

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model used successfully against the Tamil Tigers in its own against insurgents?

Sarmad Ishfaq*

Abstract

Initially, the paper highlights the characteristics adopted in the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency model that was used successfully against the Liberation of Tamil Eelam. The paper aims to ascertain whether it is feasible for Pakistan to apply the model against its insurgent group – Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan. The paper analyses whether Pakistan can reproduce the Sri Lankan model by taking into consideration Pakistan's environment; kind of insurgency threat; history; politics; allies; and capability of armed forces etcetera. After analysis, it becomes evident that due to certain differences and in both countries' scenarios and insurgency types, it is simplistic to state that Pakistan should copy the Sri Lankan modus operandi. However, the paper suggests takeaways that need to be appreciated and applied, from the Sri Lankan experience. It is concluded that Pakistan should continue Zarb e Azb; learn lessons from Sri Lanka; and create a "Pakistani model" that is familiar with the country's needs.

Keywords: Counterinsurgency model, Sri Lanka, Insurgents, Pakistan

Introduction

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda attacked the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in an event that would change world history indefinitely. The 9/11 attack was unprecedented in terrorism history due to its striking coordination, scope, and also the dedication of the hijackers among other things (Hoffman, 2002). The aftermath of the attack initiated a plethora of different counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies adopted by distinct countries. For example post 9/11 the U.S., inundated with feelings of vehemence and retribution, displayed their fervor through hard power tactics such as military campaigns. The U.S. along with its NATO allies invaded Afghanistan and later Iraq to eliminate terrorist groups and supportive regimes. Countries not only focused on their independent policies but came together to battle this transnational menace. For example Chow (2005) mentions that ASEAN countries created the Southeast Asian Counterterrorism Center in Malaysia and also partook in collaborative efforts between them and international partners (such as Russia and the E.U.) to fight terrorism.

South Asian countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka have suffered years of terroristic attacks. The latter defeated the LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – insurgency militarily in 2009. Layton (2015) remarks that compared to Iraq and Afghanistan, where no grand victory can be claimed, Sri Lanka won using military strength and ended the LTTE insurgency in 2009. Pakistan, on the other hand, is engaged in its counterinsurgency battle and after some earlier setbacks has made good progress. The country has made innumerable sacrifices of man and material both. Pakistan's efforts have largely revolved around a military approach in fighting terrorism although negotiations have also been tried alternatively. It is the aim of this

*Author is from International Studies, University of Wollongong, Dubai – UAE.

research paper to see whether Pakistan can replicate the successful Sri Lankan model used against LTTE in its own fight against insurgents.

The paper initially, in a brief manner, expounds on the Sri Lankan war against the LTTE and the Pakistani war with its primary insurgent foe – TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan). The paper then lists down and explains the major characteristics of the Sri Lankan model of success. After which the central query will be tackled i.e. whether Pakistan can follow the Sri Lankan model.

Background of the Insurgencies

The Sri Lankan conflict with the LTTE is one with a storied past. The Tamil insurgency goes all the way back to ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority which climaxed subsequent independence from the British in 1948 (Jalal, 2010). The LTTE was formed in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran and aimed at creating a Tamil homeland in the north and east of the Sri Lankan island. The organization thus had a national-secessionist motivation rather than a religious motivation that is usually the norm with most terror groups today. The Sri Lankan civil war started in 1983 and drove the country into mass chaos and panic. Thousands of non-combatants and combatants alike died in the war. According to Smith (2010), different Tamil separatist groups joined the LTTE and began the bloody insurgency. There were many different Tamil separatist groups even before the LTTE but they were all either absorbed or destroyed. By the late 1980's the LTTE had eradicated its competitor groups and became the dominant vehicle for Tamil desires (Fair, 2004). The Sri Lankan army was engaged in four grueling wars with the LTTE. According to Hashim (2013), the LTTE had been labeled as one of the most deadly terrorist or insurgent groups in the world. Furthermore, Hashim says that the group's suicide unit, the Black Tigers, carried out more suicide attacks than any other insurgent or terrorist group from their inception until their demise (1983-2009). The group became masters of using suicide terrorism – ironically better than the Islamist groups it is attributed to. Their support came not only from the Tamil population of Sri Lanka but the millions of people in the Tamil diaspora around the world. It is estimated that their annual revenue was an astonishing \$200 million. They were also infamous for using child and women soldiers and were perhaps the only insurgent group to have a navy and a rudimentary air force in history. This formidable foe was finally crushed militarily by the Sri Lankan's in the final war – Eelam IV.

