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Triage:
The Next Twelve Months in Afghanistan and Pakistan

By Andrew M. Exum, Nathaniel C. Fick, Ahmed A. Humayun, David J. Kilcullen

Center for a New American Security

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Cover Image

Armed Pakistani Taliban gather at a hideout in the semi-autonomous tribal district of Orakzai on April 22, 2009. Pakistan helicopter gunships raided suspected militant hideouts near the Afghan border killing 20 insurgents and destroying their positions on April 19. The ground and air assault on militant bases near Ghiljo in the semi-autonomous tribal district of Orakzai comes after a suicide attack in the nearby town of Hangu killed more than 20 security personnel on April 18.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

JUNE 2009

Triage:
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INTRODUCTION

The United States and its allies are in the eighth year of a war in Afghanistan that has no end in sight. Making matters worse, the security situation in Pakistan — always a safe haven for the insurgents against whom the United States and its allies have fought — has also declined precipitously. Attacks by violent extremist groups have now spread east of the Indus River and into the heart of the previously calm Punjab region, yet Pakistan's civilian and military leaders have reached a consensus on neither the nature of the threat nor the appropriate course of action to address it.

The strategic consequences of the extremist advance are severe. In Afghanistan, the Taliban's growing strength compels U.S. and allied forces to devote increasing resources just to maintain a weak and unstable status quo, even as popular support for the mission fades among the citizens of many NATO countries. Failure in Afghanistan would mean not only a possible return of pre-9/11 safe havens, but also a sharp blow to the prestige of the United States and its allies. The conflict's center of gravity, meanwhile, has now shifted to Pakistan, where the government's very survival is at stake. Al Qaeda remains committed to attacking Western forces and targets, but recent success in Pakistan has emboldened militants who, for now, have fixed their attention there. An al Qaeda victory in Pakistan would galvanize global support for the radical Islamist movement, provide a safe haven for al Qaeda, and substantially increase the threat of nuclear terrorism.

A new U.S. administration is looking to reverse the negative trends in Central and South Asia against the backdrop of this steadily worsening situation. President Barack Obama has stated that critical U.S. interests are at stake in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Specifically, the core U.S. goal is "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan." [1] Such a "counter-haven" strategy could be operationalized using a variety of different means. The president and his advisers have elected to pursue a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan while encouraging the government in Islamabad to do the same in Pakistan.

To implement this strategy effectively, the United States must rapidly triage in both countries. For the United States, NATO, and the governments involved, winning control over all of Afghanistan and Pakistan in the coming year is not a realistic objective; setting priorities is paramount. But because populations in civil wars tend to side with whichever group exercises control, protecting the population must take precedence over all other considerations. What counts, for now, is controlling what we can with the resources we have. Thus, this paper recommends that the United States and its allies pursue an "ink blot" strategy over the course of the next 12 months on both sides of the Durand Line, securing carefully chosen areas and then building from positions of strength.[2]

The tasks facing Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus — as well as their civilian counterparts, Ambassadors Karl Eikenberry and Richard Holbrooke — are complex and difficult. Yet, they must recognize one crucial thing: in insurgencies, momentum counts. The Taliban is pursuing a strategy of exhaustion designed to bleed away public support in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe for continued Western engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. If the United States and its allies are unable to halt the downward trajectory of the war in Afghanistan over the next year, then public support for the war effort in the United States will surely ebb. That decline in popular support for the war is likely to be even sharper in allied nations. Regaining momentum will allow the United States and its allies to sustain public support both in Afghanistan and at home, prerequisites to defeating the Taliban.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first section outlines the current situations in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, with particular focus on Pakistan since the situation there is both graver and less well understood. These situation

assessments highlight two trends that threaten the administration's stated objectives of promoting a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan and enhancing a stable, civilian-led, constitutional government in Pakistan: decreasing government control and increasing civilian casualties. In Afghanistan, Taliban influence has displaced government control in large sections of the country, while the government and the coalition have been unable or unwilling to guarantee security for the people. In Pakistan, extremist control in the northwest has spread with alarming rapidity and now threatens traditionally stable areas in Pakistan's Punjabi heartland. In both countries, civilian casualties resulting from military operations have been increasing.

The second section provides two operational recommendations for Afghanistan and two for Pakistan. These four recommendations seek to address the most pressing dangers identified in the situation assessments, and to further progress toward meeting the benchmarks that matter.

In Afghanistan:

- Adopt a truly population-centric counterinsurgency strategy that emphasizes *protecting the population* rather than controlling physical terrain or killing the Taliban and al Qaeda.
- Use the "civilian surge" to improve governance and decrease corruption in Afghanistan. Place civilian expertise and advisers in the Afghan ministries and — to a lesser degree — the provincial reconstruction teams, rather than in the embassies.

In Pakistan:

- Strictly curtail the counterproductive drone strikes on non-al Qaeda targets in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). The expansion of the approved target list for U.S. drone attacks to include non-al Qaeda individuals should be reversed.
- Strengthen the Pakistani police, with an emphasis on areas — such as Punjab and Sindh — where the Taliban has not yet exerted control.

The third and final section examines the question of metrics. Since momentum is crucial in counterinsurgencies, accurate metrics are necessary to reinforce what works and to change what does not. Measurement of progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan has focused excessively on inputs, rather than outcomes; when measurement has focused on outcomes, they have often been the wrong ones. We suggest different metrics for tracking, and adjusting, the implementation of the administration's new strategy, with particular emphasis on measuring the peoples' perception of their own security and the government's ability to exercise legitimate control.

The recommendations laid out in this paper are not a panacea for the problems threatening U.S. and allied interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. No matter what course of action is adopted by the United States and its allies, violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan is likely to increase before the overall situation improves. It will take time for trend lines to become apparent — perhaps August at the earliest in Afghanistan, as the fighting season peaks and the outcome of the presidential election becomes clearer. In Pakistan, the situation is even less certain, U.S. leverage is weaker, and options are even more constrained. By triaging the problems of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the United States has the opportunity to reverse the erosion of security in both countries and to lay the foundation for eventual stability. In so doing, the United States will protect not only the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also its own vital interests.

