

Conceptualising Terrorism Trend Patterns in Pakistan - an Empirical Perspective

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Abstract

Terrorism continues to be viewed conventionally in Pakistan. However, the phenomenon has assumed a structured formation driven by rational choice perspectives. This article attempts to identify distinct trends and patterns of terrorism within prevailing environments of Pakistan. In doing so, it also examines the validity of seasonality dimensions of routine activity theory (use of summer months and earlier days of week) for terrorist acts. Eight trends are identified tentatively. Using empirical data and analytical discourse, the findings confirm the assumed trends in terms of their typology, structure, operational system and rallying themes. In addition, the article finds support for the hypothesis of terrorism being a strategic approach rather than an ordinary form of violence. It is further found that changed patterns of violence warrant a revisiting of earlier assumptions regarding the applicability of routine activity theory within the Pakistani context. By implication, the study also suggests a variation of terrorism under different regime types, i.e. military or democratic.

Introduction

For more than a decade, Pakistan is in grip of rampant violence. The Taliban's attack at Peshawar Airport on 15 December 2012 is a recent development in an ongoing wave of terrorism. While the history of violence in Pakistan spans several decades, the prevailing environment reveals the emergence of terrorism as a structured phenomenon driven by rational choice expectations. Conventional approaches and traditional mindsets that continue to view terrorism as a customary form of violence have prevented the growth of critical thinking which is essential to conceptually grasp and deal with the menace effectively. [1] This fact is evident from both the ritualism prevalent in political rhetoric in response to acts of terrorism as well as from the absence of epistemological rigour in much of the national terrorism scholarship. [2] Anthologies, books, monographs, policy papers and journal articles by Pakistani writers on terrorism in Pakistan abound but only few are substantively novel and painstakingly investigate roots and myths behind the current cauldron of violence. [3] One glaring weakness lies in examining the violence in cause and effect frameworks only. Being a-theoretical many authors fail to challenge the existing inertial discourse and the prevailing policy dispositions. Together with a few national writers (such as Moonis Ahmar, Muhammad Waseem, Abdul Siraj and Amir Rana, [4]) immigrant Pakistani academics (most notably Ishtiaq Ahmed, Tahir Abbas, Tahir Andrabi, Asim Khawaja,

Moeed Yousuf as well as others), have produced commendable publications on religious conflicts, seminaries, radicalisation and political violence. But with the exception of Ishtiaq and Moeed, they have somehow either sparingly made Pakistan focus of their intellectual experimentation or have eschewed contextualized theorization of terrorism. [5]

A recent dissertation "Terrorism in Pakistan: Incident Patterns, Terrorists' Characteristics, and the Impact of Terrorist Arrests on Terrorism" by US-based Ejaz Hussain measurably breaks new ground by utilizing insights from modern research paradigms.[6] His findings relate to temporal dimensions of routine activity theory i.e., trend, cycles and seasonality of terrorism in Pakistan. This dissertation is innovative, but already partly obsolete due to the rapid flux in the currents of violence.

Against this backdrop, the present article is a modest attempt to make a threefold contribution;(i) it builds and employs hypothesized thematic trends as the organizing lens to understand terrorism; (ii) it claims that in the wake of terrorism surfacing as a strategic tool, the routine activity postulate that held out vis-à-vis traditional forms of violence in the past is no longer applicable in its entirety;[7](iii), by implication of the above two, it suggests that terrorism in Pakistan shows a surge during military regimes compared with democratic civilian rule.

In this article, terrorism is defined as violent acts by religious, sectarian and nationalist non-state actors against unarmed civilians, law enforcement agencies including security forces, government officials, public leaders, journalists, civil society activists, foreigners and public infrastructure anywhere within Pakistan. In terms of methodology, the discourse initially encompasses identification of tentative trends by discerning, disaggregating and analytically locating empirical data relevant to each trend. A multidisciplinary approach has been followed in building themes of the trends, namely in terms of a human-political syndrome, infrastructural and criminalized warfare, regime and system's change, normative-cultural, ideological-real politik anarchism, spatial conquests, non-seasonal and strategic. The findings conceptualise and categorically synthesize main contours of the discussion to ascertain the veracity of the hypothesized trends. Broadly, the research design is longitudinal in nature whereby the transformation of various dimensions of violence is analysed over time, covering the period between 2006 and mid-October 2012, a period bisected by three years of military and civilian rule respectively.

The article uses three components of time series i.e., trend analysis which is the long term movement in a series; the cycles that are regular non-seasonal fluctuations and seasonality which is a component of the series that is dependent on time of the year e.g., winter or summer months as well as week days.[8] Consequently, incidents, timelines (months and week days), locations (spatial distribution), methods, fatalities and cost effect are employed as indicators. This constitutes the analytical framework for the discussion. Incidents used are of two types: all terrorist acts regardless of the number of fatalities in order to determine human losses; and

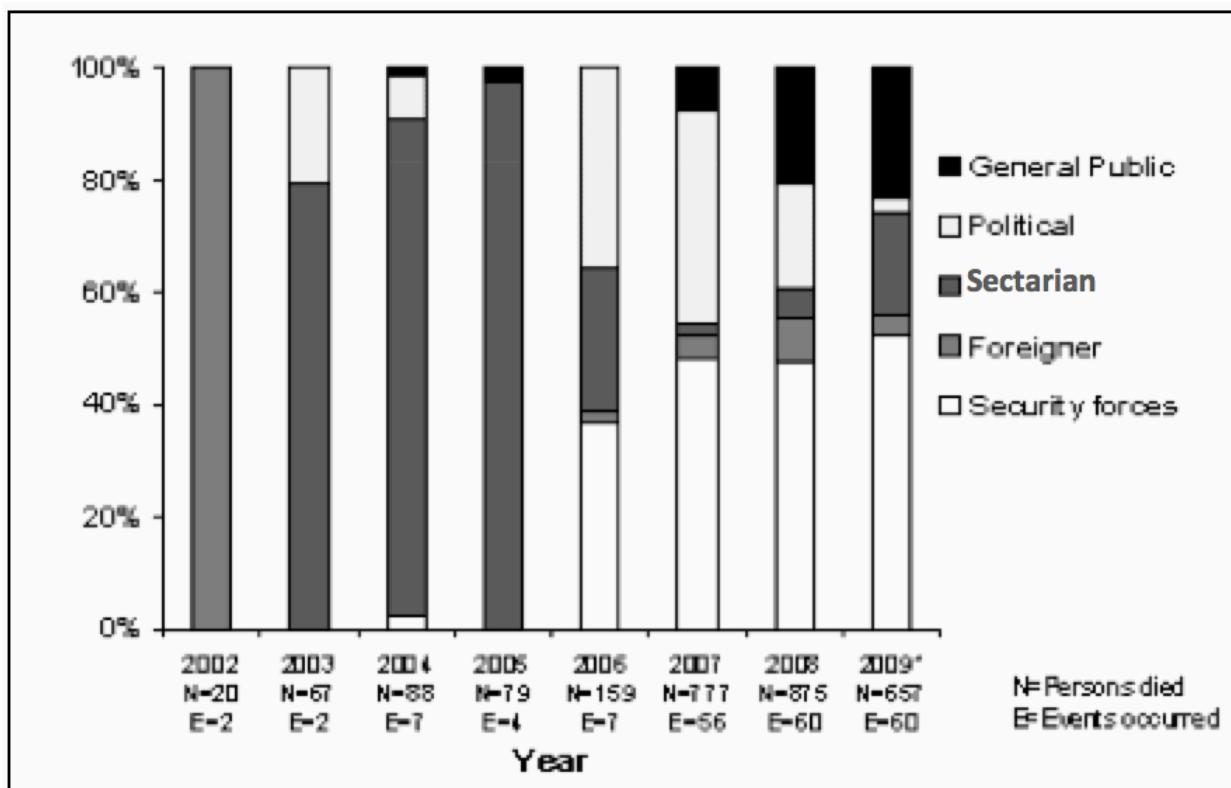
second, those involving upto and beyond 15 fatalities per incident. These are denoted as High Casualty Terrorist Bombing (HCTB). Based on territorial and demographic size, socio-political significance and development profile, locations have been grouped into six categorizes, namely capital cities, major cities, medium cities, small cities, sizeable towns and remote areas, on a scale of 1-6 respectively. For example, an incident occurring at any one location is assigned a specified numerical value (e.g., a single incident in Islamabad or in a provincial capital has been coded as 1, and will be aggregated depending upon the number of total occurrences in other capital cities, if any). Three sources have been used for statistical data – those of the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) for the number of incidents, months and fatalities; those from the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) for fatalities and timelines (months, weekdays); and those from the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) for HCTB along with their locations. Other complementary sources have been used to plug quantitative gaps and tighten qualitative dimensions of terrorism.

Trend 1: Human and Political Syndrome

The trigger generating a new generation of violence was provided by a US-led drone strike on a religious seminary belonging to TNSM (Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi) in the village of Chenegai in Bajuar Agency. It took place on 30 October 2006 and killed up to 69 children, among a total of 80 civilians.[9] This attack set into motion a change in the existing paradigm of violence by heralding TNSM into an anti-state antagonism hitherto confined to strife in the sectarian milieu. The immediate suicidal retaliation took place on 6 November 2006 and led to the killing of 42 army recruits at Dargi training camp of the Punjab Regimental Centre of Pakistan's Army located near Malakand Fort in KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).[10] That was followed by the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) fiasco at Islamabad in July 2007. Intensified attacks by TNSM cadres and Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat (TTS) members resulted in huge losses of life as well as property. The Taliban, later TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) also joined hands. While thus far pursuing essentially an anti-government policy it also began to foment sectarian violence in Kurram Agency. In addition it also began engaging in discriminate killings of captured shia soldiers of the Frontier Corps (FC).[11] Apart from the unison operations by TNSM, TTS and TTP, a major impact on the evolving scenario was thronging in the ranks of Taliban and TNSM by sunni zealots from LeJ (Lashkar-e-Jhangvi) as well as fanatics (both male as well as females) from among common and tribal citizenry. Some independent groups also emerged. For example, in October 2006, Pakhtun militants who fought against the US-led invasion of Afghanistan formed a new anti-Shia militant organization led by Mufti Ilyas and Hazrat Ali of Darra Adam Khel. It had no links with other militant groups, including the banned LeJ; it became active in Quetta, Karachi and other major cities in Pakistan.[12] Afridi Taliban led by Commander Tariq Afridi started an identical anti-shia campaign in Darra Adam Khel by targeting shias commuting between Peshawar and Kohat.

