



REMOTE CONTROL

Examining changes in military engagement

**TERRORIST RELOCATION AND THE
SOCIETAL CONSEQUENCES OF
US DRONE STRIKES IN PAKISTAN**

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The Remote Control project is a project of the [Network for Social Change](#) hosted by [Oxford Research Group](#). The project examines changes in military engagement, in particular the use of drones, special forces, private military companies and cyber warfare.

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Executive Summary

US drone strikes in Pakistan have brought serious, negative consequences for various communities in the country. A narrow focus on just the number of individuals killed does not reveal the full, on-the-ground effects of these strikes. In addition to eliminating some 'high-value targets', strikes have displaced the terrorists from their home regions and have forced them to relocate throughout Pakistan – and bring their problems with them. A thorough measure of the effectiveness of drone attacks is possible only by taking all effects fully into account. The British government, given the ongoing investment in its own drone programme, could stand to learn a great deal from the US experience in Pakistan. It has a duty to ensure that none of its future drone strikes endangers the well-being of communities where they are deployed.

Where US drone strikes in Pakistan have killed certain known terrorists, they have also pushed a large number of these individuals out of the heavily-targeted parts of the country's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and into the settled and less restive parts of the country, creating problems for their new host communities. These problems include an increase in sectarian and communal strife, gang warfare and kidnapping for ransom, to name a few. Though the negative societal consequences have been felt by almost all major population centres in the country, the worst affected areas include the southern port city of Karachi and the Kurram agency – a territory within FATA with a significant Shia population.

A large number of militants fleeing drone strikes in FATA have chosen to relocate to Karachi, the biggest Pashtun city in the world. The city's existing Pashtun networks have facilitated the move by making room for new arrivals. Karachi provides ample opportunities for these new residents to engage in petty crime such as kidnapping for ransom and land-grabbing. The proceeds generated by these crimes are often channelled back to various militant groups in FATA and elsewhere. Some of the new arrivals have also joined the ranks of those who target politicians belonging to the country's secular parties, given their differences with these individuals' *jihadi* agendas.

The tribal agency of Kurram has also attracted a number of terrorists fleeing the heavily targeted North Waziristan agency. Kurram is home to the largest population of Shia Muslims in FATA and has endured a limited number of strikes, making it a lucrative place to hide for those trying to escape US drones. The territory is also a suitable destination for a number of Taliban fighters given its location and proximity to major urban hubs in Afghanistan, including Kabul and Jalalabad. Given Kurram's location, a number of fighters want to use its routes to attack international forces based in Afghanistan. The move by terrorists to relocate to Kurram and use its access routes has been resisted by the locals who understandably fear US drones. This has, in turn, resulted in anti-Shia violence in Parachinar, Kurram agency's capital, leaving hundreds of casualties.

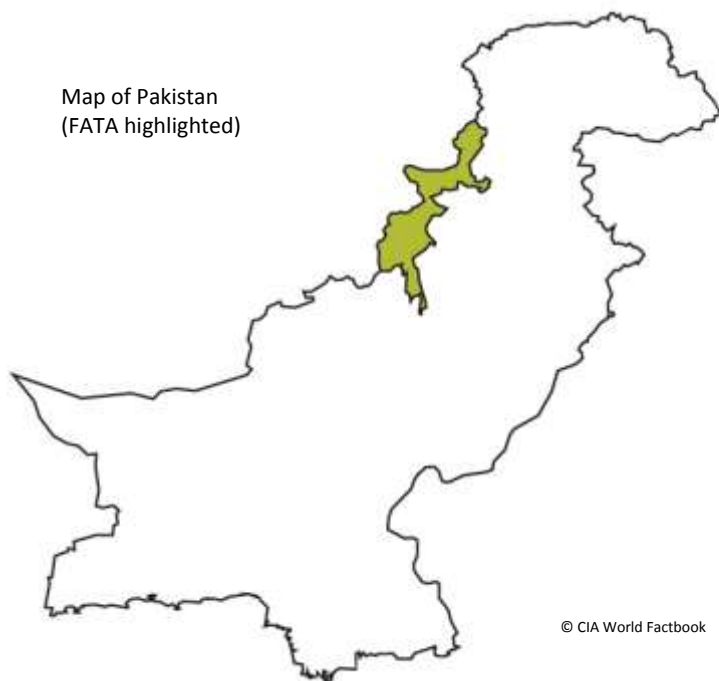
Militants fleeing from FATA due to US drone action have also taken up residence in the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Baluchistan. In Punjab, these individuals preach a more violent interpretation of Islam than many locals, bringing negative consequences for those incumbent groups whose interpretations are at odds with the new arrivals – such as Shias and Barelvis. The latter of these follow a milder, Sufi-like version of Islam and constitute the majority of Muslims in Punjab. A number of Sufi shrines have recently been targeted by suicide bombers in the province, killing hundreds. The terrorists relocating to Punjab also strengthen the ranks of militants already there.