The Pakistani case compared to the Sri Lankan example carries a few similarities but also some major differences. Pakistan's current insurgency problem has an extensive history and has been exacerbated by events such as the Saudi-Iran proxy wars post-Iranian revolution; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and the 9/11 attacks. But not everything can be blamed on exogenous factors as the country in the past has been partial towards some militant groups. An example is how Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

America assisted seven significant mujahedeen groups to fight off the Soviet invasion in 1979-1989 (Jones & Fair, 2010). Pakistan's partiality was also evident towards certain groups who, with the support of the local public, contested the Indians in Occupied Kashmir. But this strategy backfired in the wake of 9/11 when Pakistan was between a rock and a hard place. Choosing to side with the U.S. or else face a potential war with them, the country chose to fight previously supported groups thus facing a massive blowback. Javaid and Khan (2015), report that Pakistan has been fighting a predominantly U.S. war which has led to negative spillovers and repercussions for its own internal security.

There are many different forms of terrorism in Pakistan which makes it even more challenging to defeat. This paper focuses mainly on the dominant insurgent group, TTP, but also touches upon the Punjabi Taliban. The TTP consists of anti-Pakistan militant groups that came together to form the TTP in 2007 led by then leader Baitullah Mehsud (Fair, 2012). Currently, it is being led by Mullah Fazlullah.

The majority of the insurgent battles have been fought in the North West region of Pakistan called FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) which borders Afghanistan. Although, the TTP and its affiliate groups are primarily made up of ethnic Pashtuns, the other significant group called the Punjabi Taliban is mostly Punjabi in ethnicity. According to Javaid and Khan (2015), the Punjabi Taliban is an umbrella organization that is primarily present in Southern Punjab. They along with the TTP and Al-Qaeda have considerable links with each other and are known to work together from time to time. Tankel (2016) explains that the Punjabi Taliban is sometimes directly and at times indirectly connected to the TTP; he further states that TTP and Al-Qaeda are known to contract out attacks to the Punjabi Taliban. Most of these insurgent groups are different than the LTTE, in that they are religiously motivated and want to install their brand of Sharia (religious law) in the country. Also, unlike the LTTE, these groups do not possess their own navy or air force, but nevertheless are well armed and adequately funded and are proficient in the use of suicide terrorism. A total of 28,152 civilians and security personnel have been killed in terrorist violence from January 2003 to December 25th, 2016 in the country ("Fatalities in Terrorist.", 2016). The Pakistan Army has been engaged in many battles and operations with these foes and is currently involved in a massive operation with the aim of eradicating them.

The Sri Lankan Model

So, what is the Sri Lankan model? The paper will list down the main characteristics of this model that it thought was most relevant as derived from various sources and authors (Hashim, 2013; Babar, 2015; Layton, 2015, Shashikumar, 2009). The Sri Lankan model is distinct from traditional Western COIN (counterinsurgency) methods. The former relied on the brute use of military might while the latter follows

a population-centric approach and is aimed at winning over ‘hearts and minds’ (Beehner, 2010). The following is a brief explanation of the major features of the Sri Lankan model:

Political Will

This has been one of the main characteristics cited for the success of President Rajapakse’s government. The Sri Lankan government rather than surrounding itself in ambiguity as it did in the past came out with a clear objective to eliminate the insurgency. Gotabhaya Rajapakse (Defense Secretary and brother of the President) stated that destroying the LTTE was the main goal and the civil and military leadership were working close together (Hashim, 2013). According to Shashikumar (2009), President Rajapakse backed the army to win the war and he ensured them that he would handle any local and or international political pressures.

Adapt your armed forces to the threat

The defeat of the LTTE was a military one but to ensure this end, the Sri Lankan government needed to train, fund and reinvigorate its armed forces. According to Hashim (2013), there were several changes made in the armed forces that led to the LTTE’s defeat e.g. a more flexible and innovative army; a budget increase to proliferate troop numbers; training soldiers in jungle and medical warfare to create a counter-guerilla force and so on. Layton (2015) says that the Lankan navy, to defeat LTTE’s hordes of boats, used larger counter-horde fast action boats. Desilva-Ransinghe (2010) observes that the Sri Lankan army adopted the SIOT (Special Infantry Operations Team) concept; these soldiers were trained in jungle warfare, medical training etcetera. The use of SIOT’s was extensive and caught the LTTE heavily off guard.

Regulate Media

Hashim (2013) explains that the government saw media as a damaging force to the war and so controlled independent media from entering the battlefield. He further remarks that the Media Centre for National Security and Defense website was created to propagate the government’s narrative. There was only a single version of the war that the media could report – that of the Sri Lankan governments (Shashikumar, 2009).

Engage Internationally

Sri Lanka was lucky in the sense that it had the support of powerful China, and also other major regional actors such as Pakistan and India. The Chinese provided military and economic aid – \$1 billion in 2005 – annually to support the Sri Lankan government's war and in return acquired key contracts with respect to sea ports and so

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

on (Smith, 2010). Sri Lanka received lines of credit for arms purchases and oil from Pakistan, Iran, Libya and Russia (Layton, 2015). Pakistan provided assistance by giving 22 of their Al-Khaled battle tanks. India, which once trained and support the LTTE before Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, also assisted Sri Lanka by providing intelligence reports.