Generally, however, sectarianism even though involving new actors, remained a subtext of the main trend. Unlike in the past when language and sectarian motivations explained about 70% of terrorism in Pakistan, [13] sectarianism now accounted only 4.96 percent of the total fatalities (1850 out of 37226 victims) from 2006 until 2011.[14] A study by Junaid Bhatti and his group for the period from 2002 to October 2009 assessing ‘epidemiological patterns of suicide terrorism in the civilian population of Pakistan’ based on 198 events empirically established the yearly shifting trend of attack targets from foreigners (in 2002) and sectarian (between 2003-2005) to government functionaries, general public or security forces (in the period 2006-2009) (Figure I). [15]

Figure 1 – Variations in Targets



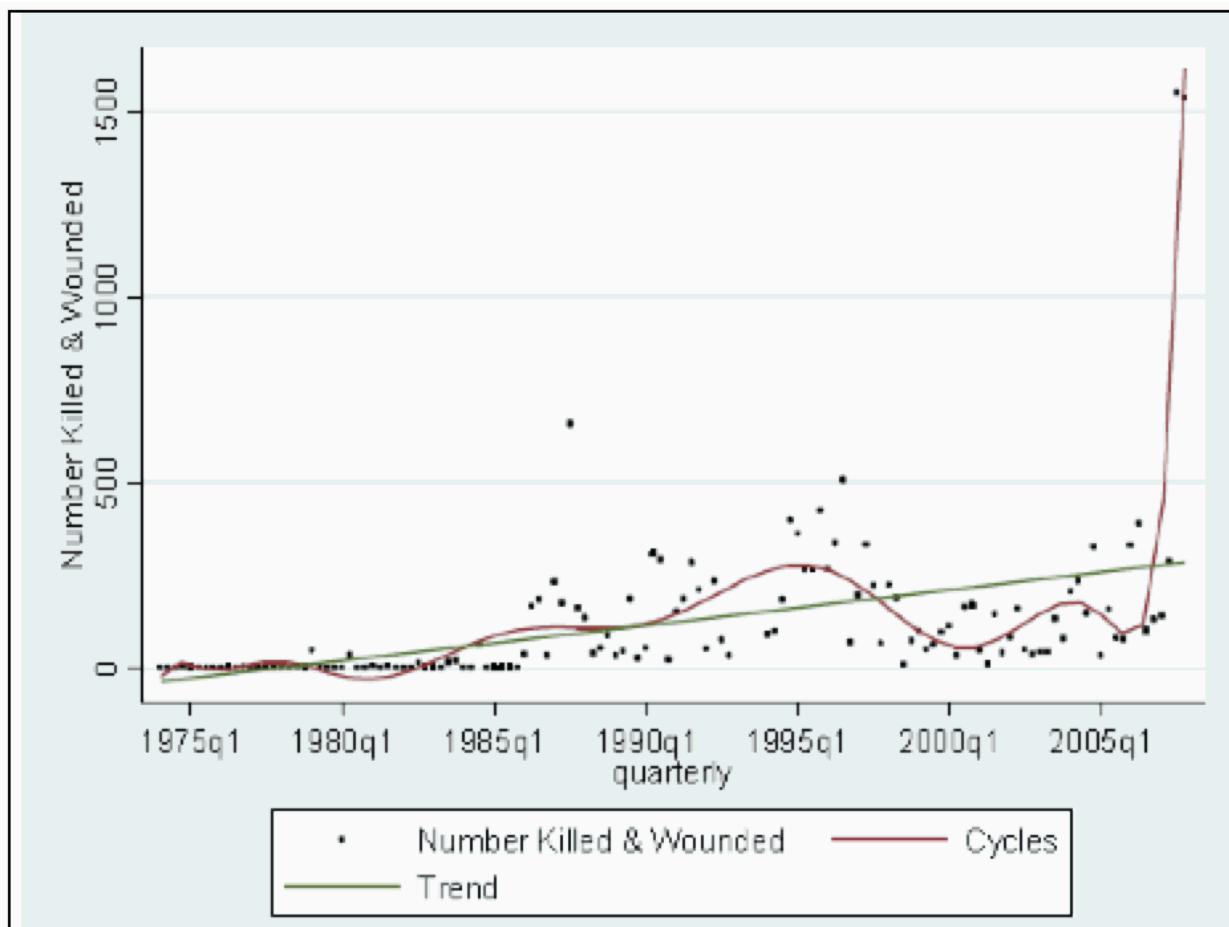
Source: International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion, September 2011

From 2006 onwards security forces were targeted consistently; a trend that reached a high mark during 2009 followed by the victimization of the general public. However, attacks on public installations (mosques, etc.) or political gatherings resulted in a significantly greater number of deaths (22 vs. 8) and injuries (59 vs. 24) per event compared with security installations.[16] The year 2009 was the most destructive in which all types of targets were attacked by suicidal terrorists throughout the country. The incidents vis-à-vis fatalities correlation was proportionate in case of civilians and inverse involving attacks against security forces; this was possibly due to

the protective profile of the latter. A hindsight perspective of terrorism cycles over the last 34 years is captured in Figure II; it helps to understand the trend and character of contemporary human-centric and political violence in Pakistan.

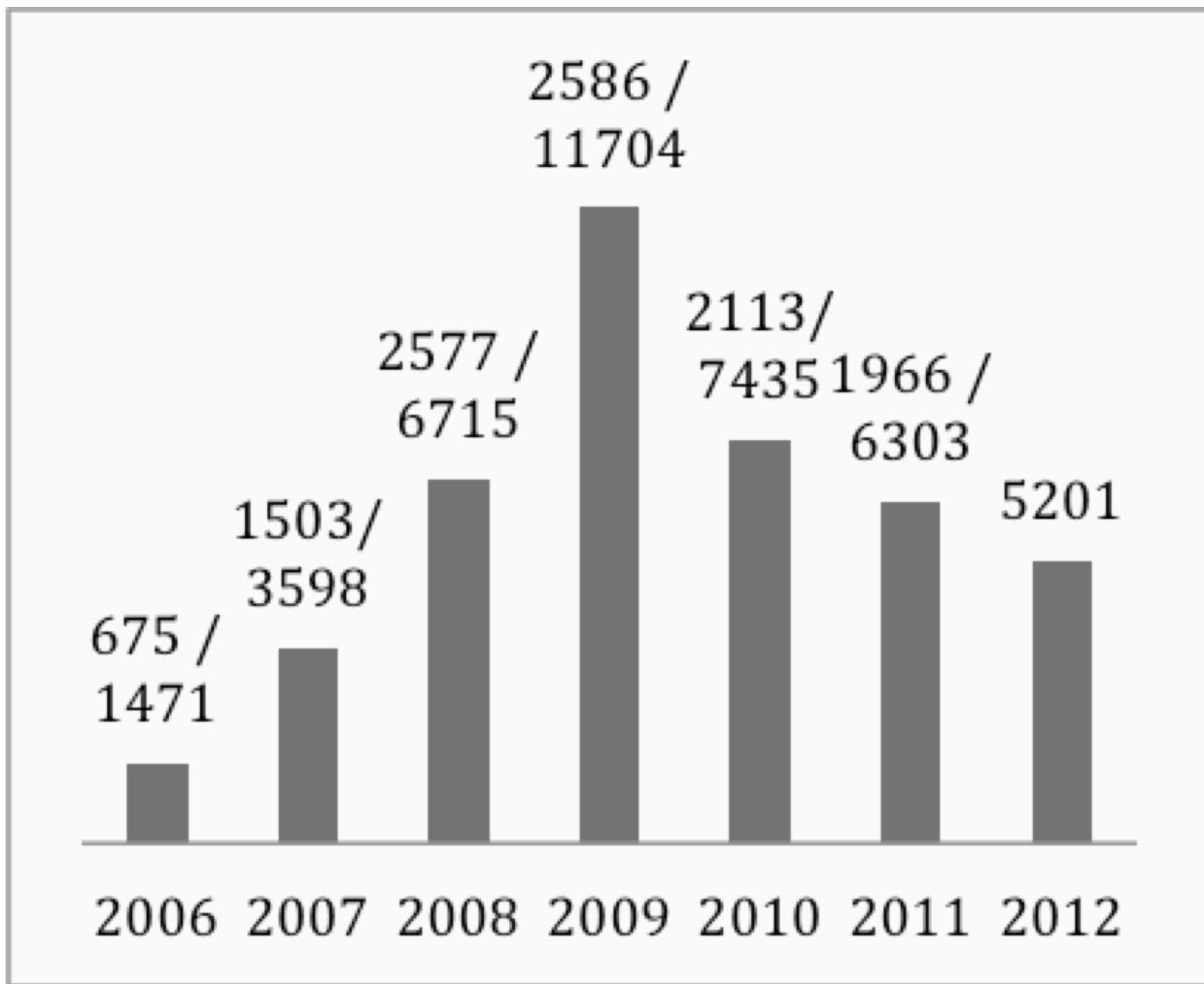
The last cycle shows an extraordinary rise at the end of the graph, indicating the beginning of a very powerful cycle.[17] It peaked in 2009 as mentioned earlier but has undergone a downward trend ever since (Figure III), indicated by a 24 percent decrease in violence during 2010-2011. [18]