Triage:
The Next Twelve Months in Afghanistan and Pakistan

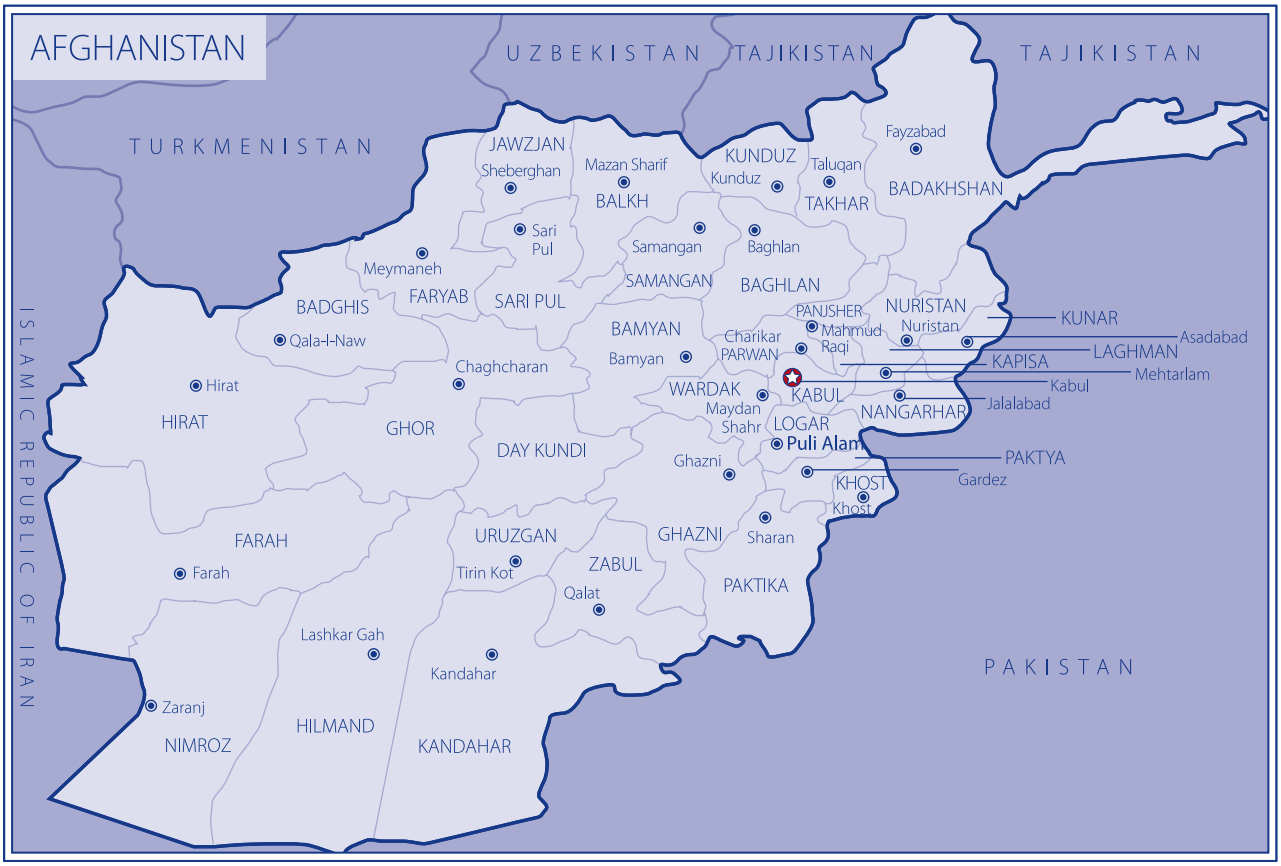
Afghanistan

In counterinsurgency campaigns, if you are not winning, then you are losing. By this standard, the United States and its allies are losing the war in Afghanistan. A swift victory over the Taliban regime in 2001 — facilitated by Special Operations Forces and airpower acting in partnership with local Afghan allies — was quickly followed by an insurgency of increasing intensity. After late 2002, the vast majority of U.S. assets and attention were focused on Iraq, while Afghanistan was relegated to an "economy of force" mission.[3] Safe havens in the neighboring tribal areas — the likes of which facilitated the September 11th attacks — are expanding, not contracting.[4,5]

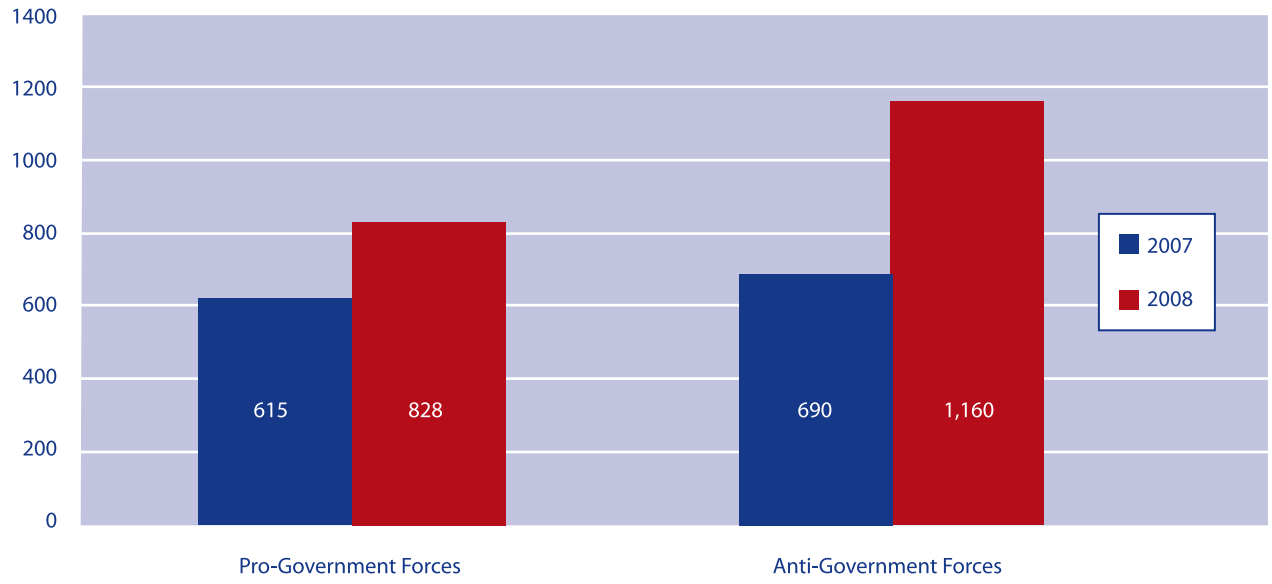
The security situation in Afghanistan has declined steadily over the past several years, with the U.S. military and its NATO partners either unable or unwilling to protect the Afghan people. According to the UN, the number of civilians killed in Afghanistan increased by 41 percent from 2007 to 2008.[6] Over a longer period, violent attacks rose from 50 per month in 2002 to over 550 per month in 2007.[7]

According to Amnesty International, the coalition is responsible for roughly 25 percent of the violence committed against Afghan civilians, with the Afghan government and the insurgency responsible for the rest. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, of 2,118 total civilian casualties last year, 828 were caused by coalition and Afghan government forces.[8]

Taliban control is increasing along with civilian casualties. According to one estimate, the Taliban have a "heavy presence" across



Cause of Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan



Data from United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan. Pro-government forces include international military forces and Afghan national security forces.

approximately three-quarters of Afghanistan's nearly 400 districts, up from one-half only one year ago.[9] Last year, the Taliban substantially increased operations in formerly stable regions in western Afghanistan and around Kabul while consolidating control in the south by providing services such as legal adjudication.[10] Countering the Taliban, as of April 2009, approximately 58,000 NATO troops had been deployed to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).[11] An additional several thousand U.S. forces are carrying out the "train and equip" mission to the Afghan military as part of the Combined Security Transition Command — Afghanistan (CSTC-A).[12] The Afghan National Army (ANA) stood at approximately 79,000 soldiers and there were roughly 76,000 officers in the Afghan National Police (ANP) in April 2009.[13] In his new strategy for the region, President Obama has pledged an additional 17,000 combat troops as well as an additional 4,000 to CSTC-A. At the conclusion of the NATO summit in April 2009, NATO allies announced that they would deploy an additional 3,000 forces to secure the Afghan elections.[14] These troops include approximately 900 from Britain, 600 from Germany, and 600 from Spain. NATO allies also committed to providing 70 Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams to help expand the ANA, and pledged an extra $100 million through the NATO Afghan National Army Trust Fund to the ANA.[15]

This troop increase is needed, but Afghanistan is a country of more than 30 million people spread out over mountainous territory the size of Texas. Because population-centric counterinsurgency operations demand a high concentration of troops, there will still be a sizable gap between the coalition's stated objectives and its available resources, even with these significant new commitments of forces. The United States and its allies may have enough military power to clear Taliban fighters from large areas of Afghanistan, but they do not have enough troops to hold and then build across equivalently large areas. This constraint will require commanders to triage ruthlessly, allocating their forces to areas where the smallest number of coalition troops can protect the greatest number of Afghans.

Further complicating this already-challenging mission, Afghanistan is one of the poorest, least developed, and most corrupt countries on earth. Transparency International rates Afghanistan 176th among 180 countries surveyed — only Haiti, Myanmar, Iraq, and Somalia suffer from greater corruption.[16] Since 2005, perceived transparency in Afghanistan has declined precipitously.[17] Unsurprisingly, 76 percent of Afghans think corruption is a major problem in their country.[18] Severe problems with corruption and inefficiency have contributed to a remarkable decline in positive public opinion about the Afghan government in recent years: the national government enjoys an approval rating of 49 percent, down from a high of 80 percent in 2005.[19]

Worse still, the Karzai administration is increasingly perceived as illegitimate by the people it governs, a trend only exacerbated by the decision to postpone the elections from spring until late summer.[20] Because insurgencies are, in essence, a competition to govern, this crisis of legitimacy does not bode well for the authorities in Kabul. Additionally, when the United States is viewed as supporting a government whose legitimacy is questioned by its own people, then U.S. intentions are called into doubt.