Baluchistan province, on the other hand, provides lucrative opportunities for drugs and arms smuggling given its location on the border with Iran and its land links with Europe. However, those relocating to Baluchistan have so far refrained from engaging in violent activities for the fear of attracting US drones. Many fear that an expansion of drone strikes to the restive province may endanger the lives of the Taliban leadership already hiding there. This does not mean that the status quo will remain in the future: the situation could change should the Taliban leadership quit Baluchistan.

The negative societal consequences of US drone action in Pakistan shows that a policy that changes the focus of terrorists from Western forces to local targets is hardly an ethical one. If drone strikes are to have an element of legitimacy as key instruments of remote-control warfare, they must be employed after a thorough assessment of their consequences at the receiving end.

Introduction

The controversial US drone programme in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)ⁱ of Pakistan seems to be coming to an end.ⁱⁱ The United States Secretary of State John Kerry has suggested that there is not much further need for drones as the strikes have likely ‘eliminated’ most of the threat.ⁱⁱⁱ Supporters of drones have been arguing that they work not only because they have been successful in killing key terrorist leaders but also that their deployment has led to ‘denying terrorists sanctuaries in Pakistan’ and elsewhere.^{iv} It is true that the number of terrorists operating in FATA is likely falling.^v Drones have indeed pursued some high-value targets, which has led to other terrorists’ plans being disrupted. However, this is only half of the story. The drone strikes have also had serious negative consequences for Pakistani society, and these effects remain under-examined.



This report examines ‘on-the-ground,’ negative consequences of drone attacks. It looks at the consequences of terrorists’ relocation from heavily-targeted tribal territories to avoid being attacked by US drones. A large number of terrorists have been moving to other parts of Pakistan,^{vi} and this relocation has had serious impact on their new host societies. The research states that the strikes may have been effective in the short term by reducing the presence of terrorists in FATA, but they have also increased the problems in the rest of the country by driving a large number of terrorists to other parts of Pakistan. The problems include an increase in gang violence and communal and sectarian strife in different parts of Pakistan (due to increased radicalisation). Furthermore, drugs and weapons smuggling has also been on the rise. Overall, the strikes have exposed Pakistani civilians to harm or risk of harm, something that would not be the case otherwise.

The strikes have mostly targeted sites specifically within the territory of FATA. Not unexpectedly, militants have learnt to respond to the problem by staying away – or fleeing – from the areas under attack from

these drones. The empirical evidence discussed in this report suggests that a large number of militants are being moved southward by their organisations, such as the *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP, or the Taliban Movement of Pakistan) and the Haqqani group of the Afghan Taliban, to avoid being hit. In other words, drones have had the effect of literally spreading terrorism and militancy across Pakistan. A major report jointly published by the New York University and the Stanford University in September 2012 has also suggested that groups hiding in FATA, such as al- Qaeda, learnt quite quickly to avoid the tribal areas of Pakistan not long after the US started to use drones in the territory in 2004.^{vii} It is no surprise that major al-Qaeda leaders, such as Osama bin Laden, have been uncovered in the settled areas of Pakistan, far away from FATA.

The research examines four destinations within Pakistan where terrorists are relocating once they are displaced from FATA, in order to avoid being targeted by drones. They include the southern mega-city of Karachi in Sindh province, a relatively safe tribal agency of Kurram (within FATA) and Punjab and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan. The study focuses on the activities of militants once they reach their new refuges and it argues that those fleeing the tribal areas engage in different activities in different locations. These activities include participating in organised crime, committing sectarian and *jihadi* violence and perpetrating other petty crimes. The consequences of the move take different forms depending on the destination.