Figure II- Trends and cycles in number killed and wounded



Source: *Terrorism in Pakistan: Incident Patterns*,

Figure III - Human centric trend: incidents / fatalities 2006-2012

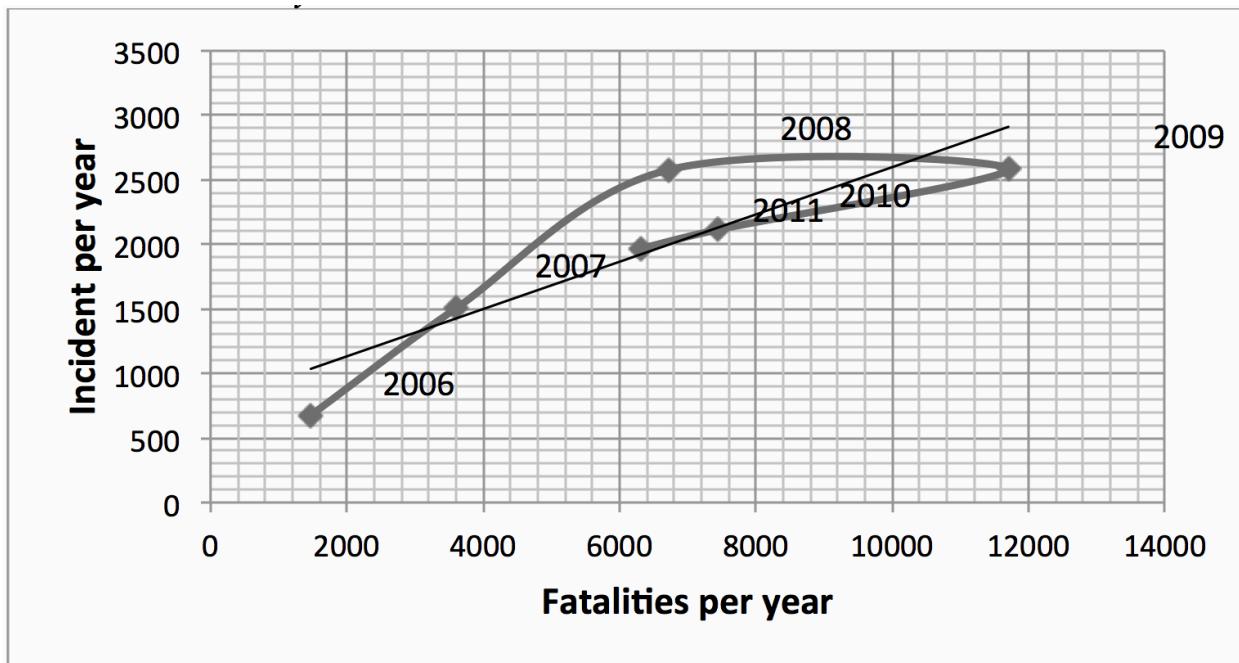


Source: PIPS, South Asia Terrorism Portal

Terrorists' Characteristics and the Impact of Fatalities data up to 14 October 2012

Terrorist Arrests on Terrorism

Auto regression in yearly terms of incidents and fatalities does not provide any intelligible correlation due to fluidity of environment (Figure IV).

Figure IV –Auto Regression Incidents and Fatalities on Yearly Basis

Source: Author's compilation

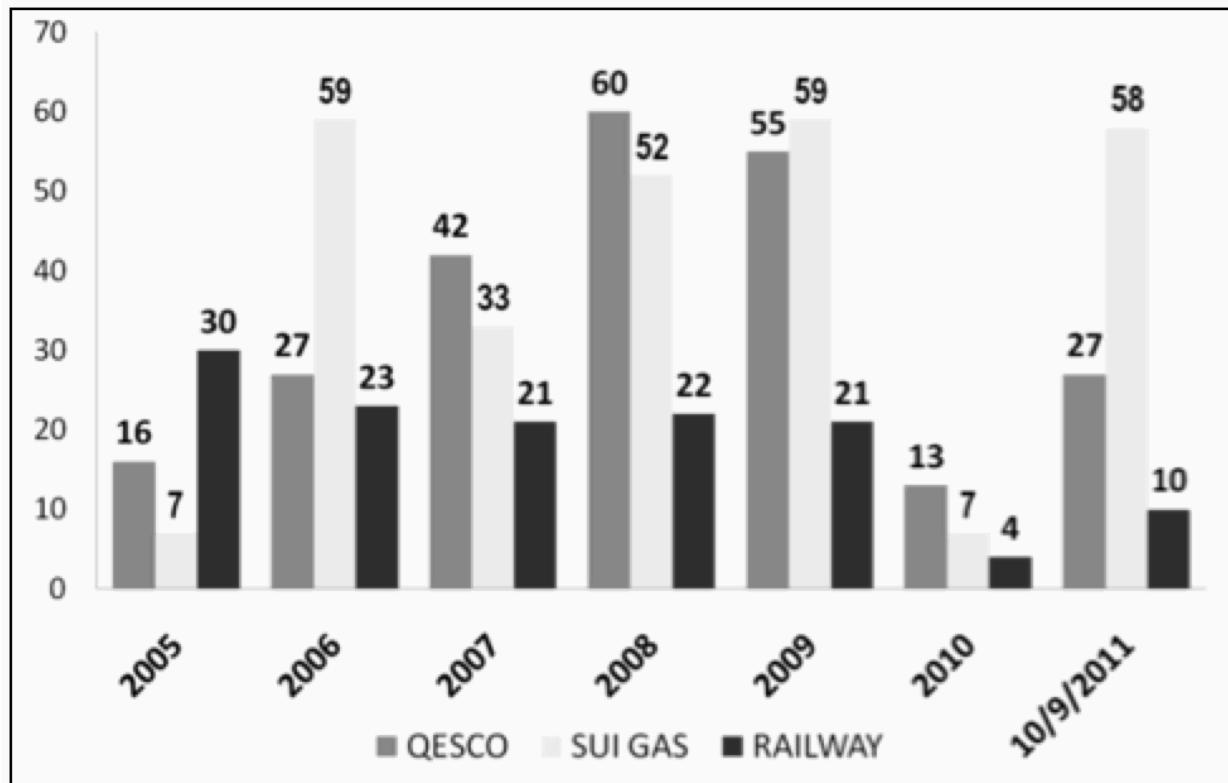
For example, during 2009, the mean average of daily fatalities was 32 lives lost, each incident causing in the average four deaths in that year. The same pattern can be identified during 2006-7 and in 2011. On the whole, the yearly trend is sustained nowhere, while cycles fluctuated with far more frequency in weeks than in months compared to the last 34 years where such pattern formation could be clearly detected. Systemically the terrorism campaign during 2006-2009 aimed at creating conditions for anarchy leading to civil war in the country through widespread fear and panic in society by trivializing the government in the eyes of masses.

Trend II: Infrastructural and Criminalized Warfare

In addition to heightening violence, the Lal Masjid episode of July 2007 in Islamabad marked the advent of another mode of warfare by the Taliban – the economic and infrastructural terrorism mainly in Swat but also in suburbs of Peshawar, Nowshera and Mardan. TTP, TTS, Al-Qaeda, and several leading Pakistani mullahs used the Lal Masjid incident (which cost the lives of 154 people, including 70 militants, and triggered the Third Waziristan War) to instigate an armed uprising against the Pakistani state. ‘Zawahiri used its storming by the Pakistani Army as a rallying cry to fight the US-backed Pakistan government and its military’.[19] During the active period of conflict spanning over 21 months in Swat, education, farming and tourism sectors bore the main brunt and suffered widespread devastation. After the imposition of the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation in April 2009, around 4,000 schools providing education to over 40,000 girls were

shut down in Swat.[20] About 8% (i.e., 427 out of 5,347) facilities in KP that included schools, educational residences and hostels, were damaged; of which 237 were completely damaged and 190 were partially damaged. These included 149 completely and 66 partially damaged girls' schools. The total damage was estimated at Rs 2,696 million (US \$ 27.9 million).[21] In terms of physical infrastructure, 5,934 housing units were destroyed and 7,280 were damaged to varying degrees; damage to housing stock was the highest in the Swat District. In the energy sector, the total damages amounted to Rs. 2,406 million (US \$ 24.9 million). Major damage was also done to the immovable assets and stocks of the Peshawar Electrical Supply Company (PESCO). The direct damages were estimated at Rs. 769 million (US \$ 7.7 million) whereas indirect losses (revenue loss during the crisis period) were estimated to be Rs. 1,045 million (US \$ 10.8 million). In effect, all main resources of revenue in the affected areas were hurt, including agriculture, tourism industry, manufacturing and small-scale industry. Pakistan thus not only lost precious lives and infrastructure; according to official estimates, it also suffered a loss of around US \$ 35-40 billion between 2001 and 2009 – a figure that has now risen to around US \$ 78 billion.[22] Broadly speaking, the degradation and destruction of physical infrastructure cost \$ 1.72 billion between 2001/02 and 2010/11.[23] In Balochistan the warfare on infrastructures is carried out against selected targets of national importance such as electricity supply lines, grid stations, gas fields, railway tracks etc. Dera Bugti, Kech, Panjgur, Jaffarabad and Naseerabad continued to remain common target locations of these attacks. Figure V shows a more or less consistent pattern of intensity since 2006, barring the year 2010. The entire campaign aims at destroying the economic potential of the country.

Figure V - Attacks on the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Sui Gas and Railway Installations: 2005 - 2011



Source: Home Department, Govt. of Balochistan March 2012

Rarely witnessed in the history of armed conflicts in Pakistan, the economic motivation became in recent years a key feature in the terrorist campaign. Almost simultaneously, as the anti-state jihad appeal found a considerable constituency among part of the youth, the violence paradigm began to overlap with crime. As Col. R. Killebrew put it: "Not only that terrorism and crime merged, partly turning religious entities into criminal organizations to fund their operations, expand their reach -- and make the people on top extremely rich, lower-level zealots continued to be recruited for suicide and ordinary missions."^[24]In addition to the criminal generation of revenue by TTP in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) from multiple sources, the TTS under Fazal-u-ullah alone accumulated rents to the tune of Rs. 708.6-819.6 million (US \$ 7.34-8.49) between November 2007 and May 2009 through extortions.^[25]The violence was turned into a market commodity and its perpetrators transformed from rebels into conflict entrepreneurs. This rent seeking behavior has refused to go away; its perpetuation nonetheless has suffered considerably since the military operations in Swat and FATA.