The first Afghan presidential elections in October 2004 were a watershed event: 80 percent of 10.5 million eligible voters turned out to elect President Karzai in an election remarkably free and fair for a country with no history of democracy.[21] In 2009, by contrast, the Karzai administration suffers from weakened popular support and charges that it is manipulating the power of the incumbency in order to win. If the outcome is to be perceived as legitimate by the population of Afghanistan, then coalition military forces in the field must provide a safe environment for voter registration and polling, while civilian advisers inside the government and its ministries provide reassurance that the process has been free and fair.

Legitimacy, however, may not be first among the government's problems. The most immediate concern lies in control. Populations in civil war environments tend, out of rational self-interest, to support whichever side is strongest in their area. Tilting the balance in favor of the government requires getting information about the insurgents from the people, but building the trust for people to collaborate requires demonstrating that the government is defeating the insurgents. It is a vicious cycle, and breaking it is a fundamental early step in the successful prosecution of a counterinsurgency campaign. Until the coalition and the Afghan government are able to do so, the Taliban will maintain and expand their control, compelling and persuading the people of Afghanistan to resist the government and the coalition.

"Taliban control is increasing along with civilian casualties."

The problems facing the United States and its allies in Afghanistan are complex and multidimensional. The administration's strategy reflects a multipronged approach employing both kinetic and non-kinetic lines of operations.[22] In Afghanistan, though, Western efforts along all lines of operation have had limited success over the past seven years. Economic development has done little to improve the lives of the average Afghan, and the Afghan government has remained highly corrupt, making even violent extremist organizations like the Taliban appear to be viable alternatives. And despite almost eight years of combat operations, the United States and its allies have never had the resources — and, until recently, the desire — to implement a population-centric strategy that promotes the security of the Afghan people over every other consideration.

Pakistan

The rising tide of insurgency threatens to overwhelm a beleaguered and increasingly unstable Pakistan. As in Afghanistan — except with even bloodier results — terrorist attacks increased over the last year.

While the government has been slow to recognize the seriousness of the threat it faces, the military has done what conventional militaries do best: attempt to seize terrain and kill its adversaries. These efforts have yielded little success, and have even been counterproductive.

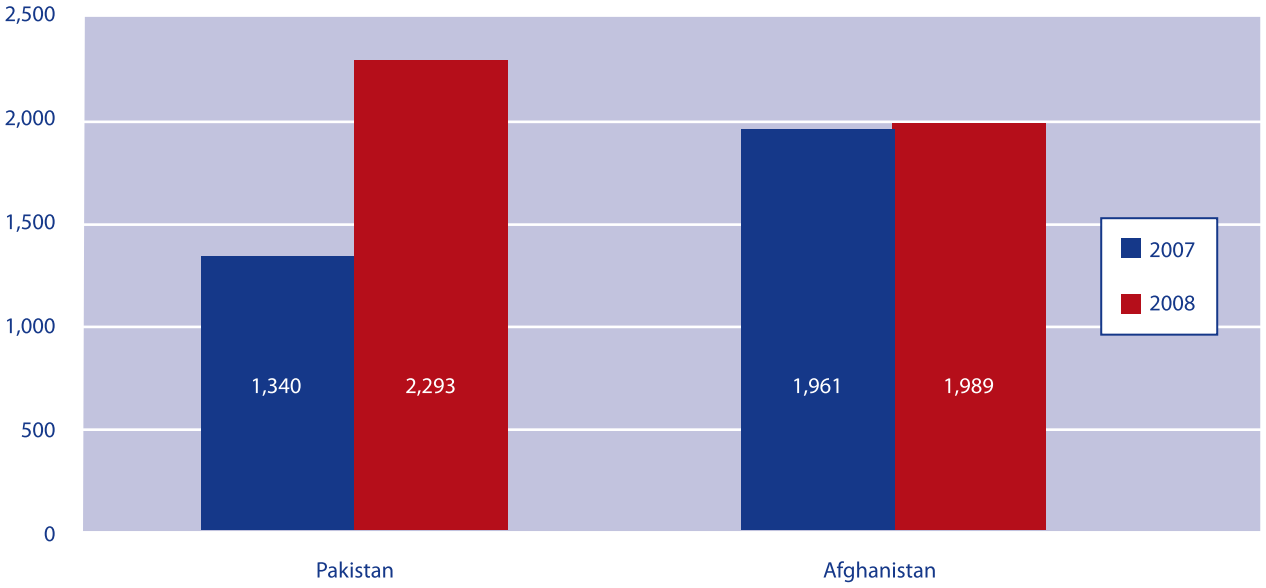
Pakistan's northwestern region is inhabited largely by Pashtun tribes that have historically relied on a set of traditional laws and dispute resolution mechanisms to negotiate relations amongst themselves. There are estimated to be 30 to 35 million Pashtuns in Pakistan and up to 15 million across

the border in Afghanistan; their tribal relationships extend seamlessly across the border.[23] Extreme Islamist ideology has made inroads into the tribal areas in recent decades, accelerated by the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Religious ideologues gained great power at the expense of traditional tribal leaders, a change in the balance of power that outlasted the end of the anti-Soviet jihad.

The Taliban movement that eventually assumed power in Afghanistan emerged organically from these altered social networks. The government of Pakistan played a pivotal role in strengthening extremists among the Pashtuns by helping the Taliban take over Afghanistan and supporting the regime throughout the 1990s.[24] Indeed, Pakistan was one of only three states (with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) to recognize the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan. This policy stemmed from a preoccupation with India. A weak, but sympathetic, regime in Afghanistan — so the thinking went — would give Pakistan much sought after "strategic depth," allowing its military forces, in the event of an Indian invasion, to retreat westward into the Afghan mountains, regroup, and then counterattack across the Indus.[25] An attempt to address one strategic threat thus laid the foundation for another.

Today, multiple intersecting networks of militant groups crisscross northwest Pakistan. Organizations such as the original Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network have existed for decades, while other entities, such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (Pakistani Taliban), only recently coalesced into organized movements. Many of these groups foster ties with al Qaeda, and there is evidence that al Qaeda provides logistical, financial, and training support to the insurgencies on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Soon after the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, many of al Qaeda's surviving members escaped into northwest Pakistan, where they continue to train and plan operations.[26] For example, a Saudi al Qaeda operative, alleged to have helped plan the July 2005 bombings in London, was arrested in Peshawar early in 2009.[27]

Deaths from Terrorism



Data from the National Counterterrorism Center.

These groups exploit the social networks of the Pashtun tribes to raise funds and recruit men willing to fight in Afghanistan. But there is increasing cooperation between the Taliban and Punjabi-based militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-i-Muhammad.[28] The synergistic relationship between northwestern Taliban groups and Punjabi jihadist militancy has brought suicide terrorism into the heart of the Punjab, Pakistan's richest and most developed province.[29]

Pakistan has been slow to recognize the seriousness of this threat, and its attempts to address militancy in the NWFP and FATA have fallen generally into three categories: military incursions, peace deals, and tacit support for U.S. drone attacks. Pakistan first sent its army into the Khyber Agency of the tribal areas in mid-2002, with the objective of capturing Taliban and al Qaeda members who had escaped from Afghanistan following the disastrous American operation at Tora Bora in December 2001.[30] After discussions with local tribal leaders, the military deployed troops to other parts of the tribal areas as well, but these have been inherently volatile arrangements due to the tribes' resistance to external authority. Since the country's founding, Pakistan's northwestern tribes were left to govern themselves according to their own codes and customs, and so the entry of troops into FATA violated the norms that had long governed the government-tribal relationships.