The next section of this report will conduct a case study on the Pakistani city of Karachi. It will look at the *en masse* movement and its consequences for the mega-city. The fourth section examines the case of Kurram agency, one of the tribal territories of FATA, where the drone strikes have indirectly caused an increase in severe sectarian strife and a subsequent large number of casualties. The cases of the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Baluchistan will be discussed in the fifth section. The sixth section will sum up the flaws of the recent use of drone strikes in Pakistan. The seventh section will show how the UK government can learn valuable lessons from the US drone programme in Pakistan given increasing British investment in its own drone programme. In closing, the report will argue that the policy of conducting drone strikes in FATA has had major flaws. The problems will reappear in the area once drone strikes have stopped. Various other measures will have to be adopted if the United States and the broader international community are genuinely interested in eliminating militancy from FATA for good. The conclusion will conduct a brief overview of those measures.

Terrorist relocation to Karachi

Karachi, the capital of Sindh province, is Pakistan's largest city (and the ninth-largest in the world by population). It generates around 70 per cent of Pakistan's GDP.^{viii} Karachi has recently been experiencing some of the worst violence in its history, resulting in the deaths and injuries of thousands of civilians.^{ix} The types of violence and attacks cover a broad range including *jihadi* and sectarian strife, mafia and gang violence and other petty crimes. The increase in violence in Karachi has closely corresponded with the increase in the frequency of the US drone strikes since 2009, where a large number of terrorists relocated to the city but continued their disruptive activities in their new host communities.

A relatively peaceful start to the 2000s

Though Karachi has seen an upsurge in violence in recent years, it remained free of such strife until almost the end of 2009, a time when the rest of the country was marred by serious bloodshed. For example, Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, suffered major terrorist attacks in 2007 and 2008 when some of the key targets in the city, such as the Marriott hotel, were attacked.^x Similar attacks occurred in the country's Khaibar Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces.

Noting the 'curious case' of Karachi, a prominent Pakistani newspaper wrote in October 2009 that 'as suicide bombers and car bombs go off with an audacious frequency right across the NWFP [now known as the Khaibar Pakhtunkhwa province], Punjab, Balochistan and Islamabad, Sindh and its capital, which is also the country's largest city, Karachi, has largely remained "peaceful."^{xi} The paper noted that one reason for this relative peace in Karachi could be that the Sindhi population includes a large number of followers of 'non-puritanical' variants of Islam (such as Sufism).^{xii} The city has mostly been known for its secular character and business-oriented nature. Although the city's residents did vote for some major Islamist parties in national elections in the past, such as *Jammat-e-Islami* before the early 1980s, such support was mostly confined to the city's *mohajir*^{xiii} population rather than across all communities. Furthermore, the *mohajirs'* votes for the Islamists were rooted in historical precedent and not motivated by religious reasons. This group identified with these parties' pan-Islamic ideology – as opposed to the ethnic nature of other mainstream political parties that vouched for the rights of the 'natives' of the land, such as Punjabis, Baluchis, Sindhis and Pashtuns.^{xiv}

The recent wave of violence in Karachi

Karachi has experienced a major epidemic of violence since 2010.^{xv} The level of aggression seen in the city, far exceeding the violence perpetrated elsewhere in Pakistan, has not been witnessed before in its history. A key question is: what changed during that time in Karachi to spark such violence in the city – violence that continues unabated until today? Some have argued that with the Pakistan army starting major military operations in Swat (May 2009) and South Waziristan (November 2009), a wave of migrants was pushed to the south, whereby Pashtuns from these areas joined their brethren to find safe havens in the city.^{xvi} This move of several hundred thousand individuals destabilised the ethnic balance in Karachi,

leading to conflict over the scarce resources which the city had to offer, such as jobs and business opportunities.^{xvii}