No negotiations or ceasefires

The message was clear. There will be no negotiations or ceasefires because in the past the LTTE had used these to regroup and rearm themselves. The LTTE even assassinated the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and attempted to kill the commander of the army during a ceasefire. International pressure to start negotiations was ignored and the war to eradicate the LTTE continued; the same was the case with ceasefires as they were seen as counterproductive by the Rajapakse's government (Shashikumar, 2009).

Ignore international pressure that may distract from the end goal

During the war, there were many countries and international humanitarian organizations, mostly from the West, that raised concerns over civilian deaths and tried to stop the fighting and engage peace talks. This is exactly what the Sri Lankan's wanted to avoid and did successfully. Hashim (2013) says that Rajapakse's government thought the previous governments had caved into the demands of the international community and allowed the LTTE to regroup. Shashikumar (2009) notes that British and French foreign ministers were disregarded when they suggested to the government to negotiate with the LTTE.

The Sri Lankan Environment

The aforementioned are only some of the characteristics of the Sri Lankan model but this must not be seen as an exhaustive list. Other factors such as mobilizing public support; isolating the LTTE financially and diplomatically; dividing the LTTE from within etcetera were also vital parts of the overall strategy.

The global, regional and local environment in which the model was applied also needs to be highlighted. The Sri Lankan victory was a combination of internal and external factors and not just the employment of innovative tactics or a grand model. Internal defections (mainly that of Colonel Karuna); the 2004 floods that devastated LTTE areas; the new anti-terror global mindset after 9/11; and poor choices made by Prabhakaran played huge roles in the LTTE's defeat (Smith, 2010). According to Jalal (2010), Sri Lanka's took glorious advantage of the post 9/11 anti-terror environment and by proactive diplomacy convinced 32 countries that the LTTE was a terror outfit thus drastically depreciating its funding and legitimacy from abroad. The Sri Lankan's also as mentioned had support from their regional neighbors. It would have been a

different story if China and Pakistan had not provided aid or if India had continued, like in the past, to provide safe havens and other support to the LTTE. There were neither contiguous safe havens nor presence of international forces in Eelam War IV. Sri Lanka's geography, it being an island, helped in fighting the insurgency. The Sri Lankan model was applied on an island with around only 20 million people. There was no immediate neighbor and once sea routes were blocked it became an easy victory.

The Model's Applicability in Pakistan

In this section, the paper analyses whether Pakistan can, cannot, has or has not applied the Sri Lankan models characteristics in the fight against TTP.

Political Will

One of the primary reasons for regional instability and militancy has been the unresolved Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India which in some ways had encouraged Pakistan to use non-state elements in support of the Kashmiris oppressed by the Indian forces. Despite the clampdown on such elements in recent years by Pakistan some of them contrive regardless. Such groups could attack India with or without the author station or complicity of state authorities in Pakistan (Perkovich & Dalton, 2016). The unsettled Kashmir dispute dilutes Pakistan's political will to fight such groups. These and other proxy groups were actively used to fight off the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) and the CIA. Zia Ul Haq, Pakistan's then military dictator, supported these groups in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion and also in India (Grare, 2013).

When the U.S. came knocking after 9/11 President Musharraf faced a stark choice: help the U.S. or risk war with it (Tankel, 2016). The country chose the former and became a key ally in the War on Terror but it did not dismantle relationships with all proxy groups. Due to this sudden pro-War-on-Terror policy change, many of these groups became anti-state (around 2004) and joined together to form the TTP insurgency in 2007 (Fair, 2012). But the problem does not end there because rather than taking a concurrent approach against all militant groups, the government is following a sequential method focusing first on those groups which are conducting attacks within Pakistan.

The other problem is that Pakistan has a past filled with contentious civil-military relations which have resulted in recurring coups in the country ("Pakistan's delicate civil...", 2014). This rivalry between the civil government and military is characterized by the fact that there have been three successful military coups. In 1979, army dictator, Zia Ul Haq, put to death the then prime minister, Zulfikar Bhutto, while later on democratically elected Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, sacked two army chiefs – Jehangir Karamat and Musharraf. The latter of who subsequently toppled Sharif's

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

government in 1999. Pakistan army has an important say in the country's national security and foreign policy issues but some academics claim that it has more say than the government. For example, Grare (2013) states that the army is the major decision maker with respect to defense and foreign policy according to most analysts. While this might have been true in the past, recent trends show the army shifting away from the political realm. For example "Pakistan's delicate civil..." (2014) remarks that Nawaz Sharif's election in 2013 was the first successful changeover between two democratically elected governments in the country's history. The civilian government and military leadership should continue working in their respective spaces and not meddle in each other's (like in the past) as this will make eradicating insurgents impossible. The Sri Lankan model saw that the civil-military relationship was based on mutual trust. The Sri Lankan government provided the army with the necessary leeway it needed so that the army could deliver the desired outcome.