"The synergistic relationship between northwestern Taliban groups and Punjabi jihadist militancy has brought suicide terrorism into the heart of the Punjab, Pakistan's richest and most developed province."

Tribal resistance to external intervention is not the only factor that has made counterinsurgency in northwest Pakistan so difficult. Militant groups have systematically dismantled competing power structures in order to enhance their own ideological authority, and hundreds of tribal leaders more supportive of the Pakistani army's efforts — or at least wary of the Taliban's threat to their own authority — have been killed in the last few years.

The army's tactics have also hindered the effectiveness of these incursions. Most Pakistani army operations have relied heavily on "enemy-focused" sweeps to kill or capture individual fighters.[31] This approach has imposed great costs on the civilian population. For example, hundreds of thousands of Pashtuns have fled from Bajaur within the FATA alone, and they live in makeshift refugee camps without water, food, electricity, and other basic amenities.[32] The original Taliban emerged from the refugee camps straddling the Afghanistan-Pakistan border during and after the Soviet war, and the persistence of this humanitarian crisis only increases the attraction of the Taliban cause over that of the Pakistani government.

In addition to military incursions, the Pakistani government has addressed militancy in the NWFP and FATA by signing several peace deals with militant groups since 2004. These peace deals are often surrenders masquerading as calculated decisions, and their main effect has been to allow extremists to consolidate their control and push for greater gains.[33] Peace agreements in North and

South Waziristan, for example, have increased the legitimacy and authority of Pakistani Taliban leaders such as Beitullah Mehsud, and have resulted in increased attacks across the border in Afghanistan. Most recently, after 18 months of fighting between the Pakistani army and militant groups in the Swat Valley, the government agreed to an accord with the insurgents. Although the agreement was supposed to lead to the disarmament of the militants, the insurgents remain fully armed and are expanding their influence eastward toward Islamabad.[34]

In conjunction with launching military incursions and signing peace agreements, the Pakistani government has granted tacit approval to the United States to launch remote attacks on targets in the border region. Pakistani public opinion is broadly opposed to military operations in northwest Pakistan, especially when they involve cooperation with the United States. In March 2009, although 74 percent of Pakistanis acknowledged that religious extremism was a serious problem in Pakistan, 61 percent thought that Pakistan should not cooperate with the United States in combating extremism, and 72 percent supported a peace deal with the insurgents.[35]

Three broad trends have shaped these views, and must be accounted for in any U.S. policy affecting Pakistan. First, many Pakistanis believe that the United States has an instrumentalist attitude towards their country, strategically using Pakistan when U.S. interests dictate, and then abandoning Pakistan when its immediate utility passes. The principal event cited in support of this opinion is America's quick disengagement from South and Central Asia after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. The United States, Pakistan, and other countries supported the resistance to the Soviet Union, and Pakistanis allege that America's premature departure contributed to the current instability.

Second, Pakistanis interpret their relationship with the United States through the prism of their fraught association with India, and see U.S. involvement in the three-way relationship as a zero-sum game. According to this view, growing rapprochement between the United States and India (including, most prominently, the Bush administration's civilian nuclear deal) occurs at Pakistani expense. A perception of encirclement — with India to the east, and an Afghanistan allied with the United States and India to its west — fuels wariness of American intentions.

Third, many Pakistani views about insurgency in northwest Pakistan hardened during the tenure of the previous president, General Pervez Musharraf. Although Musharraf was initially popular when he assumed power in a 1999 coup, his heavy-handed attempts to retain power at the expense of civilian institutions eventually spurred a massive outcry against him. Pakistanis associated Musharraf's military operations in northwest Pakistan with his autocratic behavior towards the judiciary and civilian political parties. Opposition to Musharraf therefore became synonymous with resistance to counterinsurgency.

This combination of factors has created a situation in which many Pakistanis are skeptical about the importance of combating Islamist militancy; that skepticism increases when civilians are killed (or even when Taliban information operations create the widespread *perception* that civilians have been killed), whether in Pakistani army assaults or U.S. drone attacks.

Triage:
The Next Twelve Months in Afghanistan and Pakistan

PART TWO:
OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

War takes place at four levels: the political, the strategic, the operational, and the tactical. The political and strategic vision for what the United States and its allies seek to achieve in Afghanistan and Pakistan has already been articulated by the president: "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan." Operationalizing this vision will involve promoting a more capable, accountable, and effective government in Afghanistan and enhancing a stable, civilian-led, constitutional government in Pakistan. The capacity of these governments to protect their people and to provide them with other essential services will largely determine their legitimacy as an alternative to the Taliban and other extremists. In Afghanistan and Pakistan alike, the key operational decisions must therefore prioritize protecting the population and strengthening civilian institutions.

These recommendations do not constitute an exhaustive list of measures necessary for strategic success in Afghanistan. They do not directly address, for example, the relationship between the Taliban and the poppy industry, or the importance of training a capable and accountable ANA and ANP. These recommendations aim for triage: arresting the downward security spiral in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to regain positive momentum and create the basic conditions necessary to implement other aspects of the administration's strategy.

Afghanistan

PROTECT THE POPULATION

Protecting the population in Afghanistan is the single most important task facing the United States and its allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the near term. All other lines of operation are subordinate to this critical task.

While much of the U.S. military establishment is prejudiced in favor of enemy-centric operations, political wars such as the one being waged in Afghanistan demand a focus on the population. Because populations in civil wars tend to side with whichever group exerts control, the population in Afghanistan can be expected to react positively to a persistent presence by security forces.[36] Forces able to create conditions under which the people feel secure will reap the rewards of the population's participation in security operations and the political process. Only by securing large swathes of the Afghan population, thereby denying their passive or active support to the Taliban, can the coalition create conditions conducive to the kind of negotiations necessary create stability in Afghanistan.

One of the more worrying trends in Afghanistan has been the way in which the U.S. military — while claiming to faithfully execute population-centric counterinsurgency — has continued to articulate its aims in terms of terrain controlled and enemies killed or captured. A recent report released by Oxfam International and co-signed by ten other leading non-governmental organizations active in Afghanistan worries that the new influx of U.S. and allied troops will only exacerbate this tendency, making life worse rather than better for ordinary Afghans.[37] There is indeed cause for concern. Afghans note that U.S. or allied presence in their areas inevitably leads to increased numbers of air and ground operations, which affect their lives and property, and the spike in violence that will result from increased combat missions into territory previously held by the Taliban will certainly lead to more deaths.

To be sure, violence *will* rise in Afghanistan over the next year — no matter what the United States and its allies do. What matters, though, is who is dying. And here a particular lesson may be directly imported from the U.S. experience in Iraq. In 2007, during the Baghdad security operations commonly referred to as "the surge," U.S. casualties actually increased sharply. What U.S. planners were looking for, however, was not a drop in U.S. casualties — or even a drop in Iraqi security force casualties — but a drop in Iraqi civilian casualties. In the same way, U.S. and allied operations in Afghanistan must be focused on protecting the population even at the expense of

U.S. and allied casualties. Operations which further endanger allied forces will be unpopular in Europe and will likely require the United States and a few allies — such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands— to bear a disproportionate share of the combat burden in 2009 and beyond. Again, though, the basic mission of the coming 12 months is triage: doing what is necessary to change the perceived trajectory and momentum of the war.

"Violence will rise in Afghanistan over the next year — no matter what the United States and its allies do. What matters, though, is who is dying."

Focusing on protecting the population requires making difficult operational tradeoffs. There will never be enough coalition forces in Afghanistan to execute a perfect population-centric counterinsurgency, and it will take years to train and deploy Afghan forces in sufficient numbers and of sufficiently high quality to undertake this mission effectively. It is necessary, therefore, to focus available forces where the fewest number of government and coalition troops can protect the greatest number of Afghans. This will require the coalition to depart some areas it currently occupies. For example, U.S. forces might be compelled to withdraw from sparsely populated Taliban strongholds such as the Korengal Valley in order to better protect more of the population in Kandahar City or Lashkar Gah. Such moves may be trumpeted as defeats by the Taliban's information operations, and will no doubt strike some U.S. officers as abandoning the field to the enemy.