The purely ethnically-linked explanation of the recent upsurge of violence in Karachi, however, is inadequate: the city also welcomed a large number of migrants moving south as a result of the Afghanistan *iihad* in the 1980s. That move was not followed by the waves of violence that Karachi has experienced recently but rather by '10 years or so' of a period of (relative) peace and prosperity during which 'Karachi unexpectedly regenerate(d) itself.'^{xviii} One also cannot say that Karachi residents suddenly started supporting the so-called 'puritanical Islamist parties' in early 2010 (that radicalised a city of 20 million within a few months) that served as a cause for violence. The city has indeed seen a massive increase in the number of *madrassas* (religious seminaries) in the last two decades and their role in Karachi's social life is well documented.^{xix} However, the *madrassas* were already there when Karachi experienced the above-mentioned unprecedented period of growth and regeneration in the late 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s.

Societal consequences of the terrorist relocation to Karachi

What then could account for the almost overnight increase in violence in Karachi from early 2010 onward? The answer can be found by examining the frequency of US drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas. Interestingly, the recent upsurge in violence in Karachi closely correlates with a dramatic increase in drone attacks by the Obama administration in 2010. Where there were 36 and 54 drone strikes in 2008 and 2009 respectively, their number shot up to 122 in 2010.^{xx} It has been noted by, among other sources, the Associated Press that a number of militants fled the tribal area of Pakistan to take refuge in Karachi precisely because drones cannot and will not target the city.^{xxi} Karachi has been the preferred destination of militant groups to relocate their group members because the city, despite its distance from traditional Pashtun homelands, is the largest Pashto-speaking city in the world and it is easier for members of Pashtun ethnic group to take refuge in communities already inhabited by their brethren.^{xxii} The US-based Combating Terrorism Centre points out that 'fighters from multiple Taliban factions are increasingly moving to' Karachi as 'militants continue to flee U.S. drone strikes and Pakistani military operations in the country's northwest tribal regions.'^{xxiii} The Centre goes on to say:

U.S. drone attacks are proving to be one of the biggest challenges al-Qa`ida operatives and Taliban leaders have ever faced. Multiple al-Qa`ida and Taliban leaders have been killed by the drones, including the former head of the TTP, Baitullah Mehsud. The U.S. government has clearly increased its intelligence assets in the tribal region, evidenced by the rising number of successful strikes. As a result, al-Qa`ida and especially Taliban operatives find the only way to avoid such strikes is to limit their militant activities or shift to safer locations such as in Quetta and Karachi. According to local police officials in Karachi, TTP militants are heading to the city to seek shelter and rest, as well as funding. One Taliban source told reporters last year that Karachi is one of their main destinations for rest and to receive medical treatment. According to the source, every month a group of 20-25 militants arrive in

Karachi where they rest for a month while a fresh group of militants replaces them in the region to fight.^{xxiv}

The Taliban fleeing FATA have recently started playing an active role in the city's social and political life not only by arbitrating civil disputes but also by targeting the members of secular political parties who have traditionally been supported by the majority of the city's inhabitants, such as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the Awami National Party (ANP).^{xxv} Many Pakistani police and intelligence officials have also confirmed that the Taliban and other militants have fled Pakistan's tribal areas due to US drone strikes but continue their brutal activities in Karachi where drones cannot reach them.^{xxvi} According to these officials, they have been involved in 'kidnapping for ransom, bank robbery, street robbery and other heinous crimes.'^{xxvii} Interestingly and unexpectedly, drone strikes are creating more profitable opportunities for these groups as their operatives have found they can maintain a more luxurious lifestyle in Karachi than they would be able to enjoy in the tribal areas of Pakistan.^{xxviii} Furthermore, the income generated through petty crimes is then used by these groups to help the operatives engaged in various activities back home in the country's north.^{xxix} According to Karachi police, 'up to a third of Karachi bank robberies in the past two or three years were believed to help fund militant groups including the Taliban.'^{xxx} The militant groups have not just been relocating Pashtuns to Karachi, either. There is a 'sizeable population' of Uzbeks also who have fled FATA and are now living in Karachi, and some of these individuals 'figure in the ranks of militants allied to the Taliban.'^{xxxi}