Another factor that hinders the political will and process is that some Pakistani religious political parties sympathize with the Taliban and its affiliated groups. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has a support base with some Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) politicians (Fair, 2012). Most of Pakistan's militant groups are members of the Deobandi sect and the earlier discussed Punjabi terrorist groups are connected to the Deobandi JUI and also to the network of madrassas tied with it (Tankel, 2016).

This being said credit must be given to both the military and civilian leadership of Raheel Sharif (military chief who retired in November 2016) and Nawaz Sharif (no relation) respectively for coming together recently in what is being hailed as the most successful counterinsurgent operation in the country's history – ZARB E AZB. The operation was launched in 2014. The fight has been mainly against the TTP – the main insurgent group – in North Waziristan agency (an agency in FATA) but other groups operating in the same locale have also been targeted. Javaid's (2015) proclaims that the Zarb E Azb has broken the backbone of the terrorist network. According to PICSS (2016), there has been a fifty percent reduction in deaths in February 2016 compared to January 2016. After negotiations in 2013, the TTP attacked the Karachi airport in the following year, which resulted in a convergence of opinions between the army and government vis-à-vis the destruction of the TTP. This attack on the airport and the one in December 2014 on the Army Public School Peshawar (mostly children killed) brought the nation together giving even greater impetus to the operation. Ironically though unlike President Rajapakse in Sri Lanka, Nawaz Sharif was not really seen as the hero of the continuing operation rather it was Raheel Sharif. This emphasizes the schism that ordinary citizens still perceive between the military and civilian leaderships due to their uneasy past. This gap must be redressed so the military and political parties can continue working together.

Adapt your armed forces to the threat

This is one of the principal things going in favor of the country. The Pakistani armed forces are the 6th largest in the world and the largest in the Muslim world. They have nuclear and second strike capabilities and have been engaged in four major wars with arch-rival India. In recent times they continue to fight a non-conventional guerilla war with insurgents. There have been some failures in the past like in South Waziristan Agency (FATA) in 2004, 2005 and 2008 as the army did not adapt its forces to the guerrilla threat and suffered heavy loss of life but eventually later did find its stride – much like the Sri Lankans. Successful operations include Operation Sher Dil (2008-2009) in Bajaur agency and Operation Rah E Rast (2009) in Swat Valley. Another success story was the South Waziristan operation called Rah E Nijat (Path to Salvation) in 2009. This operation saw the army using its forces on multiple axes (like the Sri Lankan's) and grabbing the higher ground to control the valleys (Lalwani, 2010). Jan and Szrom (2009) while talking about the same operation mention that the army had learned from past lessons and melted the TTP resistance in the area; the Pakistani public heavily supported the operation in South Waziristan. Ali (2009) comments that this operation used around 30,000 troops and successfully cleared TTP strongholds like Makeen, Kotkai, Laddah etcetera.

There was much anticipation after this operation that another one should start in the neighboring North Waziristan agency. This came in 2014 in the highly successful Zarb E Azb which is an operation not based solely on kinetic force as it includes madrasa reforms and the mainstreaming of FATA etc. The destruction of TTP strongholds; the elimination of public support among FATA residents; and the removal of the bomb making and munitions factories have been the highlights of the operation (Khan, 2015). Javaid (2015) says that due to the operation against TTP (and other outfits) terrorist assaults have declined as well as their infrastructure in the region being destroyed.

Shah (2014) states that there has been a huge learning curve since earlier operations which includes knowledge about the terrain; use of precision weapons etcetera. Pakistan army has adapted by learning how to fight in small groups; how to conduct surprise offensive actions; and even the use of bird calls to signal approaching terrorists (Craig, 2015). The Institute for Economics & Peace (2016) states that: in 2015 Pakistan had a 38% decline in terrorist related deaths compared to 2014; Operation Zarb E Azb was responsible in part for the decline of terrorism as well as the fact that there has been infighting within TTP; Pakistan had the third largest reduction in deaths from terrorism for 2015 thus experiencing the lowest number of deaths since 2008; and the country also saw a 45% drop in terrorist activity compared to 2014.

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

The army faces quite a challenging rugged terrain vis-à-vis FATA where the porous mountainous border allows militants to hide and also escape to Afghanistan. The Afghani forces despite U.S. and NATO military support are not at par with Pakistani forces thus making the capture and killing of escaped militants even more difficult. This has soured Pak-Afghan relations which make achievement of success even more taxing. Sustained peace is not attainable without concurrent counterterrorism progress.

None the less, the Pakistan armed forces have played their part in clearing and holding areas but the socio-economic regrets of the people in FATA and other underdeveloped areas must be looked at. This being the government's job should be prioritized so the battles can be won in the long term politically rather than just militarily. Pakistan's armed forces, after a shaky start, have shown that they are more than capable of defeating insurgents.