But the facts remain: cooperation follows control over — and protection of — the population, and exerting control with limited resources requires ruthless triaging of requirements in order to protect the greatest number of Afghans with the smallest number of coalition and government troops. At this time, it is the Taliban, unpopular as it may be, that exerts greater control over larger numbers of the population. As a result, it is the Taliban — and not the government in Kabul — which enjoys the greater degree of the public's collaboration and cooperation. The United States and its allies must demonstrate to Afghans that a persistent U.S. and allied presence means *decreased* Afghan civilian casualties; the coalition will then reap the rewards of the cooperation and collaboration of the Afghan people against the insurgents.

This is of particularly acute importance during an election year. Civilian casualties indicate to Afghans the extent to which coalition forces are genuinely committed to their security. If the local population does not believe in this commitment, then they have little incentive to support the presence of foreign troops. There is no doubt that the Taliban have inflicted many more civilian casualties than has the coalition, and unlike the coalition they have done so deliberately in order to sow fear in the hearts of the population. But the coalition is fighting for more than control: every action of the United States and its allies must bolster the legitimacy of the Afghan government. When coalition forces kill civilians, it becomes more difficult for Afghan political leaders to justify their alliances with the coalition, and the result is a weakening of the government relative to the insurgents.

EMPLOY THE CIVILIAN SURGE TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN

The greatest challenge in Afghanistan in the near term is to provide physical security for as much of the population as resources allow. Yet even if the United States and its allies manage to bring a degree of physical security to the population over the next year, the coalition's efforts will ultimately count for little if governance does not get better. Improving

governance requires first reversing the spread of corruption that has rendered the Afghan government illegitimate in the eyes of many of its people. The United States and its allies must work with the Afghan government before and after the upcoming election to expose and combat the egregious corruption that has eroded popular support for Afghanistan's civilian institutions.

In its new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Obama administration has announced that the substantial increase in troop levels will be accompanied by a "civilian surge." Under the plan, hundreds of diplomats and other experts from across the U.S. government (including large numbers of military reservists) will deploy to Afghanistan to work on governance and development issues in order to strengthen the Afghan government.[38]

The conventional wisdom is that the civilian surge will help realize American objectives in Afghanistan in two ways. First, the success of a population-centric counterinsurgency hinges on the willingness of Afghans to cooperate with coalition forces and turn on the insurgents. Therefore, targeted development projects addressing the real and immediate needs of an impoverished population, such as those undertaken by Provincial Reconstruction Teams, create an incentive to collaborate with the coalition.[39] Second, bolstering the Afghan government's capacity to govern is essential if it is to provide the basic services necessary to show the Afghan people a better alternative to Taliban control and to sustain control in the long term.

In the next 12 months, however, the priority of civilian-led efforts should be neither small-scale development projects, nor ambiguous "capacity building." Instead, the civilian surge should have one overriding objective: visibly decreasing corruption inside the Afghan government in order to increase the confidence of Afghans in their own government. The goal is to produce results in the near term, fostering a virtuous cycle of support for the Afghan government, coupled with a population-centric counterinsurgency strategy in the field.

This effort should continue, both before and after the August election, regardless of the winner. Embedded civilian experts inside the ministries should prioritize mundane tasks such as creating a stable system for budgeting. As development specialist Clare Lockhart notes, "Public finance — transparency and accountability — is at the root of bringing order to a situation." [40] However, since 2005, perceived transparency in Afghanistan has declined precipitously.[41]

Using the influx of civilian advisers in this manner provides the United States an opportunity to work more closely with its allies. Since invoking Article 5 of the NATO Treaty in 2001, U.S. allies in Afghanistan have been, by turns excluded from the mission, berated for contributing too little, and publicly criticized for their reluctance to take on missions for which they lacked the resources, capability, or domestic political support. Increasing accountability in the Afghan government, however, will require thousands of Afghan civilian bureaucrats, providing an opportunity for the allies to contribute according to their strengths. Allies can help provide the short-term manpower necessary to encourage good governance and build Afghanistan's long-term capacity to manage its affairs.

This international development should be less about building schools and other infrastructure than about the process by which international donors partner with local governments and institutions. Accordingly, international aid to Afghanistan should privilege those programs — such as Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program — that emphasize local actors and local solutions. International aid and development workers should be less concerned with running their own projects — the overhead costs of which often outweigh the projects themselves — than with strengthening Afghanistan's weak bureaucracies to function by themselves. It all starts in Afghanistan, though, with increased transparency and financial accountability. This is where U.S. and international efforts should be targeted in 2009.

Pakistan

The situation confronting the United States in Pakistan is extraordinarily difficult, and permanently altering the political dynamic in Pakistan will require a sustained effort on many fronts. Avoiding the worst outcomes in Pakistan over the coming year, however, demands focusing on securing areas — principally the Punjab and Sindh — that are still under government control, while building up police and civil authorities. The near-term challenge for the United States and its allies is to stop the extremist advance, both geographically and psychologically. If the militants' advance is not at least halted in the coming year, then the Pakistani state — including the supply routes supporting the coalition in Afghanistan and Islamabad's nuclear arsenal — could face an existential threat. The first priority is to change two policies that have proven especially destabilizing: drone strikes in the FATA and NWFP, and unconditionally aiding the Pakistani military at the expense of other security forces.

DIRECT COUNTERTERRORISM IN PAKISTAN: THE CASE AGAINST DRONES

Remote attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles are currently the United States' primary method of combating violent extremism in northwestern Pakistan. The use of drones in military operations has grown in recent years, and the list of approved targets in Pakistan has been expanded. In the six months preceding March 2009, the United States launched more than three dozen strikes, according to media reporting.[42] After the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007, President Bush authorized an expansion of the target list from al Qaeda alone to a wider array of targets within Pakistan.[43] Targets now include al Qaeda operatives, Pakistan-based members of the Afghan Taliban insurgency, and — in some cases — other militants bent on destabilizing Pakistan.[44]

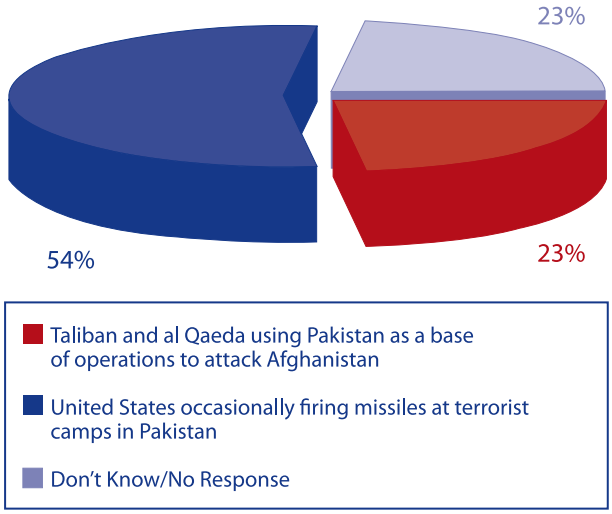
The appeal of drone attacks for policy makers is clear: their positive effects are measurable and they avoid coalition casualties. Military commanders and intelligence officials point out that drone attacks have disrupted terror networks in Pakistan, killing key leaders and hampering operations. Drone attacks create a sense of insecurity among militants and constrain their interactions with suspected informers.

Despite these advantages, the costs of drone attacks against non-al Qaeda targets inside Pakistan outweigh the benefits and they are, on balance, harmful to U.S. and allied interests. The drone war has created a siege mentality among the Pashtun population in northwest Pakistan. This is similar to what happened in Somalia in 2005 and 2006, when similar strikes were employed against the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). While the strikes killed individual militants, public anger solidified the extremists' power. The UIC's popularity rose and it became more extreme, provoking a messy Ethiopian intervention, the rise of a new regional insurgent group, al Shabaab, and an increase in piracy. While violent extremists may be unpopular, they can still seem better to a frightened population than a faceless enemy that wages war from afar and kills civilians along with militants.

