif was due to exploitation of Afghan norms of warfare. Opponents were allowed join the Taliban or were bribed into supporting or simply out of expediency, changed sides.

Hekmatyar parts ways with Taliban (2007) The News International, June 12,
http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=6386#

8 Ahmed. Rashid, (2000) Taliban – Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London.

Peter Marsden (2002) The Taliban – War and Religion in Afghanistan, Zed Books, London.

9 Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism (2001) Patterns of Global Terrorism Report 2000, US Department of State 30 April 2001, Washington D.C..

Anthony Davis, (1998) 'How the Taliban became a military force' in Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban, ed. William Maley, pp.43-71, Hurt, London

Lt. General (Retd.) Assad Durrani (2004) Interview, Rawalpindi, 14 January.

Kashmir

A new front opened in 1989 in Kashmir, which allowed the ISI to use the experience of Afghanistan against Indian control in the valley. At the end of the 1980s, misrule, economic stagnation and the proliferation of mass media coalesced to produce political unrest in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Political violence has claimed around 35,000 lives, the figures are highly contested, and a number of armed groups were involved. In this fluid situation the indiscriminate role played by the security forces of India was a crucial factor in detonating Muslim assertion. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), based in Pakistan controlled Kashmir, had been recruiting young men during 1987-88 and they became the core group that had initiated the insurgency in 1989. It had no clear plan of action except to raise the Kashmir question on to the international level. The fact that the USSR had collapsed in that year provided the inspiration for this strategy and they saw themselves on par with the movement for democratization that was taking place in Eastern Europe. Once the insurgency took off an enormous proliferation of groups occurred. The harsh and ruthless attempts to crush the rebellion converted a relatively minor insurgency into a full-blown popular revolt and drove the Kashmiri middle class into the hands of the insurgents.

Pakistan's military kept a fairly tight grip on Kashmiri jihadis and manipulated the various groups to create, merge or eliminate organizations to better suit its overall strategic aims. They instigated number of splits in the organization resulting in a proliferation of groups this was done to maintain control and preventing any organization becoming too powerful and to also cover up their tracks making difficult detecting agency involvement by the Indians. Since 1988 militant groups have increased from a handful to over fifty different groups but declined over the past decade as the insurgency peaked. Recent estimates, which vary considerably, indicate that that the total number of jihadi groups somewhere between 5000 to 10000 thousand. With the decline in insurgency the numbers of Kashmiris, initially the majority, declined and the numbers of Pakistanis and non-Pakistani militants increased and was estimated to be around 50-70% of the total. The militancy spread from the Kashmir valley into the Jammu, Poonch and Doda region, professionalized during the 1990s and the number of non-Kashmiri militants increased while the total number of militants had contracted. To increase coordination, they took a leaf out of the Afghan intervention and formed the United Jihad Council (UJC) to act as an umbrella group providing uniformity of command and control over the militants. The council included Hizbul Mujahidin and Karakul Mujahidin (formerly Harakat al-Ansar) and a number of minor Deobandi, Barlevi and Shiah groups. The Council was the public voice of the militants involved in the Kargil conflict and was critical of the Pakistani pull back. The two largest Pakistani based groups - Lashkar-i-Taiba and Jaish-i-Mohammad were not part of the Jihad council¹⁰.

Anti-Americanism and Collapse of Boundaries

The roller-coaster nature of US-Pakistan relations generated a sense of distrust and

¹⁰ International Crisis Group (2002) Kashmir: Confrontation and Miscalculation, International Crisis Group Asia Report No.35, 11 July, Islamabad/Brussels.

Victoria Schofield (2003) Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War, pp.138-141, I.B. Tauris, London.

Anonymous western diplomatic source (2003)

Muhammad Amir Rana (2004) A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan, p.479, Mashal Books, Lahore.

Lt. General (Retd.)Ziauddin Butt (2004) Interview, Lahore, 10 January

resentment in Islamabad. Many Pakistani's believe that the United States has treated their country unfairly and unjustly and has been a poor friend and has walked away from them several times in the past. The War on Terror has inflamed the Pukhtun population, as well as others, on both sides of the border but particularly in the tribal areas. The use of the mailed fist has been counter productive and has led to NATO forces losing hearts and minds and resulted in the radicalization of the Pukhtun belt in Pakistan. The War on Terror's, inability to distinguish civilians from militant personnel has meant that the death of women and children were alienating the Pukhtun population. Many of the militants fighting against the US have no option but to continue fighting, as there are no opportunities to negotiate. Even Karzai has argued that negotiations even with the top Taliban commanders including Mullah Omar is necessary if they are to bring peace to the region. The support for Karzai appears to be flagging due to the failure to impose law and order has meant that reconstruction has not taken place¹¹. The rural population's dependence on narcotic production has brought them under international scrutiny. This has been extremely unpopular as there are no other means of income generation for many people in the rural areas.