Regulate Media

Pakistan's private electronic independent media saw a boom during President Musharraf's (dictator turned President) tenure. The proliferation of news channels has been astounding in the past ten years. Unfortunately, Pakistani media has a history of being quite sensationalist. While debating this, Shaukat (2015) mentions how during the Karachi Airport Operation in 2014, the media instead of censoring certain sensitive information, provided terrorists with key info through their live feed. He further mentions that the media has provided space and time to terrorists in both print and electronic sources. Nonetheless, with regards to Operation Zarb E Azb, the media was regulated and reserved and so its positive role must be commended. The media did not conduct irresponsible reporting and did not provide terrorist's space to broadcast their views (Javed, 2014). This was achieved through a government regulation.

With respect to the Sri Lankan's and their regulations on media, Pakistan has followed a similar but not same approach. The ISPR (Inter-Services Public Relations), the news disseminating body of the armed forces, has been the primary and sole source of news regarding Zarb E Azb. From all the soldiers martyred and areas cleared to the munitions factories destroyed and terrorists killed, everything was reported by ISPR through tweets or press conferences. This allowed for limited disparaging reports that could lessen public support. Hali (2014) says that the military was smart in letting select groups of media outlets visit insurgent training sites and bomb factories because it led to greater public support for offensive action. International media was also reporting the same story as the local media due to the preliminary source, ISPR, being the same. This handling of the narrative was extremely important for Sri Lanka and has helped Pakistan immensely as well.

Engage Internationally

A congressional report cites that Pakistan has received \$25.91 billion in military and economic aid since 2001 (Hassan, 2013). Although military and developmental aid have been provided yearly by the Americans and other states, the paper believes that the plethora of actors, state and sub-state, allies and enemies, is so immensely engrossed in the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan, that it becomes exceedingly difficult to obtain long-term strategic objectives. The Sri Lankan experience, by contrast, was relatively isolated compared to Pakistan. So, although Pakistan has enjoyed a lot of aid, the direct involvement of actors (Saudi Arabia, Iran, America, NATO, Afghanistan, China, India etc.) and their differing policies on how to handle things has been counterproductive in tackling insurgency.

There have been many instances which led to deep distrust between Pakistan and America. For example, Malik (2012) notes that due to an incursion by NATO on Pakistani soil which led to the martyrdom of 24 Pakistani soldiers and injured 14, Pakistan closed NATO's supply routes, demanded an American apology, and also told America to vacate Shamsi Air Base. Furthermore, the unilateral action undertaken by U.S. Seals which led to the death of Bin Laden produced even more stressful relations between both countries ("US and Pakistan: a troubled relationship", 2012). It hardly paints an idyllic picture when your key allies and you are not on the same page. The Pakistanis also feared that the Americans would eventually leave Afghanistan like they did after fending off the Soviets and Pakistan thus would inherit a potentially chaotic situation (most American soldiers have left Afghanistan). It also does not help that since 9/11 most Pakistani's have had a negative view of America and its war on terrorism. According to Safdar, Budiman and Hamid (2001), Pakistani informants were against the War on Terror and saw it having negative repercussions on Muslims and Pakistan. This view seems to be justified especially since the effects of the American war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria has divided the Muslims in the Middle East and the subcontinent.

The controversial use of drones must also be highlighted. America uses CIA and military drones to conduct strikes on insurgents in the country's border areas and it has been cited that the collateral damage in the drone strikes can lead to further radicalization of people. Mahmood (2016, p. 32), deliberating on the drone issue, concludes that although short-term results might be achieved by drones through killing extremists, it still leads to an "exacerbation of deep-rooted societal issues" in people which can lead to militancy in the country. The drone controversy is a contentious issue in Pakistan as it receives nearly all negative feedback from Pakistani citizens –especially in FATA – and news outlets. The use of drones, however, has decreased substantially over the last few years.

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan has also been one marked with vicissitudes – cooperative sometimes, uncooperative at others. Due to the mountainous yet porous Afghan-Pak border stretching to an estimated 2,430 kilometers, cross-border terrorist movement has been high. Due to this cross-border terrorism, the two countries have embarked on a mutual blame game with each other (Javaid, 2016). Battling various sub-state insurgent groups with communication gaps and blame games will only lead to infighting. To make matters worse, India, the regional rival of Pakistan, has been trying to negate Pakistan's influence vis-à-vis Afghanistan and has invested a lot in Afghanistan's development much to the disarray of Pakistan. Firdous, Nazir, and Ali (2015) say that India, since the fall of the Taliban regime in Kabul, has adopted a proactive Afghan policy which includes cultural, economic, social and also political assistance. Naqvi (2015) writes that India sees a potential comrade in Afghanistan to counter Pakistan and is spending money in various Afghan sectors to do so. Shockingly (or not so), there is also growing evidence of Indian involvement in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. "Govt airs video of Indian spy.." (2016) reports that in 2016 Pakistan caught Indian spy, Kulbushan Jadhav, who has confessed on video that he assisted anti-state Baloch groups on behest of Indian spy agency, RAW (Research and Analysis Wing). In the midst of a war on insurgency and militancy, the regional politics of power that are at play do not aid Pakistan at all.