Open source reports from Pakistan suggest that drone strikes there since early 2006 have killed around 14 terrorist leaders and more than 700 Pakistani civilians, or just over 50 civilians for every militant killed — a hit rate of less than 2 percent.[45] U.S. officials vehemently dispute these figures, and it is likely that more militants, and fewer civilians, have been killed than is reported by the press in Pakistan.[46] Nevertheless, every one of these dead non-combatants represents an alienated family, a new revenge feud, and more recruits for a militant movement that has grown exponentially even as drone strikes have increased.

What matters even more than the real numbers of militants and civilians killed is the perception of these operations among the people of the FATA and NWFP, as well as among the middle classes of Pakistan's other provinces. Beyond the Pashtun belt, airstrikes excite visceral opposition across a broad spectrum of Pakistani opinion. The persistence of these attacks on Pakistani territory offends people's

Pakistanis more concerned by missile strikes than by al Qaeda or Taliban



Source: IRI Index, Pakistan Public Opinion Survey; October, 2008

deepest sensibilities, alienates them from their government, and contributes to Pakistan's instability.[47] The drone war, in this sense, is similar to French aerial bombardment in rural Algeria in the 1950s, and the "air control" methods employed by the British in the NWFP itself in the 1920s. This historical resonance encourages people across Pakistan to see the drone attacks as a continuation of colonial-era policies.

The U.S. use of drones also displays every characteristic of a tactic — or, more accurately, a piece of technology — substituting for a strategy. Currently, strikes from unmanned aircraft are being carried out in a virtual vacuum, without a concerted information operations campaign or an equally robust effort to understand the tribal dynamics of the local population, efforts that might make such attacks more effective.

The reliance on remote aerial attacks is based at least partly on two mistakes, which are often made when governments attempt to separate violent extremists from the populations in which they hide. First, they overestimate the degree to which a population harboring a violent armed actor can influence that actor's behavior.[48] People do not support extremists in their midst because they like them, but rather because the extremists intimidate them. Breaking the power of extremists means removing their power to intimidate — something that strikes cannot do. Second, the United States has gravely erred in personalizing this conflict with al Qaeda and the Taliban. Devoting time and resources to killing or capturing "high-value" targets, not to mention the bounties placed on their heads, distracts U.S. forces from larger problems while turning thugs like Beitullah Mehsud into Robin Hoods. The U.S. experience in Iraq suggests that the capture or killing of high-value targets — Saddam Hussein or Abu Musab al-Zarqawi — has only a slight and fleeting effect on levels of violence.[49] Killing Zarqawi bought only 18 days of relative quiet before a resurgent al Qaeda returned to operations under new leadership.

"Killing terrorists is necessary. Overemphasizing it, however, wastes resources while empowering the very people the coalition seeks to undermine."

Killing terrorists is necessary. Overemphasizing it, however, wastes resources while empowering the very people the coalition seeks to undermine. The operation that killed Zarqawi, for example, was not a one-day event. Thousands of hours of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets were devoted to the elimination of one man when units on the ground could have used them to protect the people

from the insurgency that was tearing Iraq apart. Likewise, devoting precious resources to capturing or killing individuals rather than focusing on the protection of the Afghan and Pakistani populations is an unaffordable luxury. The United States should instead focus on isolating extremists from the communities in which they live. Drone strikes accomplish the opposite, alienating the population from their own government and from the coalition, while playing to the propaganda of the terrorists who manipulate them.

STRENGTHENING THE POLICE

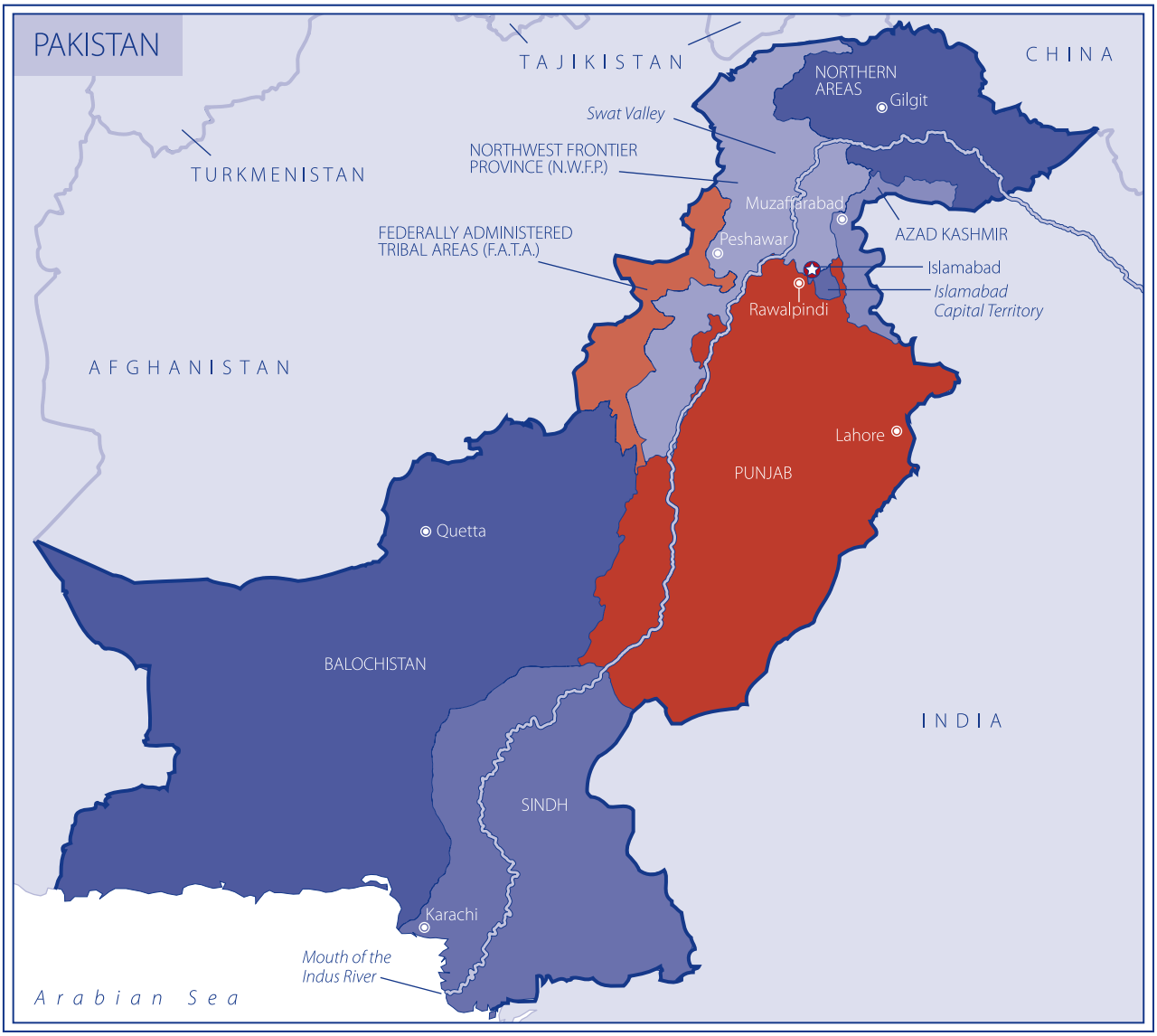
With militant attacks spreading east of the Indus River and threatening the urban centers of Punjab and Sindh, the United States and its Pakistani allies should build on their strengths by drawing a notional line at the Indus to defend those peoples of Pakistan already under the control of the central government. One element in this strategy should be the reallocation of funds from the Pakistani military and intelligence services — which continue to view India as Pakistan's most pressing threat — and toward the only security service in Pakistan wholly dedicated to protecting the people: the police.