In the intervention in Afghanistan and Kashmir the ISI was careful that the various groups operated discreetly. The various Afghan groups remained distinct and separate primarily between Ghilzai and Durrani but also among themselves and there was minimal interaction with Kashmir groups who were divided between those manned by Kashmiris and those where Pakistanis were predominating. Two events, complementing each other, dissolved the boundaries that existed between the various Islamic militants. Al Qadea encouraged the various militants to collaborate on common agenda against US intervention in Afghanistan and the US intervention, particularly the civilian casualties, also forced anti-Americanism to become a dominant theme that brought the various groups to collaborate. The significance of this for the Pakistani authorities was that groups that operated separately and distinctly were now collaborating against the US backed government in Kabul as well as Islamabad.

Pakistan Army

The army maintains an ambiguous relationship, even today, with the various militants groups. The army is Indo-centric in its strategic perspective and views India as the main security concern on its Eastern front as well as in Afghanistan. Militant groups are only an asset if the army can maintain the fiction of plausible deniability, which in turn gives the groups considerable autonomy. In relation to the Kashmir issue they are seen as a card to be revitalised and played if peace negotiations between India and Pakistan fail. They allow Pakistan to return to status quo ante of backing an insurgency in Kashmir under a nuclear umbrella to counter India's conventional superiority. In the immediate aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks Baitullah Mehsud and Fazullah were described by the army as patriots and they reiterated their readiness to fight against India¹². Similarly Pakistan sees militants as a card to fill the political vacuum if and when the United States withdraws from Afghanistan. The United States has in the past walked away twice from the region and the army and many in the Pakistani Establishment do not believe that they have the will to reaming permanently in the region¹³. The army is opposed to Afghanistan returning to the

11 'Karzai promises security to Omar for peace talks' November 17, 2008

<http://www.dawn.com/2008/11/17/top12.htm>

12 http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=18709

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/12/taliban_are_patriots.php

13 Dennis Kux (2001), The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000 – Disenchanted Allies, p.365, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, D.C.

status quo ante when it was in a pro-Indian orbit. Hence the indirect links that it has with the Taliban is precisely to ensure that Pakistan has some levers in Afghan society and remains a player. Thus the army's response to the Taliban is primarily to deal with the cadre and to let leadership remain free. In the case of Baluchistan they are also distracted by the Baluchi rebellion and they turned a blind eye to the Taliban groups crossing the border to fight in Helmand as they don't want to fight on two fronts¹⁴.

Deconstructing the Present Taliban Resurgence

The term Taliban appears to be used very loosely to denote all those who may be in opposition to the Kabul regime and represent a plurality of groups, who not working in a coordinated fashion with their counterparts in the Tribal areas of Pakistan. Who is a Taliban? A question that has been raised by the Pakistani authorities as they differentiate between the hard core leadership, Mullah Omar etc., and a wide range of Pukhtuns who have joined them because of local grievances. Taliban has been characterized as a social movement, which incorporated a range of actors a number of whom were ideologically incompatible ranging from secularists through to jihadis. It has nationalist intent under Islamic banner. The fact that Tajiks dominate the Kabul government is considered an affront to Pukhtuns who considered it their right to rule Afghanistan. The present situation in both Pakistan and Afghanistan that new recruits, many sons of the mujahidin, are receiving local tribal support. Tribal chiefs in the Pukhtun areas are shifting their loyalty and are providing valuable local knowledge and support in their attacks against central government forces and ISAF troops. Kabul's loss of support of the local tribes emanates from the failure to reconstruct the local infrastructure and bring development. The centres' struggle to keep a grip of the law and order situation has meant that it has been unable to show any benefit to its supporters and many of whom resorted to alternative strategies of survival.

The emergence of the Taliban in Pakistan tribal areas shows that division between Ghilzai and Durrani Pukhtuns has been subordinated in a common struggle against the US and its allies. Local rivalries also have been subsumed and groups that normally would be involved in factional struggles are suspending their differences. Factional politics has been a factor in civilian deaths by US airpower, as rivals would pass information to the US claiming factional opponents were members of the Taliban. There is also an element of class mobility as epitomized by Baitullah Meshud and Fazullah. The former is not a member of a tribal leaders' family but comes from a humble background and jihad has become a means of class mobility, which has given him power and authority far from what was expected from his family lineage. The same is with Fazullah who is Gujar speaker (Punjabi dialect), which in Pukhtun society excludes him from power and authority. No doubt petty criminal and narcotic traffickers have jumped on the bandwagon. Petty criminals have found that claiming Taliban membership provides legitimacy to their activities. Drug traffickers find that the chaos is conducive environment for their illegal activities and distracts the authorities attention. An ideal environment to conduct their business and in return fund the Taliban. The belief that the US lacks staying power has generated a bandwagon effect where Pukhtuns across the ideological spectrum are jumping on board because they want to be on the winning side and all the power implications that are associated with military victory.