Trend III: Regime and System's Change

The years 2006 to 2009 were significant in witnessing another change in the targeting philosophy of terrorist actors. Several symbolic targets were hit during this time. Apart from the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in December 2007, these included a suicidal blast at a meeting venue of Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, and Chaudhry Aitaz Ahsan, the leader of the lawyers movement (July 2007), the killing of General Mushtaq, surgeon general of the Pakistan Army (February 2008), a sniper's attack on the cavalcade of former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani (September 2008) and a raid at the parade lane Mosque at Rawalpindi during Friday prayers, collaterally killing and injuring high level personalities such as Major-General Bilal and the retired General Muhammad Yousuf respectively (December 2009).[26] Heads of mainstream political parties were not spared either: notably Asfandyar Wali (Oct 2008), the central president of the Awami National Party, Aftab Ahmed Sherpao (December 2007), head of Pakistan People's Party Sherpao Group and Amir Muqam, a prominent leader of the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (November, 2007). Later, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, head of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam- Fazal (JUI-F), Maulana Noor Muhammad Wazir, Maulana Merajuddin (former members of parliament from South Waziristan Agency of JUI-F), the Governor and Chief Minister (CM) of Balochistan were targeted by the Taliban, BLA (The Baloch Liberation Army) and LeJ.[27] Almost all of these terror operations (less the attacks on Rehman, parliamentarians, Governor and CM Balochistan) were planned and executed under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the TTP until his death in a drone strike in August 2009.

Trend IV: Normative-Cultural Terrorism

Several incidents like military operations in tribal areas between 2006 and 2009, in the Swat region during May 2009 and kinetic strikes by Pakistan's Air Force and CIA-drones in FATA stimulated conditions for retaliation by armed non-state organizations. The killing of Baitullah Mehsud in August 2009 was the principal trigger that brought fore a normative or cultural factor spawning heightened violence. The motive of TTP was transformed from usurpation of power envisioned by Baitullah Mehsud to avenging the death of the fallen leader, retaliation against Operation Rah-e-Nijat 2009 and the drone attacks. Energized by the notion of 'badal' (revenge), war was being waged by the Taliban not as an ideological contest but rather as score settling-regardless who the victims are, whether in or outside FATA.[28]

TNSM, TTP and TTS all have their origin embedded in pakhtun culture which is inspired by Pakhtunwali, a societal code of conduct that governs the whole array of social life of Pathans and more specifically of tribesmen. It is their informally binding and socially guiding framework. Among others, 'the central term in Pakhtunwali is nang: honour and shame, dignity, courage and bravery'[29], and badal (the right of blood feuds, revenge or vendetta) is its operationalised

form. Proverbially, it is said that "He is not a Pakhtun [sic] who does not give a blow for a pinch."^[30] Almost in all agencies of FATA, Swat, Dir, Frontier Regions of FATA, ^[31]outstanding individuals (i.e. tribal leaders, heads of anti-Taliban militia, government functionaries, journalists, clergy), groups, clans or tribes opposed to the Taliban ideology as well as those suspected as government supporters or as spies for extra-regional forces deployed in Afghanistan, were subjected to arbitrary public executions, assassinations, tortured deaths, emmasse assaults, suicidal attacks, ambushes etc.^[32] The TTP attack on the Mehran Naval base in Karachi on 22 May 2011 and the one on the Kamra airbase on 17 August 2012 were meant to avenge the deaths of Osama bin Laden and Baitullah Mehsud.^[33] Similarly, several other instances exemplify this trend e.g., the raid at parade lane Mosque allegedly carried out by TTP Punjab chapter was primarily meant to kill the son of the former Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Masud Aslam. The same applies to the attempt on the life of Aftab Sherpao during March 2012 as payback for supporting operations in the Orakzai agency as were suicidal bombings against renegade Taliban commanders, targeted killings of journalists from leading national dailies and TV channels (the News, the Nation, Frontier Post, Daily Pakistan, Ausaf, Khyber News Agency, Geo, Express, Waqt TV) in Swat and FATA, the near assassination of the brave young girl Malala in Swat on 9 October 2012 by the Taliban, routine ambushes of NATO convoys etc.^[34]In a similar retaliatory strike at Quetta during September 2011, 25 persons were killed and 40 others received injuries in two attacks by suicide bombers at the residence of the Deputy Inspector General of FC, Brigadier Shahzad to avenge the deaths of three central Asian citizens targeted by FC a few months ago.^[35] TTP claimed responsibility for this ferocious action in which the brigadier's wife was killed at point blank range.^[36]A distinct feature of this vendetta mindset can be observed in the now almost customized retaliatory strikes of militants following drone attacks or major military operations by Pakistan's Army as well as by paramilitary forces.

Trend V: Ideological and Realpolitik Anarchism

Compared to late 1990s and beginning of the current decade, both the terrorist ideology and its ideologues have been replaced with a new generation of proponents and leadership, with each propagating his own creed.

TTP erstwhile a purely mono-ethnic group, now blends elements from other nationalities such as Punjabi, Seraiki, Kashmiri, Baloch and Urdu-speaking operatives who are managing regional setups in each province with quasi-central command under Hakimullah Mehsud. Splinter groups from Kashmir-focused militant organizations (like Lashkar-e- Taiba as well as Jaishe-e-Muhammad - JeM) have cut off ties with their parent organizations, calling them puppets of state agencies; they have developed a relationship with Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.^[37] Because of that nexus, the narrative of the Punjabi sectarian groups changed to include regional

and international politics. Some writers argue that “JeM and LeJ are now subsumed in TTP” while others take a more cautious line by calling this a “coming together of the major Sunni radical groups in ways that are far more dangerous and far more threatening than they were two or three years ago”.[38] Samina Ahmed from the International Crisis Group, however, opines that “[t]hese groups have their separate identities and goals which could be local, regional and trans-regional, but there is a close alliance relationship and there is a flow of everything from funding to training to recruitment and methodology.”[39]

Rebecca Winthrop and Corinne Graff are also of the view that drawing sharp distinctions between these militant factions in Pakistan has become more difficult due to the growing number of links between them: Al Qaeda now provides support to sectarian factions carrying out attacks within Pakistan; some Kashmiri militants operate in Afghanistan and have participated in other international conflicts; and traditionally sectarian groups are increasingly supportive of the Taliban’s efforts to take over or assume control of local government structures through “Talibanization.”[40] Reportedly a large number of militants from Punjab-based sectarian outfits have in recent years revived contacts or joined hands for the first time with Afghan groups and are inciting sectarianism in Afghanistan.[41] Killing of at least 55 Shia Muslims on 6 December 2011 in a suicide bombing at a crowded Kabul shrine and another four in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif by Pakistani militant outfit-Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al Almi epitomizes this newly found alliance. [42]

Moreover, within FATA, changes have been phenomenal in terms of growth of militant organisations. Amir Rana, an expert on religious movements in Pakistan, claims over 100 militant and Taliban groups and foreign terrorist networks are now operating in and from the tribal areas of Pakistan, while there were only 26 during 2009.[43] Previously, Taliban militants in Khyber, Bajaur, Mohmand and Swat were influenced by Panjpiri Salafism[44]. The groups led by late Baitullah Mehsud, Hafiz Gul Bahadar and Maulvi Nazir Ahmed in North and South Waziristan agencies followed a Pashtun version of the Deobandi school of thought, under political patronage of JUI-F. Even though both these streams are guided by varied sources of belief, worshiping ‘God alone and God direct’ (Tauheediat) provided a confluence for cooperation. Subsequently, their monotheistic thought relented in the face of two competing dynamics, integration and fragmentation, triggered by in-fighting, sustained military operations and realpolitik considerations. The resultant broad amalgam of TTP and Salafists by allegiance to a mutually inclusive cause(s) has impacted on the Deobandi narrative of TTP to integrate theological elements of Ahle hadit, Wahabis, Hanblis, Salafis and of late somewhat of barelvirs which is evident from the assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti, the Minister of State on Minority Affairs.

On the other hand, Deobandi Taliban and militant factions broke away into splinters to embrace particularistic tendencies. Several of the renegade cadres of TTP and those from Waziri groups have engaged in intra-Deobandi violence. This is evident from continuous violent attacks by

unknown networks from within the ranks of the Taliban against JUI-F generally known for its pro-Taliban disposition.[45] The primary cause triggering this opposition is ascribed to JUI's becoming part of the government, supporting military operations in Swat and FATA, as well as its alleged engagement with the United States for its efforts to restore peace in Afghanistan. [46] From 2008 forward dozens of JUI-F leaders have been killed. Besides, there are numerous cell-centric outfits, almost amorphous and unknown to each other, operating rather on individualistic impulses and theological interpretations that have only a nominal association with major terrorist organizations; these accept no central authority.[47] This indicates not only a splintering among main militant organizations -which is a further cause of societal instability - but also the formation of new groupings motived either by hate against their traditional political supporters or in search of a new jihadi agenda in Pakistan. Structurally, this ideological-cum-organisational transformation can be conceptualized as institutionalized franchise formation of terrorism within and across Pakistan.