Lastly, the Saudi-Iran proxy in Pakistan must also be emphasized. Iran and Saudi Arabia have been indirectly fighting in Pakistan since the Soviet invasion and Iranian revolution – both in 1979. Riyadh funds Sunni madrassas, while Tehran counters by funding Shia madrassas. "Saudi-Iran rivalry..."(2016) says that Pakistan is entrenched with madrassas either getting finances from the Saudis or Iranians and the country believes foreign funding, even from allies, is causative of the militant dilemma.

The region of South Asia is fighting a war on terror where many international players are trying to do what is best for only them. Unfortunately, even allies are distrustful of each other. The Syrian civil war crisis and its myriad of actors and policies should act as a lesson for South Asia and other actors to not engage in similar behavior.

No negotiations or ceasefires

Negotiations have been done in the past with insurgents but have proven to be counterproductive for the government. The military had some calamitous operations in 2004-2007 which led to three rounds of negotiations with the Taliban in 2004, 2005, 2006; this move brought the insurgency more legitimacy and strength (Lalwani, 2010). The three major negotiations or peace deals that have taken place are: The Shakai Peace Agreement (2004) Srarogha Peace Agreement (2005), and the highly infamous Swat Agreement (2008) which allowed insurgents to impose Sharia law in Swat valley. All of these failed due to the insurgents not keeping their end of the

bargain and so military action had to be initiated. Khattak (2012) while reviewing these three major negotiations and other unwritten negotiations concludes that all of them were signed from a position of government weakness and hence allowed the militants to attain noteworthy concessions which included money and legitimacy. As the LTTE used ceasefires and peace talks to regroup, so did the TTP and its affiliates.

It must be added here that America has frowned upon Pakistani initiative towards negotiations and there was little to no pressure from them on the Pakistani government to start negotiations. Pakistan has found better success in negotiating from a stronger position such as in conclusion of Operation Sherdil (2009) in Bajaur Agency. Presently, the government is in a position of power due to the current operation; it would be wise to follow the Sri Lankan route and keep fighting as there is no international pressure to stop and there exists huge public support for the operation. That being said, negotiations from a strong government position could also be in the cards (it is always difficult to make accurate predictions).

Ignore international pressure that may distract from the goal

In 1947 Pakistan was born. Finding itself feeling the precarious pull of two superpowers during the Cold War, it had a decision to make. Although Pakistan wanted a non-aligned foreign policy, it became more reliant on the Americans. This policy of reliance has continued until the present day albeit with some ups and downs in the progress. The reality is that instead of facing similar pressure like the Sri Lankans' faced i.e. to stop Eelam War IV due to their gun blazing COIN strategy, America, and the West have pressurized Pakistan to initiate anti-insurgent operations or to do better in the wake of failed operations. It must be noted here that although America and the West can exert considerable amount of pressure on Pakistan, Pakistan does not submit to America's will on many occasions thus leading to troubled relations.

Pakistan has come under immense pressure from Britain and America to play a greater role especially after attacks like the London Bombings and the failed Time Square car bombing. "Pakistan in post-London crackdown" (2005) reports that Pakistan has been under pressure to act against militants since it was revealed that three London bombers were British-Pakistani and had recently visited Pakistan. It seems Pakistan has a 'reverse pressure' scenario compared to the Sri Lankans where Pakistan is asked to take offensive initiative (or do better) rather than curtail it. This is due to the importance of defeating Al Qaeda, Taliban and its affiliates for America and its allies – NATO and otherwise.

Ali (2009) remarks that Operation Rah E Nijat in South Waziristan was commended by Pakistan's western allies who in the past had been very critical of the country's military endeavors. The Pakistani's were urged by the Americans years before Operation Zarb E Azb to initiate an operation in the North Waziristan agency to clear

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

out the TTP, Haqqani network, Uzbek and other fighter strongholds (Coll, 2014). Thus if Pakistan continues with vast operations like Zarb-e-Azb it bodes well for them as similar successful operations have received critical acclaim at home and abroad. Prominent nations that have a degree of influence on Pakistan such as China and America will almost always welcome operations against insurgents as it helps deter terrorists from a doomsday scenario that the West likes to propagate i.e. insurgents getting their hands on Pakistan's nukes.