It's no coincidence that the upsurge in militancy has taken place in some of the remotest

Lt General (Retd) Naseer Akhtar (2004) Interview, Lahore, 7 January

Lt General (Retd) Talat Massod (2003) Interview, Islamabad, 20 December

14 Anonymous, western observer in Pakistan (2003) interview 12 January

areas of Pakistan. The tribal areas have an antiquated and ineffectual system of governance, which has collapsed under the pressure of social change. Where there is very little development and little opportunity for young men particularly those that have no particularly skill, education or training. There is some sense in viewing the insurgency as an uprising of the dispossessed. Militancy has become a life strategy for hyper-masculinized men who have little or no future.

Military action in Swat

There was delay before Islamabad acted against the militants, which allowed them to expand from their redoubt in the tribal areas into the Swat valley. The army had become unpopular during the Musharraf's regime and was only willing to conduct operations if they had full support of the civilian authorities. The army had indicated that it was ready to act but expected the PPP led coalition to take the political fallout that was inevitable. The army is trained for conventional warfare and ill equipped to fight an insurgency as demonstrated by the Bajur operations, which resulted in several hundred thousand displaced people. For the Federal authorities and the Awami National Party administration in the NWFP their difficulty was that they could not expect to be reelected if they did not demonstrate that they exhausted the alternatives first. Hence the negotiations with the neo-Taliban in Swat and the acceptance of their central demands of the introduction of Islamic courts. In Swat, Islamic courts had a different connotation as they were used by the Wali of Swat before the state was incorporated into the federation, and were a mixture of customary and Islamic practices. In comparison to the colonial based legal system, which was slow, expensive and corrupt, the Islamic courts provided cheap and rapid rough justice. The ANP, the governing party in the NWFP, a secular organization insisted and pressurized the federal authorities in accepting the deal with the Taliban in Swat. When the Shariat Bill was debated in the national assembly they temporarily walked out of the National Assembly accusing the PPP of delaying tactics¹⁵. However the Taliban saw the negotiations as a sign of weakness and they poured out of the tribal areas first into Swat to consolidate their position and they expanded into Bunner, which is as the crow fly only a hundred miles from Islamabad. The reaction of the political Establishment was to close ranks and see the take over of Bunner as direct threat to the integrity of the Federation. Up that time religious parties and the main opposition party the Muslim League (Nawaz) were close ideologically to the Taliban's anti-American jihad. After the Taliban moved into Bunner the most these parties, importantly the Muslim League (N), closed ranks with the government and supported military action¹⁶. The army was involved in a protracted struggle to retake control of first Bunner then the Swat valley and in the process nearly two and half million people were displaced into camps located outside of the valley. It was never clear whether the army was determined to eliminate the Taliban as some commentators have suggested that the leadership was allowed to escape, Fazullah is still on the run, and only the rank and file cadre were captured or killed. The army success in the valley can only be termed as a short term success as the real battle for hearts and minds still rages and the social processes that are producing militancy remains intact. The lack of state capacity to provide effective justice, education, health and good governance means that the displaced population from the valley has become fertile ground for future crop of militants¹⁷.

15 Nizam-e-Adal Regulations 2009 implemented. Zardari signed much delayed bill, Asian Tribune 14 March 2009, <http://www.asiantribune.com/?q=node/16794>

16 APC endorses Swat operation, Dawn 19 May 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/16-gilani-urges-national-consensus-as-apc-convenes-hs-16>

17 'Pakistan Taliban: Swat deal is dead' Aljazeera English 7 May 2009 <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2009/05/2009567324513142.html>

Transnational circuits

The transnational processes that were established during the intervention against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan remain active feed into the militancy. Any sustained military campaign is resource intensive and require substantial funding. The Pakistan authorities have complained that the Taliban are better equipped and paid more than the Frontier Corp that is used to police the tribal areas. Richard Holbrooke, President Obama's, special envoy to the region accepts that most of the funding, more than from the drug trade, is coming from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Not from the authorities but from wealth individuals that want to see the Taliban establish an Islamic state in the country. The money is either transferred through the informal Hawala network or through secretive formal banking system based in Dubai¹⁸.