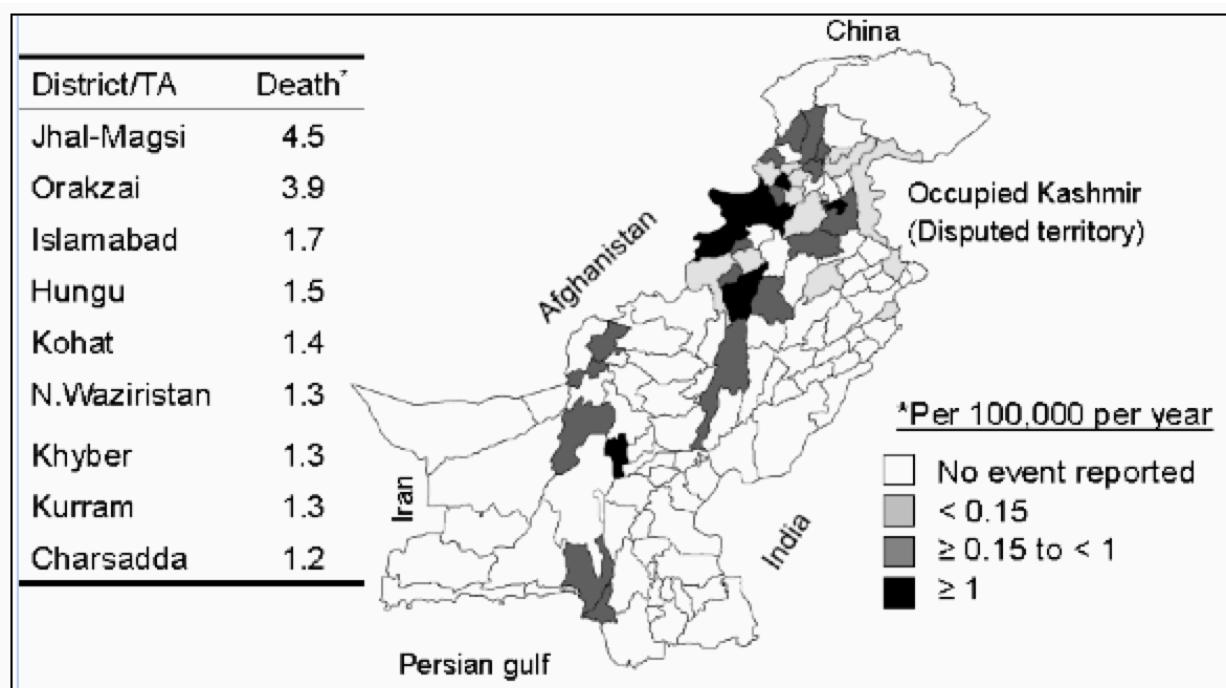
In a similar way, madrassahs have generally been mapped as recruitment centres for potential militants. A trend previously confined to FATA and Swat is now replicating in mainstream Pakistan wherein madrassahs are emerging as a source of glamorized social status and political power afforded to relatively young religious leaders commissioning from the madrasahs. This religious leadership, Saeed Shafqat argues, is 'not necessarily well-versed in religious scholarship but is enthusiastic in instrumentalising Islam by increasingly becoming assertive and uncompromising in projecting their own form of Shari'a'.[48] Deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions have created opportunity structures in the form of meta-securitization contexts for neo-Islamists eager to replace state and political elites. Joshua White's thesis based on patterns of Islamist response to the Lal Masjid crisis, that "the line between persuasive and compulsive Islamism is likely to remain blurred in Pakistan for some time", has now by and large crystalised.[49] Not only the Malala episode but the warning by the Wifaqul Madaris-all Deobandi confederation of seminaries, issued in Karachi to the MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement- United National Movement) during October 2012 to stop it from prying into their madrassahs to know who was studying there is a robust indicator of the change which, was the first time ever that the Wifaq was ominously challenging the MQM in a physical showdown in Karachi.[50]

Moreover, a new secular-religious nexus has also emerged in the past few years to further a common agenda – the collapse of the state of Pakistan. The convergence of the LeJ Balochistan chapter, followed by the Iran-based "Jundullah's "Soldiers of God"...alliance with BLA and TTP is a case in point.[51] In its entirety, the depicted scenario likens to a veneer constituted by a classical ideological and power politics anarchy – a situation that offers opportunities but also more challenges.

Trend VI: Spatial Conquests

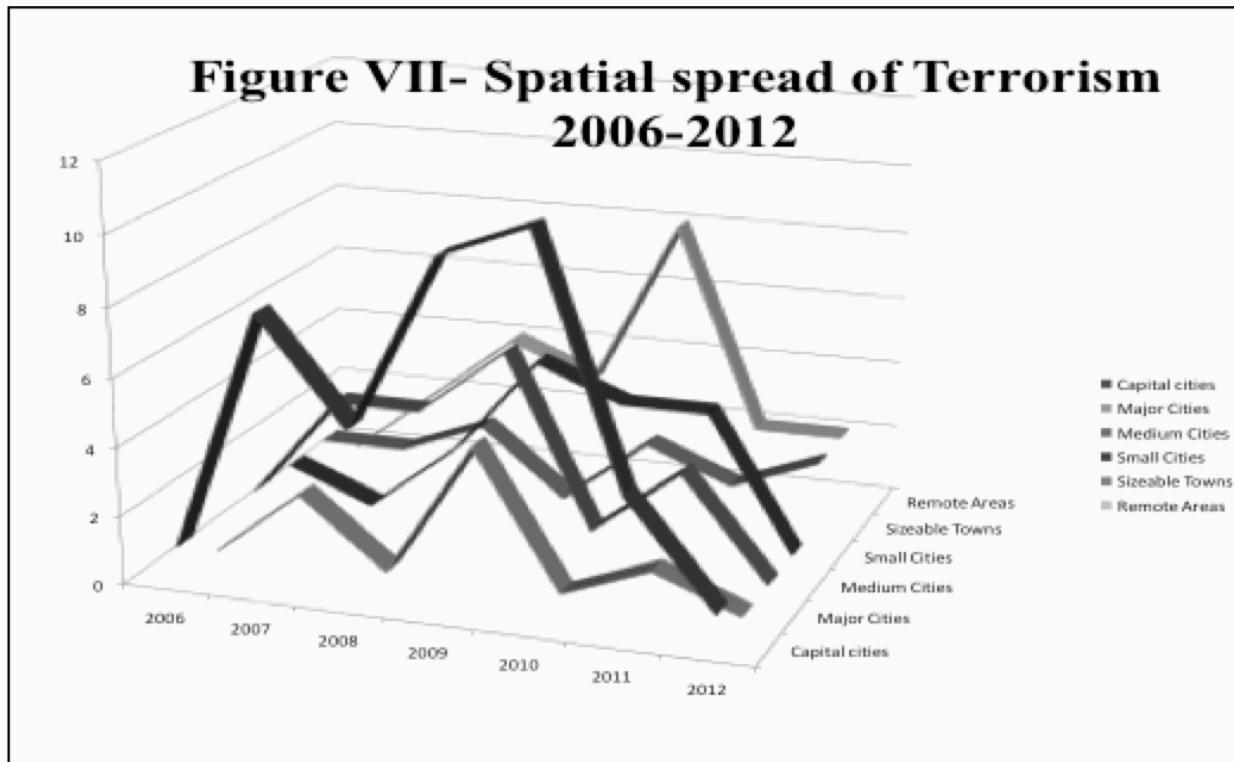
In terms of space, after entrenching itself firmly in FATA, the reach of terrorist groups gradually expanded to adjacent settled areas (southern districts of KP) into its hinterland; later they engulfed all major and medium size urban centres of the country. This trend persisted from 2006 until 2009 and then experienced a reversal now confined mainly to remote areas and sizeable towns (FATA, Swat, smaller districts of KP and Balochistan). Figure VI (suicidal violence only) depicts the origin of spatial patterns from 2002 until 2009. Barring an exceptional incidence at Jhal Magsi in Balochistan, it shows a territorial sprawl (blackened, grayish and light grayish shaded) with FATA as the epicenter, spreading northeast (Hangu, Kohat), east (Bannu, Charsadda, Mansehra, Bhatgram), southeast (Islamabad, Sialkot), south-southeasterly (Lucky Marwat, D.I.Khan, D.G. Khan, Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Lahore), concomitantly enfolding Quetta and southern Balochistan (Kalat, Khuzdar, Lasbela). After the attack on French engineers during May 2002, Sindh escaped suicidal bombing for long time.

Figure VI – Spatial Patterns of Terrorism 2002-2009



Source: *International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion*, September 2011

The evolving pattern becomes more transparent in Figure VII.



Source: Author's compilation

It appears that three types of locations, situated on extreme ends of the spatial spectrum, have constantly been visited by terrorists - capital cities, sizeable towns and remote areas. These were least attacked during 2006, simmered during 2007 and recorded marked violence during 2009-10. Intensity however, decreased after 2010 in capital cities while it is now stabilising in remote regions and escalating in sizeable towns which include various locations in FATA and the districts of KP. In numerical terms, highlighted figures in Table 1 also form this pattern, besides indicating geographical to and fro flow of terrorism in Pakistan. During this period, major cities (Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Mardan, Multan) were engaged intermittently, with Rawalpindi witnessing repeated incidences of HCTB (five times from 2007-2009). During 2009 all categories received heavy punishment except a few remote areas and sizeable towns, indicating relative calm in FATA and enhanced concentration in urbanized terrain. Seemingly, KP and Swat in particular appeared as the foremost targets for conquest, leading to subsequent establishment of Taliban control.

Table 1 - Civilian Casualties 2007- May 2012

Year	KP	FATA	Balochistan	Sindh/ Karachi	Punjab	Islamabad	Total
2012	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured	
May	8	56	71	168	22	94	65
April	11	15	27	45	31	19	58
March	32	76	46	96	27	18	28
Feb	49	93	91	77	24	29	22
Jan	17	61	41	120	29	21	24
2011	569	1319	494	720	591	677	550
2010	722	1580	543	872	483	903	238
2009	1005	1580	1005	2777	275	824	19
2008	982	1735	497	694	296	807	146
2007	1096	1595	1663	2020	224	564	210
Total	4491	8110	4478	7589	2002	3956	1360
							2209
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							257
							746
							39656