Thus far, most U.S assistance to Pakistan has been in the form of aid to the Pakistani military. From 2002 to 2009, the United States provided Pakistan approximately $9 billion in security-related assistance, but only $3 billion in economic and development assistance.[50] In return, the United States and its allies have received abhorrent performance from the Pakistani military. In 2004, the Pakistani Army signed the Shakai Agreement ceding control over parts of Waziristan after an embarrassing defeat at the hands of Islamist militants. This capitulation was followed by the 2006 North Waziristan Agreement, which — after another disastrous campaign — ceded more of Waziristan to the Taliban, and the Swat Agreement of 2009, which surrendered Pakistani control over the Swat Valley and other areas of the NWFP. All three of these agreements were negotiated directly between the militants and the Pakistani military leadership. Moreover, there is evidence of Pakistani forces working actively against U.S. interests and the stated goals of the Pakistani government. There have been numerous incidents, for example, in which U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan have allegedly been fired on by units of the Frontier Corps and the Pakistani army. In the past, the Taliban have also allegedly set up firing positions in direct view of Pakistani military bases without interference from the Pakistani army.[51] Regardless of whether Pakistan's military is incompetent or in collusion with the Taliban, it makes little sense to continue to devote such a high percentage of U.S. aid to an ineffective force when other options exist.

While Pakistan has lost effective sovereignty in most of FATA and adjacent portions of NWFP, the militants are increasingly testing the government's ability to enforce law and order in major urban population centers across the country. If Pakistan were on the verge of collapse, one indication of impending disaster would be the government's inability to provide security in major urban areas where much of the nation's middle class resides — Lahore and Rawalpindi in Punjab, and Karachi in Sindh. Because these cities house much of Pakistan's economic activity and the major institutions of the state, the Taliban has deliberately and repeatedly linked the war in northwest Pakistan to terrorist attacks in these areas. A senior Taliban commander recently declared, for example, that the organization would carry out two suicide bombings each day in Pakistani cities if attacks by unmanned drones continued.[52]

The Pakistani police is — as much as the military — on the front lines of this fight against the militants. In 2008, for example, NWFP's police force alone lost more than 140 officers — twice as many as the preceding year.[53] Nevertheless, most American aid remains channeled to military and intelligence agencies, with a relatively small percentage allotted to the police.[54]

Given the degree to which the security situation in previously calm areas of Pakistan has deteriorated,



the United States and its allies must move quickly to aid the police. Where possible, this assistance should support existing security forces rather than attempt to create new ones. In the Punjab, for example, the United States could develop the capabilities of elite commando units that work with district police in crises requiring high-risk searches, raids, and rescue operations.[55] When the Taliban attacked a police-training academy near Lahore in March 2009, it was one of these elite forces that overpowered the attackers with relatively few casualties, suggesting some degree of competence.[56] Strategically scaling up such units across Pakistan may help repel the insurgency as it increasingly penetrates the country's urban heartlands.

To be sure, short-term aid to the police forces is not a long-term fix for Pakistan. In the coming year, however, the neglected Pakistani police forces must be bolstered so that they can credibly secure the populations of Punjab and Sindh from militant attacks.

Triage:
The Next Twelve Months in Afghanistan and Pakistan

PART THREE:
BENCHMARKS AND METRICS

All strategies require constant assessment, and President Obama's plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan is no exception. In the speech unveiling his new approach, President Obama promised:

> We will set clear metrics to measure progress and hold ourselves accountable. We'll consistently assess our efforts to train Afghan security forces and our progress in combating insurgents. We will measure the growth of Afghanistan's economy, and its illicit narcotics production. And we will review whether we are using the right tools and tactics to make progress towards accomplishing our goals.[57]

Effective benchmarks should measure *outcomes for the population* rather than *inputs by governments*. Too often, the international community has measured progress by tracking money raised, money spent, or troops deployed. These are inputs, not outcomes, and they measure effort, not effectiveness. Better benchmarks track trends in the proportion of the population that feels safe, can access essential services, enjoys social justice and the rule of law, engages in political activity, and earns a living without fear of insurgents, drug traffickers, or corrupt officials.

Because politics is about perception, and the coalition's goals are political — to marginalize the Taliban, bolster the government, and wean the population away from armed struggle toward peaceful politics — perceived outcomes matter the most. It is not enough to make people objectively safer and better off: before they are willing to put down their weapons and support the government, Afghans must *feel* safer, and must *perceive* the government as the winning side. What matters is that Afghans have a well founded feeling of security and progress, a belief — based in reality, not spin — that things are getting better. These trends are harder to gauge than inputs (tracking them requires field surveys, opinion polling, and questionnaires — difficult though doable in conflict environments) but they give a much more accurate picture than inputs alone. And although none of these metrics directly address al Qaeda, they do concentrate on the conditions under which people can be more susceptible to the influence of extremists and their enablers.

Metrics to Avoid in Afghanistan

Not all outcome metrics, however, are created equal. Three of the *least* useful metrics relate to outcomes: violence involving coalition troops, numbers of Taliban casualties, and military accessibility.

The United States will deploy 21,000 new combat troops to Afghanistan in 2009: the 17,000 the president committed in February, plus the 4,000 he committed in April. (The latter, nominally trainers, will actually "partner" alongside Afghan combat units and, hence, are really combat troops. In any case, the distinction between combat and non-combat roles is entirely theoretical in insurgencies, which lack clear front lines, so that any part of any force may have to engage in combat with little warning). Likewise, the European allies may contribute up to 5,000 new troops. With these additional 26,000 troops in Afghanistan for the fighting season, violence between the Taliban and the coalition (typically tracked using "significant activities" or SIGACTS, which count the number of violent incidents) will spike. The level of violence will rise whether the coalition is winning or losing, simply because there are more troops fighting and more units on the ground reporting SIGACTS. Thus, this year, high incident numbers and an increase in the number of Taliban killed will simply show that there is more fighting, without indicating much about progress.

Military accessibility, a measure that tracks whether coalition or Afghan forces can enter and remain in a given area, is also not a very useful metric. The difficulty in counterinsurgency is not in entering an area but in controlling it; the measure of success is not whether the military

can access a district but whether it can protect the population in that district from intimidation by, and contact with, the insurgents. Again, perception is key here: the question to ask is not "can the military enter this area?" but "do civilian officials and members of the community feel safe in this area?"

Metrics that Matter in Afghanistan

Afghan civilian casualties, whether at the hands of the coalition, the Taliban, or the Afghan government, will be the most telling measure of progress. As noted, the central goal of counterinsurgency

"Afghan civilian casualties, whether at the hands of the coalition, the Taliban, or the Afghan government, will be the most telling measure of progress."

is to make the population feel secure enough to engage in peaceful politics and to marginalize insurgents and other illegal armed groups. Since killing non-combatant civilians fundamentally undermines this goal, violence against civilians — whether committed deliberately by the Taliban or carelessly by the coalition — will be the key metric. Civilian deaths have risen steadily over several years, accelerating sharply from 2005–2008. Failure to reduce the number of civilian deaths in 2009 may indicate a looming campaign failure, whereas reductions in violence against civilians will indicate improving security and thus the potential for political progress.

The result of the Afghan presidential election in August is the next most important benchmark, because it will indicate whether such political progress is actually being made, and will thus be a "report card" from Afghans on their own government and the international community. An election conducted without major violence, and which is fair and transparent in accordance with international standards, can be counted a qualified success regardless of which candidate is elected. Major electoral fraud, intimidation, interference with registration, or violence on polling day would indicate a lack of political progress and poor government control over population areas, and hence poor performance in the campaign.