Pakistan's Environment and How It Contrasts to Sri Lanka's

Reading the above makes one understand that there are many differences (and some similarities) between both the Sri Lankan and Pakistani scenario which might undermine Pakistan copying the Sri Lankan model in full such as: The LTTE was motivated by ethno-nationalism while the TTP and others are motivated by religion; where Sri Lanka faced one primary insurgent, Pakistan faces multiple insurgents; the relationship between military and civilian leaderships is different in both countries; the terrain where the majority of battles both countries have been engaged in are different etcetera. Other than this, the strategy used by the Sri Lankans was in many regards opposite of the traditional COIN. Pakistan, on the other hand, is succeeding using the traditional COIN approach focusing on "the people" and using only necessary force. Not to mention the major differences in culture, religion, ethnicities, history, politics of Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The paper mentioned earlier the local and global environment in which Sri Lanka applied its model; it would be prudent to mention the same for Pakistan. Pakistan is in a strategic location where multiple actors exist and the complex situation is characterized by self-interest, trust deficits, negative rhetoric, power politics and huge communication gaps. It is neighbored by unstable Afghanistan and hostile India. The Sri Lankan model was applied on an Island with a population of 20 million people while Pakistan has a population of over 180 million. Pakistan, in 2016-2017, is in a situation where the majority of U.S. troops have departed leaving a potential time bomb in Afghanistan in the hands of Pakistan. It is also in an environment where ISIS is trying to establish a foothold in the country, albeit with scant success so far. Pakistan is also a battleground for the Saudi Arabia and Iran proxy war since many years. The economy is not as strong as it should be and the country is deeply divided on ethnic and religious lines. Political corruption has also been an issue that has plagued the nation for many years. While the country has some key allies and has received a lot of developmental and military aid, many negatives are still stacked against it in its current environment making the replication of the Sri Lankan model even more complicated.

Conclusion

As there are many variances between the two countries and the insurgencies, it is important not to treat the Sri Lankan model as monolithic. In everyday rhetoric, it is simplistic to say that Pakistan should follow the Sri Lankan model to defeat insurgents, although this type of thinking excludes the distinct characteristics of each country and the local and global environments. The Sri Lankan model seems effective and makes sense but it might not have the same end effect in a country like Pakistan which is a profoundly dissimilar country with a similar but not the same insurgency problem.

That being said, there are takeaways that the government and military of Pakistan should use from the Sri Lankan model. For example, Pakistan should develop a strong political will. Pakistan also faces a complex web of actors in its fight (United States, China, Afghanistan, and NATO etc.) and this can prove counterproductive. This is a little out of Pakistan's control but it should nonetheless try to bridge gaps so all allies are on the same page. The Pakistan Armed Forces have adapted to the threat well and have played its part excellently while the country has also done well to regulate the media and ignore negotiations/ceasefires with respect to the current operation.

There is no 'one size fits all' counter-insurgency model. Pakistan should learn from both the Sri Lankan model and its own experience and create a suitable "Pakistan model" which focuses on its own peculiar requirements, capabilities and shortcomings while also keeping the local, regional and global environment in mind. This will allow it to better tackle the insurgent threat and finally end this plague.

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

References

- Adam Khan (2015, September). *Zarb-e-Azb: The Operation that Changed the Course*. Retrieved from <http://hilal.gov.pk/>
- Ali, I. (2009). Military Victory in South Waziristan or the Beginning of a Long War?. *Terrorism Monitor*, 7(38), 6-8. Retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/programs/tm/>
- Ashraf, J. (2014, August 13). Media maturity in Zarb-e-Azb. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://nation.com.pk/national/13-Aug-2014/media-maturity-in-zarb-e-azb>
- Babar, M. (2015, January 10). Can General Raheel enjoy what General Fonseka got to rout terror?. Retrieved from <http://dailymailnews.com/2015/01/10/can-general-raheel-enjoy-what-general-fonseka-got-to-rout-terror/>
- Beehner, L. (2010, August 27). What Sri Lanka Can Teach Us About COIN. Retrieved from smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/513-Beehner.pdf
- Chow, J. T. (2005). ASEAN Counterterrorism Cooperation Since 9/11. *Asian Survey*, 45(2), 302-321. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/as.2005.45.2.302>
- Coll, S. (2014, June 19). Pakistan's Offensive, America's Withdrawal. Retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/pakistans-offensive-americas-withdrawal>
- Craig, T. (2015, April 16). To fight the Taliban, Pakistani military turns to unorthodox but simple tactics. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/to-fight-the-taliban-pakistani-military-turns-to-unorthodox-but-simple-tactics/2015/04/15/eac5b088-e1ee-11e4-ae0f-f8c46aa8c3a4_story.html?utm_term=.ca8b8ebe603f
- DeSilva-Ranasinghe, S. (2010). *Strategic Analysis of Sri Lankan Military's Counter-Insurgency Operations*. Retrieved from Future Directions Website: <http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/1266992558-FDIStrategicAnalysisPaper-12February2010.pdf>
- Fair, C. (2012). Pakistan in 2011: Ten Years of the "War on Terror". *Asian Survey*, 52(1), 100-113. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/as.2012.52.1.100>
- Fair, C. (2004). *Urban battle fields of South Asia*. Retrieved from www.rand.org
- Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2016. (2016). Retrieved from www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/Pakistan/database/casualties.htm
- Firdous, T., Nazir T., & Ali A. M. (2015). India's Afghan Policy: PAKISTAN Perspective and China Factor. *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, 22(1), 209-220. Retrieved from <https://www.cfplist.com/default.aspx>