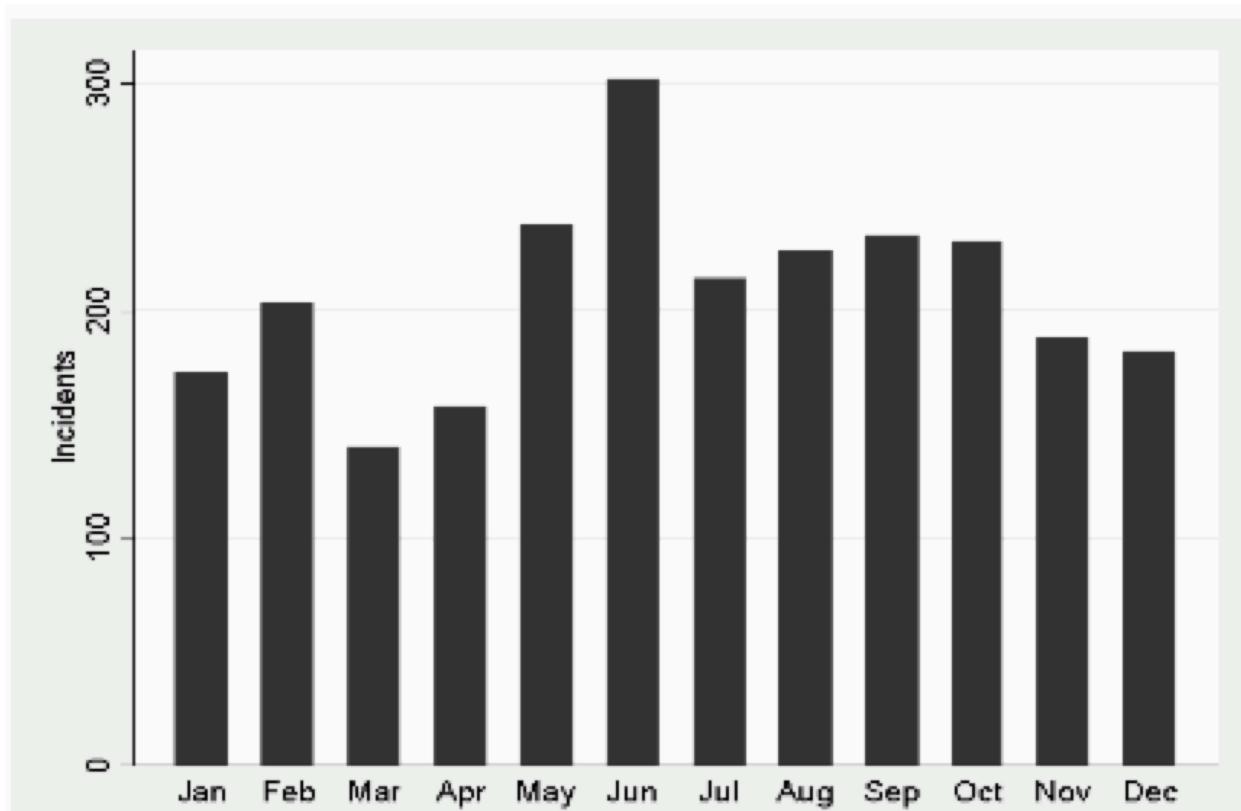
Source: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies 2012

Trend VII: Non-Seasonal Terrorism

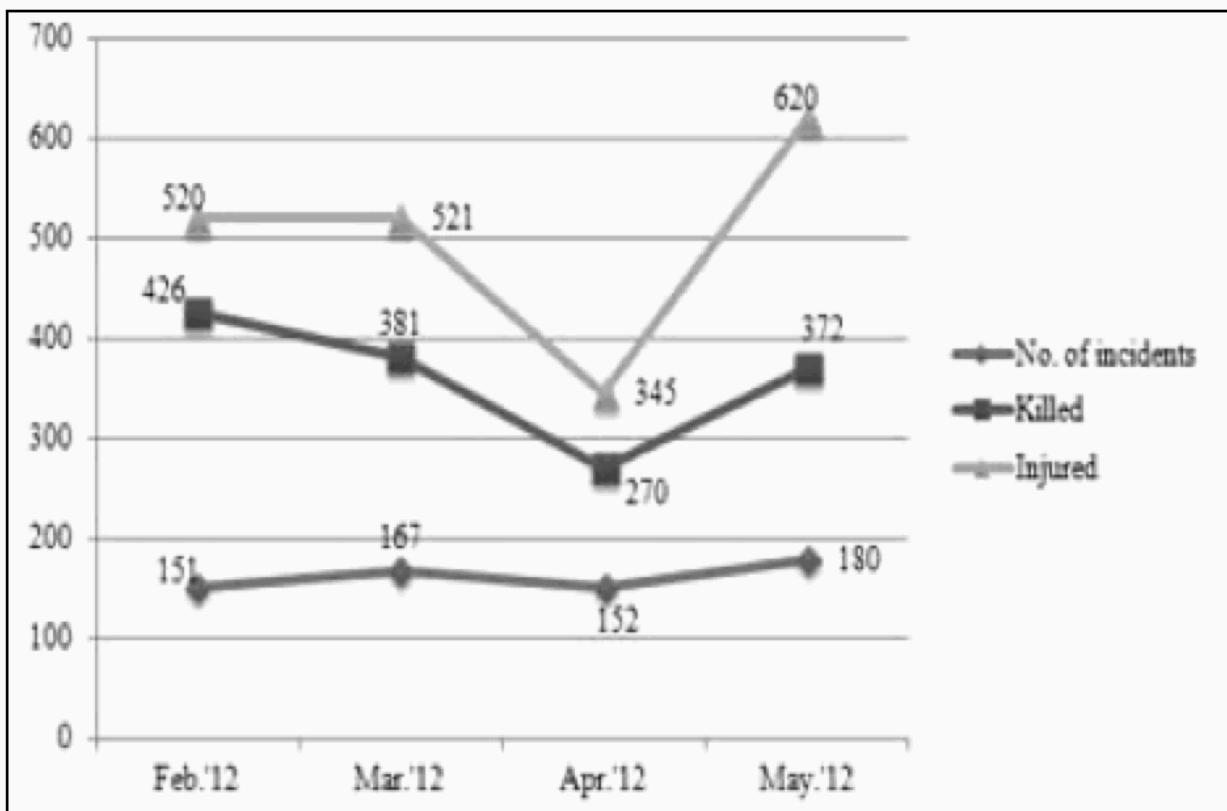
Scholars have subscribed to routine activity theory in order to explain the increase in crime in summer months, attributing it to the availability of more outdoor victims due to good weather and longer daytime hours. Ejaz tested and validated this theoretical postulate by drawing upon data of seasonal (months and week days) distribution of terrorism incidents in Pakistan from 1974-2007 (Figure VIII).[52] Apart from locating maximum terrorist activities during summer season, (May until October), he found Monday being the leading day for terrorism in Pakistan, with 20% of all incidents, followed by 15% on Sunday, 14% on Saturday 14% while Friday recorded the lowest number of incidents i.e., 11%. Friday is the day of peace, rest, and prayers for Muslims; it remained a weekly holiday in Pakistan for many years. Ejaz further noted that since private citizens and the government institutions as preferred targets for making victims, are available less on holidays therefore, the choice of Monday by terrorists makes sense: due to being the first day of the week, more activity is expected.[53] By implication, a correlation is suggested between summer months and earlier days of the week, thereby endorsing routine activity assumption within temporal spheres. These are indeed novel but plausible findings.

However, the scene of violence in Pakistan during the period 2006-2012 makes this construction of seasonality somewhat suspect. Different and sometimes vague patterns emerge when terrorist incidents are studied in temporal terms, spatial contexts or from a spatio-temporal perspective. For example, the winter months (February and March) of 2012 saw hectic terrorist activity in Pakistan, dropping in April and then marginally rising in May (Figure IX). The number of fatalities was substantially higher in February, moderately higher in March but not significantly less in April.

Figure VIII – Monthly Distribution of Terrorist Incidents 2012



Source: Terrorism in Pakistan: Incident Patterns

Figure IX – Month-wise Distribution of Terrorist Incidents 2012

Source: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies 2012 Terrorists' Characteristics and the Impact of Arrests of Terrorists on Terrorism 2010

In the year 2011, except for Karachi, all other provinces experienced heightened terrorist activity during the winter months (February to March). Balochistan, a relatively cold region, maintained a consistent profile in the first five months of the year (Table 2). In earlier years i.e., during 2009, the month of April was the most violent one, with 55 terrorist and operational attacks in Balochistan. For the year 2008, barring minor variations, no let up is observed in the recorded violence during all the winter months (Table 2).[54]

Table 2 – Terrorist Attacks in Balochistan 2008

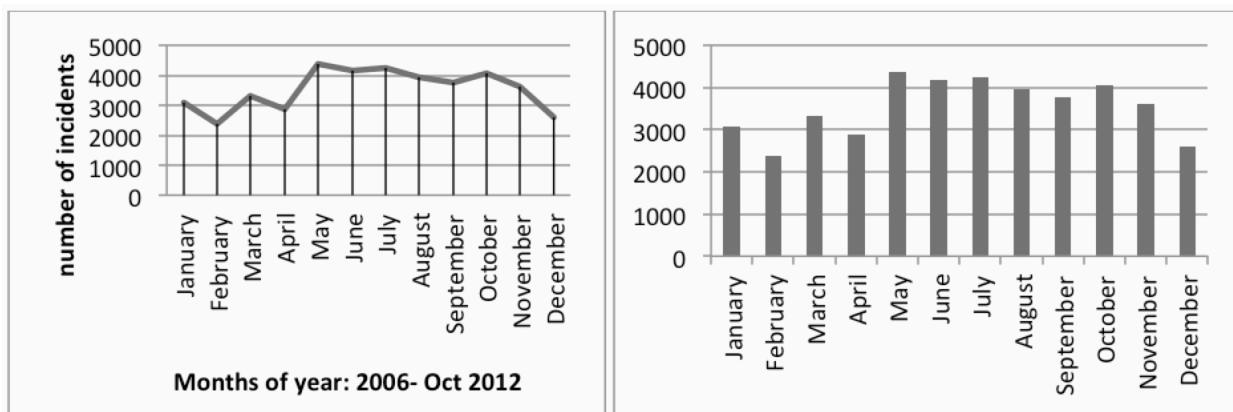
Month	Number of attacks	Killed	Injured
January	46	10	60
February	87	25	86
March	64	12	41
April	73	37	85
May	62	35	76
June	51	28	49
July	55	15	73
August	94	46	174
September	35	24	74
October	32	21	37
November	48	22	30
December	45	21	22
Total	692	296	807

Source: Annual Security Report 2008

Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies

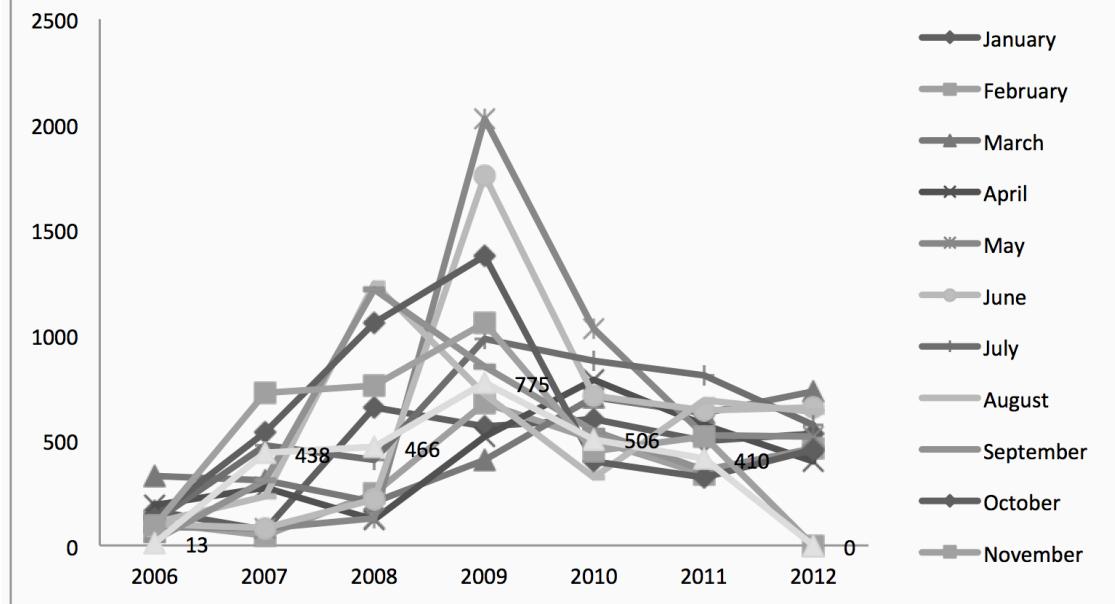
The above, somewhat transactional (annual-cum-regional) perspective assumes a different graphical configuration when the data of the last seven years are holistically synthesized. (Figure X).