Shifting the focus

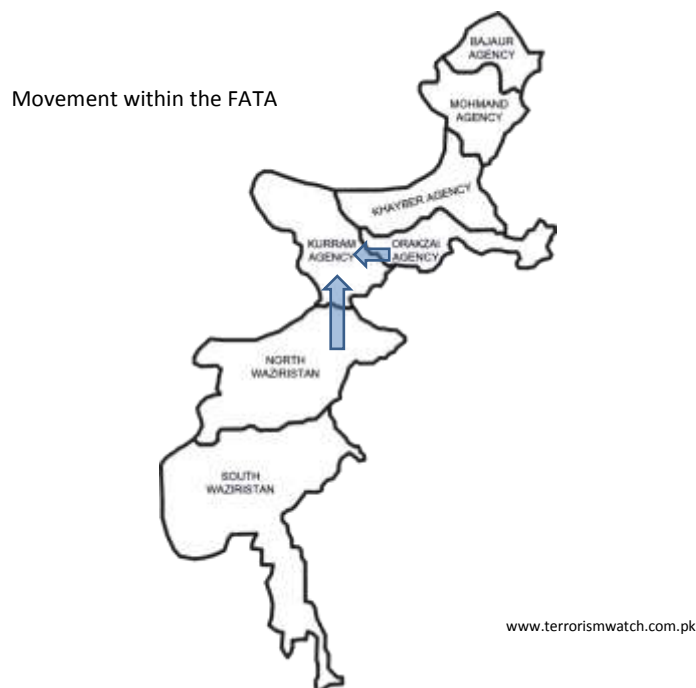
The recent upsurge in violence in Karachi indicates 'a strategic shift by the country's militant insurgency from areas bordering Afghanistan to major urban centres.'^{xxxii} According to an al-Qaeda operative interviewed last April, 'the migration of TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) fighters to Karachi has been ongoing, in fits and starts, for several years, but over the last eleven months, the trickle has turned into a steady flow of men, weapons and explosives.'^{xxxiii} Given the infrastructure and the facilities provided by the city, the plan of the militants is 'to establish a headquarters in Karachi, and spread their network to adjacent cities from there.'^{xxxiv} A prominent Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*, has also reported that Karachi provides an excellent space for militants who are 'seeking money, rest and refuge from US missile strikes.'^{xxxv} In an interview given to *Dawn*, a Taliban fighter, Shah Jahan, stated that militants were 'scattering throughout Pakistan to avoid the US missile strikes.'^{xxxvi} Jahan went on to say that militants 'are more alert and cautious following the drone attacks, and we understand that it is not a wise approach to concentrate in a large number in the war-torn areas.'^{xxxvii}

Intra-FATA movement of terrorists

Where some terrorists fleeing drone strikes have chosen to leave FATA areas altogether, others have tried to take refuge in relatively safer agencies of FATA, one of which is the Kurram agency. This agency is surrounded by Afghan territory on the north and the west and borders North Waziristan agency to the south. The tribal agency of North Waziristan has been the prime target of drones: according to the most recent count, this agency alone has attracted around 72 per cent of the total strikes conducted by the United States in the tribal areas of Pakistan.^{xxxviii}

Recent violence in the Kurram agency

Kurram's stability has been marred by huge sectarian strife over the past six years.^{xxxix} Kurram is the only agency in FATA with a significant Shia population: around 40 per cent of the population belong to the sect.^{xi} Most Shias belong to the Turi tribe and live in the upper Kurram area, which borders Afghanistan. That is the location of the capital city of Parachinar, the target of most of the sectarian violence.^{xii} As recently as the end of July 2013, the residents of the city were hit with multiple bomb blasts killing fifty and injuring one hundred and twenty-two people.^{xiii} This is only one of many recent attacks – the tribal agency has suffered various similar atrocities in recent years.^{xiiii} Like violence elsewhere in Pakistan, the recent upsurge of bomb blasts in Kurram correlates directly with the dramatic increase of US drone attacks that have been targeting Kurram's neighbour to the south, North Waziristan. In other words, the number of violent attacks in Kurram went up directly in line with an increase in the frequency of drone strikes in North Waziristan.^{xiv}