While there is indigenous weapon fabrication in Dera Adam Khel and other areas in NWFP most militants prefer to use reliable foreign made weaponry. There is stock left over from the Afghan intervention but it supplemented by a number of other sources. The unregulated free market of Dubai not only is the source of funding but also weapon procurement. US sourced weapons for the Afghan army has ended up on the black market and this pool of illicit weaponry has been complemented by supplies of IEDs from Iran, military equipment supplied by Delhi for the Baluchi insurgency via Kabul and the blowback from weapons supplied by the US to the Iranian Baluch. The consequence of these actions is that they are pool of weaponry that can be sourced without difficulty by the Taliban.

Media and ideology are also two other closely overlapping circuits. There is a host of media used by the Taliban for propaganda purposes. They range from Mullah FM, audio-visual material downloaded from extremist websites circulated on DVDs to religious exhortation on audiocassettes or in print form. The material is freely available in street markets and does not have to be sourced surreptitiously and glorifies suicide attacks, war against the US and it's allies and in general promotes Taliban propaganda. The mainstream press is quite anti-American and complements the pro-Taliban media. Overlapping the media circuits is the ideology networks and the ulama were romanticizing the jihad. However after the take over Swat cracks within the ulama became more significant. Many Pakistanis are quite patriarchal but the flogging of the girl for what was considered to be religiously a technical infraction, which most people considered to acceptable, was quite a shock. It swung public opinion that previously was favorable to the Taliban into unanimously hostile¹⁹. A number of senior ulama slammed the Taliban and declared that Islam cannot be enforced through coercion and castigated suicide bombing as unIslamic. Mufti Sarfraz Ahmed Naeemi founder of the Sunni Ittehad Council led demonstrations vigorously condemning the Taliban, supported military operations in Swat and consequently was killed by suicide bomber at the orders of Baitullah Mehsud for his audacity²⁰.

There is also overlapping between the circuits of people and criminal networks. While the presence of fighter from the Caucasus and Central Asia are well known, in particular Uzbeks and Chechens, but there has been a steady flow of Arabs, Iraqis, Yemenis etc as

18 'Gulf, Europe funding Taliban: Holbrooke' The News International, 1 October 2009
http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=23543

19 'Girl's flogging exposes Pakistani rift', The National, 8 April 2009, <http://www.thenational.ae/article/20090408/FOREIGN/871476693/1002>

20 TTP claims it bombed Lahore, Nowshera, and Peshawar, The Dawn 12 June 2009,
<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/11-ttp-claims-it-bombed-lahore--nowshera--and-peshawar--il--06>

well as Sudanese into the tribal areas. This partly with the collusion of the Iranian authorities allowing militants to cross their borders but it also in conjunction with criminal networks that traffic people along with contraband goods²¹. While the narcotic traffickers have provided financial resource in the region of \$60-100 million, to the militancy, primarily through taxation on Opium production and the smuggling of heroin they are not the main financial supporters of the Taliban²². They find the militancy convenient as it distracts the authorities attention from their activities. Dawood Ibrahim is believed to be hiding in South Waziristan and it is not clear whether this is for operational reasons or simply an attempt to remain a step ahead of the authorities. Further more local criminal operating under the suzerainty of local Taliban commanders are taking the opportunity to extend their activities such as kidnapping of Westerners which has become quite lucrative business.

Conclusion

There is a need to go beyond the security paradigm and see the issue in a wider social context. Clearly the leadership of the Taliban has been disrupted, Fazullah is in hiding Baitullah Meshud was killed in a drone strike but the weakened Taliban is still able to launch attacks in Peshawar and Islamabad. However the transnational circuits that finance, arm, provide personnel and media and ideological support are still in place. They need to be disrupted, Taliban ideology needs to be challenge and their propaganda curtailed. Also the Taliban needs to be desegregated through negotiations between those willing to compromise and hard liners. A concerted effort is needed to disrupt these transnational circuits, which require a regional perspective and not a narrow focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan. India is the elephant in the room and unless international efforts are not made to improve Indo-Pak relations as many of the actors and agents in these various circuits are linked to the tensions between the two countries. On the ground level the greatest danger is that the vacuum would allow the Taliban to return or a new crop of militants emerge in the localities they were ousted from. To prevent this state capacity to deliver law enforcement, justice and social services needs to be enhanced. It can no longer depend on the antiquated colonial model of indirect rule. The state needs to be seen as an effective and dominant player in these localities. It also raises the issues of deprivation and marginalization, which need to be addressed. The Taliban's demand for an Islamic state was attractive to people because there is a large deficit of social justice. Unless the state becomes more effective and delivers justice and development these localities will remain a crucible for radicalization.

21 Brigadier (Retd) Mahmood Shah (2008) Interview, Peshawar 17 May

22 ' Gulf, Europe funding Taliban: Holbrooke' The News International, 1 October 2009

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?id=23543