Figures X – Monthly Distribution of Terrorism, 2006 – Oct. 2012



However, when identified in terms of more intense months, it becomes clear that the activity is spread unevenly across summer and winter months i.e., *March, April, Jan in 2006; Oct, Nov, Dec in 2007; Jan, August, Sep, Oct and Nov in 2008; Jan, Feb, May, June, Oct and Nov 2009; Jan, March, April, May, June, July in 2010; Jan, March, April, May, June, July, Aug, Nov 2011 and Jan, Feb, March, May, Jun, Aug 2012*. In essence, March, May, July, Aug and Nov stand out prominently as the seasonal entities experiencing the most intense terrorist activity in a year (Figure XI).

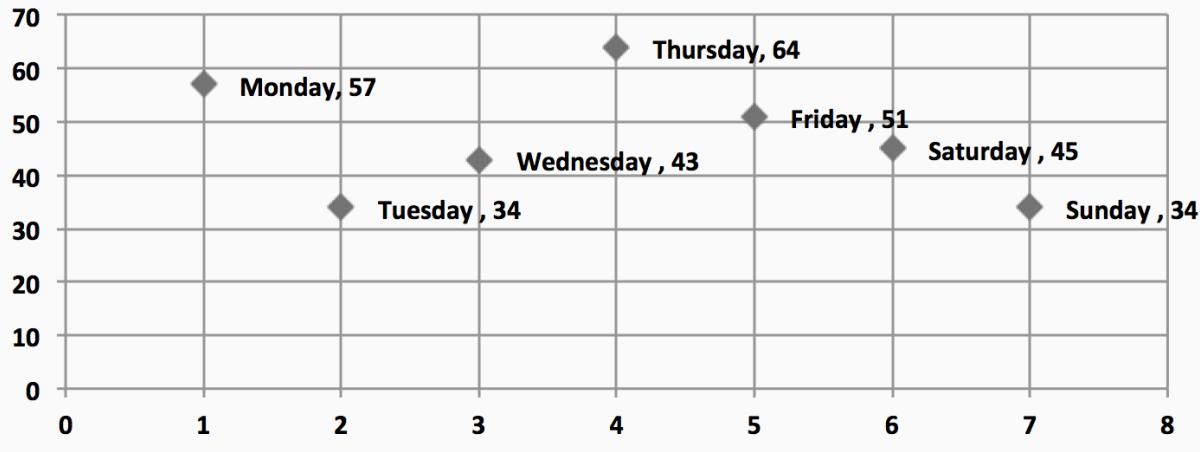
*Figure XI – Monthly Distribution of Terrorism
2006- Oct 2012*



Source: Figures X and XI Author's compilation

Five winter months, i.e., January, February, March, November and December have seen no less than 2,500 incidents each during all these years. This makes the notion of climatic seasonality nearly redundant. The data reflect a provisional shift in earlier seasonal patterns of terrorism established by Ejaz. When compared to the past, where the monthly baseline remained at 216 incidents per month (total 2,590); in the present case this base line has risen upto 3,535 incidents (out of a total of 42,423). A possible explanation for this change is the increased armed confrontation between government and non-state forces as well as the presence and role played by extra regional dynamics (NATO intervention in Afghanistan) in this escalation. In addition, none of the embattling regions lie in snow-bound terrain, affording equal spatial mobility to the warring sides. To ascertain pattern of terrorists' engagement in the course of the week, four years (2009- 2012) worth of data of terrorist on incidents, broken down by weekdays, were extracted from SATP (Figure 11). The analysis indicates that most terrorist attacks were carried out on a Thursday followed by Monday, Friday, Saturday and Wednesday with Tuesday and Sundays receiving least attention.

Figure XII – Terrorist Incidents on weekdays 2009-2012



Source: Author's compilation

A comparison of week day terrorism of the study referred to above and fresh data points towards a major shift in the selection of days for terrorist action (Table 3).

Table 3 – Comparison Weekdays Terrorism Incidence

Terrorism days pattern (1974-2007)		Terrorism days pattern (2009-2012) (Pakistan % (N=294)
Days of week	Pakistan % (N=2487)	World % (78447)
Monday	19.90	15.36
Sunday	15.36	12.92
Saturday	14.52	12.49
Wednesday	14.11	15.22
Thursday	12.67	15.06
Friday	11.34	14.91
Tuesday	12.10	14.05
Total	100	100

Source: Author's compilation

Thursday and Friday being days of large scale visits to shrines and prayers respectively, are a rationale choice for terrorists wishing to produce mass casualties. Tuesday does not show any variation vis-à-vis Sunday which now has the lowest priority with the militants. In fact, Sunday has been a holiday for many decades, with Friday being a holiday only during the military rule of Zia (Friday was discontinued as a holiday by the government of Nawaz Sharif on 23rd February 1997). The presented data belie Friday's significance as a day of peace. Instead, the incidence profile reveals Friday as an important day to hit a larger number of human beings at prayer time, partly also to seek divine providence. During 2012 alone Thursdays and Fridays in Pakistan have seen more suicidal bombings than the first days of the week.[55] Both spatial as well as temporal analysis of terrorist campaigns reveal clear preferences.

Trend VIII: Strategic Terrorism

A further development as an evolved variant of the infrastructural warfare is the degradation of the strategic capability of the Armed Forces and the tarnishing of the national image of Pakistan. Several incidents can be interpreted in this way. First, this trend could be witnessed during the sophisticated assaults at Islamabad's Marriott Hotel ("Pakistan's 9/11"), during the ambush of the Sri Lankan cricket team, the attacks on Lahore's Police Academy and at the GHQ.

[56] Subsequently, the attacks on the Mehran naval air base and the Kamra air base against AWACKs (Airborne Warning and Control System) operated by the Pakistan Air Force can be seen as part of such a rationale. Some writers have explained Kamra attack as a demonstration of righteousness by the TTP.[57] This weird assessment lacks credibility for two reasons; first, no Pakistani would approve of any organization or entity howsoever religious to take on national assets, and second, TTP would be least interested in proving its so-called righteousness by

selecting a target which symbolizes pride of an Islamic country, maintained against the arch enemy India.

In almost all these instances planning innovation and stealth tactics synchronized in time and space has been demonstrated by the terrorist attackers; they outwitted the electronic warning systems and overcame the physical barriers erected at these facilities and installations. Most of the attacks were carried out by Punjabi militants - a characteristic feature of their experiential prowess gained in Indian-held Kashmir against Indian security forces (Pakhtun fighters are more adept at tribal warfare which is characterized by more simple military tactics).

Conclusions

Terrorism has touched every aspect of national life in Pakistan. Critically observed, the entire spectrum of violence has been multi-faceted and multilateral in nature, graduating from lower to upper rungs on the ladder of escalation in a calculated, calibrated and efficient manner. The targets included humans (ordinary people and key functionaries) as well as institutional, organizational, infrastructural and material assets. The levels touched reaches from sub-tactical (citizenry) to tactical (infrastructure), from operational (police, FC, army) to strategic (leadership, defence assets, strategic organizations, state organs). In temporal domains, an unrestrained impetus is visible in the series of recorded violent incidents. The observed trends authoritatively contextualize these manifestations. While varied in its structure, operational system and rallying themes, both state and society of Pakistan have been the terrorists' ultimate objective, posing an existential threat to their survival. The typology suggested at the beginning of this article turned out to be a valid heuristic tool.

In conceptual terms, terrorism can be expressed through eight narratives: (i) as expression of religious constructions; (ii) as a protest and rallying symbol (ideological); (iii) as instrument of policy (political); (iv) as violent criminal behavior (organized crime); (v) as a warfare implement (spatiotemporal swathe); (vi) as propaganda tool (visual warfare through media); (vii) as vengeance (norm) ;and (viii) as vigilantism (state functionalism).

Trend persistency depends on extra-systemic interventions or dynamics such as policy initiatives by government to mitigate and manage the conflict or lack of it, or changed scenarios in Afghanistan and Iran. With minimal variations and adjustments, all trends are likely to endure for the present except Trend II which has considerably lost its original steam, and Trend V which is still evolving.

Randomness than certainty, is the hallmark of spate of violence in Pakistan. Time patterns i.e., trends, cycles and, seasonality do not offer themselves to linear determinism. Precepts of good weather and longer hours in general and week days' sequential pattern of terrorism has not been established, warranting further enquiry. Auto regression in ideal sense thus is handicapped given

fluid nature of violence. Suggestion made at the outset about inapplicability of routine theory is largely supported by cited evidence.

What has, however, emerged is a widespread alienation of the masses of people from the Taliban. There is a discernable unanimity with regard to the fight against terrorism among polity and public alike, something that was missing under the dictatorship. This has legitimized the use of the military instrument under civilian control, has created its popular ownership, checked its undemocratic use and has brought non-military stakeholders into conflict resolution deliberations. However, a historical review will be required to generalize with regard to military versus democratic rule in terms of its impact on terrorism. That apart, the institutionalized franchise formation of terrorism identified in this article portends a response dilemma for policy and decision-making hierarchies.