Terrorist relocation to Kurram

Kurram agency is one of the preferred destinations of militants fleeing the North Waziristan territory.^{xlv} The militants are interested in taking refuge there as the US drones do not usually target this agency given its significant Shia population.^{xlvi} Where the United States has conducted 370 strikes so far, only five have had targets in the Kurram agency,^{xlvii} making it obviously a very lucrative area to take refuge in for the militants fleeing other restive territories of FATA. However, their attempts to find a new home in Kurram are resisted by locals who, for obvious reasons, do not want the US drones to start striking there.^{xlviii} As a result, inhabitants of Kurram have been increasingly targeted by these new arrivals due to their refusal to allow them a safe haven in the area. The Haqqani faction of the Afghan Taliban has been asking the Shia tribal elders in Kurram to let its comrades stay there but the issue remains unresolved.^{xlix}

Kurram's proximity to Afghanistan

Afghan Taliban fighters hiding in Pakistan are also particularly interested in Kurram due to its strategic location: it serves as a key transit point into Afghanistan's volatile eastern and southern provinces. Militants fleeing US drones in North Waziristan attempt to get into Afghanistan through Kurram but the locals have vowed that they will allow their area to be used neither as a 'safe haven or transit route.'ⁱ On several occasions tensions have grown because the Taliban are interested in launching attacks around Kabul, which lies only 56 miles away from Kurram's western tip. However, on each of these occasions they were refused passage by the locals.ⁱⁱ The Pakistan army has also pressurised the Turi tribe in Kurram to let Taliban agents supported by the army cross into Afghanistan via mountain passes in the agency.ⁱⁱⁱ Shia tribal elders in Kurram have claimed that they are being 'attacked because they stop the Taliban from entering Afghanistan. They allege elements linked with Pakistan's military establishment support some Taliban groups because of the strategic importance of the region.'^{liii} In retaliation for their non-cooperation, the Taliban have repeatedly blockaded the territory southeast of Kurram, cutting the agency off from the rest of Pakistan.^{liv}

Pakistan army operations in Kurram

Kurram has also been the target of various military operations conducted by the Pakistan army between 2008 and 2011 to flush out insurgents (who have declared *jihad* against the Pakistan army) from the agency.^{lv} The local Turis have welcomed such military ventures because they would like the security forces to help them get rid of the Sunni insurgents that are attempting to take over their territory. This has, in turn, angered the militants who have targeted various Kurram areas since 2010.^{lvi} Though there has been sectarian strife in the region since the 1930s, the 'nature and dimensions of the sectarian conflict have changed since 2001.'^{lvii} According to Mariam Abou Zahab, who has studied sectarianism in Pakistan closely in the last ten years,^{lviii} the conflict in Kurram is 'not tribal or sectarian *per se*, but instigated by the

Taliban who want access to Afghanistan and are supported by local criminals. They use tribal and sectarian differences to fuel the conflict and keep the government out.^{lix}

Peace efforts

Since the Taliban militants started looking towards Kurram for both a safe haven and transit into Afghanistan in 2007, which was also the time when drone strikes were starting to escalate in North Waziristan, the Turi Shia tribe of Kurram has lost an estimated 2,000 members to related violence.^{lx} There have been various attempts to broker a peace deal between the Turis and the Taliban in Kurram.^{lxi} However, adoption of any peace deal hinges on two Taliban conditions: that they be given both access to Afghanistan and a safe haven against the US drone strikes taking place elsewhere in FATA, in particular in the North Waziristan area.^{lxii} However, given that they have little to gain from this deal, this is a solution the locals are increasingly reluctant to accept. That means that the restive and remote Kurram agency is likely to continue to witness violence in the near future.

Terrorist relocation to Punjab and Baluchistan

Punjab

Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, has also been attracting a number of terrorists relocating from FATA. The residents of the province have traditionally dominated the country's ruling military, political and bureaucratic elite. The province is also home to a wide array of terrorist groups who have strong ties with the tribal areas of Pakistan.^{lxiii} The 'Punjabi Taliban' fighters – ethnic Punjabis who have traditionally fought with the Pashtun Taliban fighters in the country's northwest– are particularly known for their ferocity and aggression.^{lxiv}