Another important metric is the number of *woleswali* (the lowest-level administrative district, of which there are 398 in Afghanistan) that are under government control. District-level governance, social justice, and security define the key terrain of the insurgency, and control at the local district level (as distinct from the central or national level) is vital. As of spring 2009 only about one-quarter of Afghanistan was under government control, roughly half was disputed or under local control, and the remaining quarter was Taliban-controlled. Since control is extremely hard to gauge using remote statistical metrics, fieldwork and public opinion surveys are usually needed. Can the official responsible for a district sleep there overnight? Can civilian officials travel without military escort in their district? Are the local police able to enforce the rule of law without being subject to corruption or intimidation? What is the assassination rate for local government officials at the district level? What is the popular perception of local people toward their district administrators, police, and local leaders? These indicators will be very important, especially as the elections approach.

While the number of enemy fighters killed is not a good metric, signs of cooperation with coalition and Afghan forces are helpful indicators.

Surrenders or defections are useful metrics because they point to disunity or disillusionment among the Taliban. The absolute number of surrenders and defections matters less than do trends over time.

Likewise, tracking the outcome of individual firefights matters less than measuring which side fires first: most engagements, provided the enemy actually stands and fights, are won by the coalition. But when the Taliban initiates the firefight, ambushing security forces or attacking without warning, this indicates that they have the initiative. Reducing the proportion of firefights the enemy starts is a sign of progress.

Another indicator of cooperation is the number of roadside bombs (improvised explosive devices, or IEDs) that are found and cleared versus exploded. IED numbers have risen sharply in Afghanistan since 2006 (though numbers are still low, and IEDs still unsophisticated, compared to Iraq). The coalition should expect an increase in numbers again this year. However, a rise in the proportion of IEDs being found and defused (especially when discovered thanks to tips from the local population) indicates that locals have a good working relationship with local military units — a sign of progress. Conversely, a drop in the proportion of IEDs found and cleared indicates the population is not passing on information to security forces, and is standing by while they are attacked — a sign of deteriorating security.

Spontaneous tip-offs from the population, where local people volunteer information about the enemy (known as "walk ins" in the intelligence community), indicate confidence by the people in the government and security forces, and are another useful measurement of cooperation and progress. Conversely, evidence that the population is tipping off the local Taliban about future coalition or Afghan government operations is an indicator of deteriorating confidence.

Metrics that Matter in Pakistan

Metrics for Pakistan are less clear-cut, since the United States has comparatively little leverage there, and less freedom of action than in Afghanistan. Two key metrics to watch are the rate at which Taliban "chapters" continue to open in the Punjab and whether 2009 sees more attacks in the urban centers of Karachi and Lahore. These developments would indicate that instability is increasing in the Punjab and Sindh heartlands, and would suggest that the situation on the ground is worsening.

Improved civilian control over the military would also indicate progress. The nadir was reached in November 2008 when the head of the army publicly disobeyed an order from the president of Pakistan to send the head of the intelligence service to India to help investigate the Mumbai terrorist attack. The fact that circumstantial evidence, and the testimony of the terrorist captured in that attack, indicate current or former members of the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence and the military had a hand in the Mumbai attack is further evidence that parts of the national security establishment are operating outside civilian control. An improvement in this area, as evidenced by clear subordination to civilian decisions, would be a key sign of progress. A related metric is the proportion of aid (Coalition Support Funds — roughly $120 million per month — paid by the United States to Pakistan) that Pakistan actually spends on supporting the coalition, securing supply lines, and combating militants, rather than diverting it into the pockets of corrupt officials or spending it on assets more suited to fighting India than suppressing extremism.

The rate of Pakistani action against targets the coalition passes to Pakistan's security services is another indicator of the degree and direction of Pakistani cooperation. This rate has often been

very low, with Taliban and al Qaeda targets disappearing or moving shortly after details of their location were passed to Pakistani authorities. Improvement in this area would be an extremely welcome sign of progress.

The assassination rate of *maliks* (government-appointed tribal representatives) in the FATA and Balochistan is another indicator. The Taliban have killed hundreds of *maliks* since 2004, a sign of intimidation and illustrating the erosion of civil society and the collapse of law and order. A drop in killings might simply indicate that most *maliks* have been killed or driven away from their districts, but continued high assassination rates would indicate ongoing insecurity.

The Taliban infiltration rate from Pakistan into Afghanistan is another metric worth tracking. This rate has historically spiked following "peace agreements" in the tribal areas, which have usually resulted from defeats of the Pakistani Army at the hands of militants. A reduction in infiltration might indicate better security in Pakistan, and better border security; an increase would indicate Pakistan's continued failure to police its border or secure its territory.

Another indicator of the degree to which the Pakistani military is under civilian control and cooperating with the coalition is the proportion of Pakistani Army and Frontier Corps posts that allow the Taliban to infiltrate into Afghanistan under their noses, allow the Taliban to set up mortar and rocket firing positions nearby, or provide covering fire to protect the Taliban against the coalition. In the past, along some parts of the frontier, these actions have been extremely common, indicating either that the Taliban have intimidated Pakistani forces, struck a local deal, or that the security forces actively support the Taliban. A drop in rates of such behavior would indicate improvement.

KEY METRICS OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Afghanistan

Civilian Casualties: A decrease in civilian casualties — whether caused by the United States, coalition, Afghan forces, or the Taliban — will indicate a genuine improvement in security. Conversely, a rise in civilian deaths will imply deterioration in the security situation.

Afghan Elections: A free and fair election, occurring without significant incidents of violence, will demonstrate both political progress and continuing Afghan commitment to the democratic process.

Pakistan

Assassination Rate of Maliks: The more *Maliks* (tribal representatives) killed by the Taliban, the fewer obstacles to the consolidation of Taliban influence in northwest Pakistan. If the rate of maliks being assassinated drops, and they are still resident in their home districts, then security has improved.

More Taliban Chapters in Punjab and Sindh: Greater Taliban activity in Punjab and Sindh will suggest the insurgency is gathering momentum in the Pakistani heartlands, and therefore causing greater insecurity.

Triage:
The Next Twelve Months in Afghanistan and Pakistan

CONCLUSION

As of mid-2009, the situation in both Afghanistan and Pakistan is dire and getting worse. In both countries, strategies must be adopted which recognize the state of the insurgency *today*. That means adopting a form of triage — utilizing an ink blot approach at the strategic and operational levels — which prioritizes the security of the population over other considerations while setting the stage for strengthening the institutions of the Afghan and Pakistani states.

In Afghanistan, U.S. and allied success over the next year largely hinges on whether or not the coalition and the Afghan government can create a secure environment for the Afghan people. This task is the "fifty meter" target for the United States and its allies this year. Merely providing security for the population, however, is insufficient. In the longer term, U.S. and allied success will depend on whether the Afghan government is seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people it aspires to govern.

In Pakistan, meanwhile, the security of the Punjab and Sindh alone will not ensure the long-term stability of the state. Improved security in the areas in which the Pakistani state is already strong is merely the near-term and necessary objective of the United States and its allies. Ultimately, the achievement of U.S. and allied policy aims in Pakistan depends on Islamabad's ability to exert authority over all its territory, or at least to exercise control through an effective system of delegated authority that prohibits the creation of safe havens for transnational terror groups.

The nature of counterinsurgency is not fixed, but shifting; it evolves in response to changes in the form of insurgency. In other words, different stages of insurgency demand different responses. Perception, trajectory, and momentum matter. For the United States and its allies to be successful in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the negative trajectory of the past several years must be reversed in short order. For that reason, the recommendations in this report focus only on the next 12 months. That said, there will be no quick victories in either country. The United States and the coalition are likely to be engaged there for years to come. Realism in triaging the most dangerous problems, flexibility in adapting to meet them, and honesty in assessing progress will be critical to any successful outcome.

"The nature of counterinsurgency is not fixed, but shifting; it evolves in response to changes in the form of insurgency."

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[45] Amir Mir, "60 drone hits kill 14 al Qaeda men, 687 civilians," *The News* (10 April 2009). Also a recent article cites a figure of 500 civilian casualties: Jane Perlez, "Pakistan Rehearses its Two-Step on Airstrikes," *The New York Times* (15 April 2009).

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[48] The folly of indiscriminate violence is discussed in Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*.

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