While all above forms of terrorism are comprehensible to an extent, the trend (VIII) about the destruction of vital national assets is perplexing. Ideologues like Ayman al-Zawahiri regard the strategic assets of Pakistan important to furthering their own vision. He dreams of a future jihad encompassing the southern Russian Republics, Iran, Turkey, and wants to unite a nuclear Pakistan with the gas-rich Caspian region to form a powerful base serving jihad.[58] The America-Israel and Indian nexus figures prominently in Zawahiri's discourse titled "Knights under the Prophet's Banner".[59] In addition to Chechnya and Afghanistan, Kashmir and Pakistan with its nuclear programme occupy key places in his narratives as they can serve as counterweight to the US-Israel nexus.[60] Paradoxically however, the attack on Pakistan's naval air base was construed by many as a punitive strike to avenge death of Osama bin Laden by Al-Qaida.

This setting projects three possibilities. First, TTP has outsourced its expertise to a state inimical to Pakistan which is evident from the type of target selection, degradation of which is least beneficial to Taliban. Secondly, it is probable (and more likely) that the present leadership of TTP having lost its organizational sting, is discreetly colluding with elements within Al Qaeda. For it to materialize, it is imperative that Zawahiri should no more be in effective command of Al Qaeda, and its leadership lay into multiple power centres consisting of foreign elements sympathetic to those who lost their lives in FATA as a result of US drone strikes. It is also possible that it signals a shifting in the agenda of Al Qaeda—a shift away from South and Central Asia to the Arab world and North Africa where the current turmoil caused by the Arab Awakening can be exploited. [61] Almost all statements by Ayman al-Zawahiri since 2011 focused on the Arab Spring[62] and he is urging volunteers to fight in Syria. As a result, TTP has become totally autonomous in articulating violence. A third and less likely possibility is that Gul Bahadur, commander of the Taliban in North Waziristan has jumped in since he will be the most affected party in case of new military campaign. That said, all of these possibilities are debatable.

This article has tried to demonstrate that some traditional modes of addressing the issue of terrorism are outdated. Due to the advent of a new generation of ideologues, militant leadership and a variety of terrorist organizations and networks, the security landscape of Pakistan is unlikely to change for the better in the near future. An innovative and context-sensitive response to national security challenges in Pakistan is called for. The strengthening of democratic institutions, good governance as well as the development of a home-grown epistemology of terrorism analysis are imperative to bring the country closer to a secure peace from within and without.

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Notes

[1] A glance at the references below will provide some insight with regard to the often mundane rhetoric by public figures, as well as regarding the direction and quality of many writings in the national media on terrorism. The last-mentioned report below is particularly incisive in this regard. See for example, “Patterns in Terrorism in North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia: 2007-2010”, CSIS Center for Strategic and International Studies at <http://csis.org/publication/patterns-terrorism-north-africa-middle-east-central-asia-and-south-asia-2007-2010>; Malala “out of danger”, not to be shifted abroad: Rehman Malik, *Dawn.com*, 10 October 2012, <http://dawn.com/2012/10/10/doctors-to-decide-if-malala-needs-treatment-abroad/>; Hadi Aziz, President, prime minister, political leaders condemn blast in Karachi, the Newstribes, Nov 18th, 2012, <http://www.thenewstribes.com/2012/11/18/president-political-leaders-condemn-blast-in-karachi/>; Alam Rind. Terrorism and role of media in Pakistan, *The Frontier Post*, December 6, 2012; Editorial : Anti-terrorism body, *Daily Times*, November 30, 2012; How to eliminate terrorism in Pakistan? *Pakistan Today*, 20 Aug 2011; Editorial, Pattern of terrorism and our response, *The Express Tribune*, November 24, 2012; How Pakistani Media reports Terrorism Related Conflict, Media Content Monitoring & Analysis, Jan 2012 – March 2012, <http://intermedia.org.pk/pdf/Terrorism%20Related%20Conflict%20-%20Media%20Monitoring%20Analysis.pdf>.

[2] This observation is based on a thorough review of all volumes of four leading research journals - Terrorism and Studies in Conflict& Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, Critical Studies on Terrorism and Perspectives on Terrorism, until the end November 2012. Also see Farhan Hanif Siddiqi, An Introduction to Pakistan's Religious and Ethnic Conflicts in Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia, (ed.), Monique Mekenkamp, European Centre for Conflict Prevention, London: Lynne Rienner 2003; Khalid Aziz, Causes of Rebellion in Waziristan, Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training, Peshawar, 22 Feb 2007. www.report.org; Muhammad Amir Rana, “Litterateurs’ Response to Extremism in Pakistan.” *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 3, no. 2 (April-June 2010); Sial, Safdar and TanveerAnjum, “Jihad, Extremism and Radicalisation- A Public Perspective.” *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 3, no. 2 (April-June 2010):33-58; Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari, Leadership Void in Khyber Agency’s Lashkar-e-Islam: Is MangalBagh Dead or Alive?, New Strategies in Pakistan’s Counter-Insurgency Operation in South Waziristan and The Swat Conflict: An Arc of Instability Spreading from Afghanistan to Central Asia and Xinjiang, Global terrorism analysis, Jamestown Foundation; Sadia Sulaiman, Hafiz GulBahadur: A Profile of the Leader of the North Waziristan Taliban and Empowering “Soft” Taliban Over “Hard” Taliban: Pakistan’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Global terrorism analysis, Jamestown Foundation; See stories by Arif Rafiq at <http://tribune.com.pk/author/3030/arif-rafiq/> ; see CTC Sentinels for articles by Zia urRehman.

[3] Especially the following anthologies and books; *Pakistan between Mosque and Military* (2005) by Hussain Haqqani, *Drift into Extremism* (2005) by Hassan Abbas, *Beyond the Crisis State* (2011) by Maliha Lodhi, *Partisan of Allah* (2008) by Ayesha Jalal and *Making Sense of Pakistan* (2009) by Farzana Sheikh.

[4] See e.g., Mohammad Waseem, Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: The Case of MQM, *The Pakistan Development Review* 35, no. 4 Part II (Winter 1996), 617 - 629; Syed Rifaat Hussain , "War Against Terrorism: Pakistani Perspective", *IPRI Journal* Winter 2004; Syed Abdul Siraj, "War or Peace Journalism in Elite US Newspapers: Exploring News framing in Pakistan-India Conflict." *Strategic Studies* XXVIII, no. 1, (2008) Pakistan: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad; Rabia Aslam. Rethinking "Wana": A Game Theoretic Analysis of the Conflict in the Tribal Region of Pakistan, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31, no.8 (2008); Muhammad Amir Rana, Counter-Ideology: Unanswered Questions and the Case of Pakistan *Perspectives on Terrorism*, II, no.3 (3 February 2008); Irm Haleem, 1, 2, 3...Coup! Of Violence, Incursions on Sovereignty and Recourses in Pakistan, *Perspectives on Terorism* , Vol. II, no.12 (17 October 2008); Arshi Saleem, Hashmi, "Conflict Transformation from Ethnic Movement to Terrorist Movement: Case Studies of Tamils in Sri Lanka and Mohajirs in Pakistan," *Policy Studies* 45, 2010, Colombo, Sri Lanka: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies; Moonis Ahmar, 9/11 and the Changing Paradigm of Conflict Resolution - *IPRI Journal*, Winter 2003, Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan, *Pakistan Vision* 9, no.1 (Jun 2008), 1-19 and Sectarian Conflict in Pakistan: Some Lessons From The Irish Experience, *IPRI Journal*X, no.1 (Winter 2010), 50-76 ; Pervaiz Nazir. War on Terror in Pakistan and Afghanistan: discursive and political contestations, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 3, no. 1 (2010); Shehzad H. Qazi Rebels of the frontier: origins, organization, and recruitment of the Pakistani Taliban, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 22, no. 4 (2011).

[5] For individual details see, LEAPS Project – People, at <http://www.leapsproject.org/site/people/>; Tahir Abbas, <http://tahirabbas.co.uk/>; Ishtiaq Ahmed International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore; Moeed Yousuf, USIP, Washington DC.

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[8] Ibid, see 19 for detailed explanation of time series.

[9] See, Chris Woods, "The day 69 children died", *The Express Tribune*, 12 August 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/229844/the-day-69-children-died/>.

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[14] *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, Pakistan Datasheet, Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2012 <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>, and Sectarian Violence in Pakistan: 1989-2012, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm>, accessed 1 September 2012.

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[17] Syed EjazHussain, 20.

[18] Pakistan Security Report 2011, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, 3.

[19] Zahid Hussain, The Scorpion's Tail, (Free Press Export Edition: November 2010), 119.

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The Guardian, 23 May 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/23/militants-attack-pakistani-naval-base-karachi> (accessed 8 September 2012).

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[39] Matt Wade, “An unholy trinity”, 21 October 2009, <http://www.theage.com.au/world/an-unholy-trinity-20091020-h6wt.htm>.

[40] Rebecca Winthrop and Corinne Graff, “Beyond Madrasas Assessing The Links Between Education And Militancy In Pakistan”, Center For Universal Education Working Paper 2, June 2010, Brookings.

[41] Zia Ur Rehman.

[42] ibid.

[43] Amir Rana, “What is young Pakistan thinking?” *The Express Tribune Blogs*, 2 September 2010, <http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/1342/what-is-young-pakistan-thinking/> and see Annex –Taliban insurgency in Pakistan:A counterinsurgency Perspective, *Conflict and Peace Studies*, 2(2) 2009, 9-31.

[44] Pangpiri salafism is a local variant of Deobandis originating from Pangpir village of Swabi District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They are another hardliner group who believe and manifest muscle power in imposition of strict code of Islam, propounded by their innovator, Maulana Panjpir who was educated at Deoband during pre-partition period.

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Data has been calculated on the basis of the annual security reports of 2008, 2009 and 2011, as published by PIPS (Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies), Islamabad.

[55] See e.g., Fidayeen (Suicide Squad) Attacks in Pakistan, SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Fidayeenattack.htm>; accessed 21 October 2012.

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