It has been noted that a number of terrorists leaving FATA have been choosing Punjab to avoid being targeted by drones.^{lxv} According to *The New York Times*, the insurgents from various Taliban groups are 'teaming up with local militant groups to make inroads in Punjab' and the deadly attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team during a visit to Lahore in 2009 and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad in 2008 are just two 'spectacular examples' of that alliance.^{lxvi} The Marriott bombing killed around forty people and wounded approximately two hundred and fifty.^{lxvii} The allied groups of militants behind these acts are promoting a hard-line interpretation of Islam; as such they have targeted members of sects of Islam that are different from their own as well as non-Muslim minorities living across Punjab.^{lxviii} For example, the prominent Lahore shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh was targeted in three suicide attacks in 2010, killing a total of forty-two and injuring one hundred and seventy-five.^{lxix} The shrine is very popular among the followers of Sufi Islam, who are generally considered non-violent and more tolerant of minorities. There have also been attacks on Punjab's Ahmadi, Shia and Christian communities across the province since 2007, leaving hundreds dead.^{lxx} It has been noted that,

[i]n at least five towns in southern and western Punjab, including the midsize hub of Multan, barber shops, music stores and Internet cafes offensive to the militants' strict interpretation of Islam have received threats. Traditional ceremonies that include drumming and dancing have been halted in some areas. Hard-line ideologues have addressed large crowds to push their idea of Islamic revolution. Sectarian attacks, dormant here since the 1990s, have erupted once again.^{lxxi}

The long-term impact of this relocation on the sectarian landscape of Pakistan is set to be particularly negative. The terrorist relocation from FATA has contributed to radicalisation of usually tolerant Sunni Muslims of Punjab who, until very recently, have peacefully coexisted with the members of other sects and religions for centuries.^{lxxii}

Baluchistan

The southern province of Baluchistan, and namely the capital (and largest) city of Quetta,^{lxxiii} is another destination of choice for militants fleeing drone strikes in FATA.^{lxxiv} The Taliban and al-Qaeda militants

escaping these attacks have found refuge in the Pashtun-dominated Baluchi regions of Qalat and Khuzdar, with some moving to Quetta.^{lxxxv}

Baluchistan has had an endemic problem of violence in various forms since the creation of the state of Pakistan. The province is the most under-developed in the country and has long suffered from separatist insurgency and ethnic turmoil.^{lxxxvi} Since 2010, the province has also been jolted by some of the worst incidents of sectarian violence in Pakistan's history.^{lxxxvii} The violence has been perpetrated in large part against the province's Shia community, which forms a significant minority there.^{lxxxviii} However, the most recent incidents of terrorist attacks in Baluchistan have not been orchestrated by the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants arriving from FATA. Instead, the blame for these lies partly with a Punjabi sectarian outfit, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi,^{lxxxix} and partly with Baluchi separatist groups – such as the Baluch Liberation Army.^{lxxx}

The Taliban militants that have been attacking targets elsewhere have largely not featured behind recent violence in Baluchistan. Indeed, the BBC has noted that 'Quetta's vast and crowded eastern neighbourhood, inhabited by the ethnic Pashtun group to which the Taliban belong, shows few signs of Taliban activity.'^{lxxxi}

This is a curious case, as there is clear evidence of Baluchistan attracting militants fleeing the drone attacks in FATA. The reason for the Taliban inactivity in the region lies in the fact that a large number of the Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership resides in the province and these groups do not want to attract unwanted attention to any part of it.^{lxxxii} The United States has often hinted in the past that it may expand the drone attacks within Baluchistan,^{lxxxiii} in which case there is a risk of major disruption for the leadership of the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants living there. The locals in the area also have grave concerns that drones 'may target the locations in Baluchistan as well.'^{lxxxiv}