- Grare, F. (2013). Pakistan's foreign and security policies after the 2013 general election: the judge, the politician and the military. *International Affairs*, 89(4), 987-1001. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12055>
- Govt airs video of Indian spy admitting involvement in Balochistan insurgency. (2016, March 31). *Dawn*. Retrieved from <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248669>
- Hali, S. M. (2014, August 11). The media and Zarb-e-Azb. *Daily Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/12-Aug-2014/the-media-and-Zarb-E-Azb>
- Hashim, A. (2013). *When counterinsurgency wins*. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/>
- Hassan, M. (2013, June 27). Pakistan 'received \$25.91b' from US since 9/11. *The Nation*. Retrieved from <http://nation.com.pk/national/27-Jun-2013/pakistan-received-25-91b-from-us-since-9-11>
- Hoffman, B. (2002). Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11. *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism*, 25(5), 303-316. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/105761002901223>
- Institute for Economics & Peace (2016). *Global Terrorism Index 2016*. Retrieved from <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf>
- Jalal, M. A. (2010). Think Like a Guerilla: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Sri Lanka. *Harvard Kennedy School Review*, 11, 181-188. Retrieved from <http://www.proquest.com>
- Jan, R., & Szrom, C. (2009). *The War in Waziristan: Analysis of Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path to Deliverance)* [Presentation Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/Operation_Rah-e-Nijat_Phase_One_High_Quality.pdf
- Javaid, U. (2016). Analyzing the Dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations: Past and Present. *South Asian Studies: A research journal of South Asian Studies*, 31(1), 137-147. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/9>
- Javaid, U., & Khan, M. S. (2015). Complex Regional Dynamics: Pakistan's need for Political Paradigm Shift. *Journal of Political Studies*, 22(2), 555-574. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/6>
- Javaid, U. (2015). Operation ZARB-E-AZB: A Successful Initiative to Curtail Terrorism. *South Asian Studies: A research journal of South Asian Studies*, 30(2), 43-58. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/9>
- Jones, S. & Fair, C. (2010). *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*. Retrieved from www.rand.org

Can Pakistan replicate the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model

- Khattak, D. (2012, September 26). Reviewing Pakistan's Peace Deals with the Taliban. Retrieved from <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/reviewing-Pakistans-peace-deals-with-the-taliban>
- Lalwani, S. (2010). The Pakistan Military's Adaptation to Counterinsurgency in 2009. *CTC Sentinel*, 3(1), 9-13. Retrieved from <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/publications/sentinel>
- Layton, P. (2015, April). How Sri Lanka Won the War. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com>
- Mahmood, F. (2016). The Efficacy of U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan: The Long View. *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, 11, 21-36. Retrieved from <http://yalejournal.org/>
- Malik, A. R. (2012). The Salala Incident: Implications for the PAKISTAN-United States Ties. *Strategic Studies* 32(1), 45-60 Retrieved from <http://www.issi.org.pk/category/iss-publications/strategic-studies/>
- Naqvi, A. A. (2015). Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations Post 2014: Impacts on Pakistan's Security. *Journal of Political Studies*, 22(1), 197-214. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/6>
- Pakistan in post-London crackdown. (2005, July 20). *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2005/07/2008410103438817571.html>
- Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Peace Studies. (2016). *Significant Decline in Deaths in Militant Attacks: PICSS report* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.picss.net/archives/4748>
- Pakistan's delicate civil-military balance. (2014). *Strategic Comments*, 20(1), ix-x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2014.899743>
- Perkovich, G., & Dalton, T. (2016). *Not War, Not Peace?*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Safdar, A., Budiman, A., & Hamid, N. A. (2001). War against Terrorism: Perception of Pakistani informants. *Pakistan Vision*, 17(1), 1-24. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/12>
- Saudi-Iran rivalry puts Pakistan in a bind. (2016, February 23). *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1673967151&Country=Pakistan&topic=Politics>
- Shah, M. (2014, August 16). Comparing Pakistan's Past Military Operations with Operation Zarb-e-Azb. Retrieved from <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/news/national/comparing-pakistans-past-military-operations-operation-zarb-e-azb/>

Sarmad Ishfaq

- Shashikumar, V. K. (2009). Lessons from Sri Lanka's War. *Indian Defense Review* 24(3). Retrieved from <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/>
- Shaukat, S. (2015, January 23). War on Terror: Media Should Behave Maturely. Retrieved from <http://readersupportednews.org/pm-section/86-86/28198-war-on-terror-media-should-behave-maturely>
- Smith, N. A. (2010). Understanding Sri Lanka's Defeat of the Tamil Tigers. *Joint Force Quarterly* 59, 39-44. Retrieved from www.ndupress.ndu.edu/JFQ/
- Tankel, S. (2014). Beyond FATA: Exploring the Punjabi Militant Threat to Pakistan. *Terrorism And Political Violence*, 28(1), 49-71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.879056>
- US and Pakistan: a troubled relationship. (2012). *Strategic Comments*, 18(1), 1-3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2012.671054>