Some recent reports, however, have suggested that the Taliban leadership is now moving to the southern city of Karachi for two reasons: firstly, drones cannot reach them there, and secondly, the city's major *madrassas* can provide these individuals useful hiding places.^{lxxxv} It has indeed been reported that Pakistan's premier intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), has helped Mullah Umer, the leader of the Afghan Taliban, move from Quetta to Karachi.^{lxxxvi} Given the threat posed by drones elsewhere, it would not be surprising if the headquarters of the Taliban leadership soon came to settle in Karachi, a status until now enjoyed by Quetta.^{lxxxvii} Karachi is a lucrative destination for this purpose as senior clerics of various *madrassas* in the city enjoy personal ties with the Taliban leadership.^{lxxxviii} Once any move is complete, the Taliban will not have any need to keep peace in Baluchistan and, in contrast to their actions up to now, they are likely to get involved in various violent terrorist activities and criminal endeavours in the province, the way they have done in Karachi over recent years. That eventuality is the last thing that an already restive Baluchistan needs at this stage, a province that has suffered far more than its fair share of bloodshed. For now, however, most of those relocating from FATA have concentrated on getting involved in drugs and weapons smuggling.^{lxxxix} The province provides lucrative opportunities for the former given its border with Iran and further land links with Europe. The region is also a hub of weapons smuggling; arms produced in FATA are easily moved to the rest of Pakistan (and beyond) via Baluchistan.^{xc}

Drone strikes – policy flaws

The US policy of conducting drone strikes appears to regard FATA (and in particular North Waziristan) in a vacuum, neglecting to realise that the area is well-linked to the rest of Pakistan. It is not hard for terrorist groups in FATA to relocate to other parts of the country – indeed it is proving more lucrative in many cases for them to do just this.

A map of Pakistan (arrows mark the relocation of militants out of FATA)



Earlier sections of this report have demonstrated how militant organisations are moving these fighters out of FATA and towards Karachi, parts of Baluchistan and Punjab as well as places within FATA that are not being targeted by drones, such as the Kurram agency. Evidence shows that individuals who have moved to Karachi have, upon arrival, found a completely different and far more comfortable lifestyle than what they had enjoyed before. Major cities provide organisations like the TTP the opportunity to use these new arrivals for financial gain by deploying them for engagement in petty crimes such as kidnapping for ransom, burglaries and drugs and weapons smuggling. In some cases, where their organisations may need more manpower to pursue these new avenues for financial gain, they may end up recruiting even more people to their ‘cause’ – people who might not have been recruited otherwise. Karachi’s countless *madrassas* provide an ample pool of potential applicants for that purpose. This multiplication in their numbers is having the exact opposite effect of what the strategy of using drones is supposed to have: reduce the number of terrorists and, hence, reduce acts of terrorism.

Decreasing frequency

The frequency of the United States' drone attacks has dramatically decreased recently and there have been no strikes in Pakistan since the start of 2014.^{xc1} Where there were 122 strikes in 2010 and 73 in 2011, there were only 48 in 2012 and 27 during 2013.^{xcii} One major reason for this sharp decline in the strikes justifiably lies in the fact that there are not enough individuals left in FATA to target. However, the US explanation for the reduction in the number of strikes - that most of the threats have been 'eliminated' - is fundamentally flawed: the evidence shows that a large number of them are very much alive and have simply relocated to the relative safety of other parts of Pakistan.

Pakistani civilians as 'legitimate targets' for terrorists

Pakistan has suffered brutal violence since 2007. Though there are no exact figures, an estimated 50,000 deaths due to a combination of suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices (or IEDs) and gunshot wounds have occurred.^{xciii} The number of injured may never be known due to a lack of formal recording mechanisms for such a situation. The level of violence is truly unprecedented in the country's history. Militants motivated by, on a simplistic level, the reward of 'going to heaven' after committing suicide attacks are trying to reach their objective in different parts of Pakistan if their mission cannot be fulfilled in FATA. For anyone with such motivation, being physically present in FATA is not essential. That ambition can easily be realised anywhere in the world. The individuals target Pakistani civilians because, like US civilians and soldiers, they are also considered legitimate targets, even if most of the casualties are Muslims. Such an approach is justified by them because the Pakistani state has officially sided with the United States in its campaign against terrorism since 2001, earning the wrath of the Pakistan Taliban and associated groups. According to this logic, Pakistani citizens are fair game.

Lessons for the UK government

The British drone programme

With the Ministry of Defence (MoD) aiming for a third of the RAF fleet to consist of unmanned drones by 2030, the use of these drones by the UK government for Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and for the targeting of terrorists is on the rise.^{xciiv} The British military currently has 500 drones in its fleet which include a variety of drones such as the Reaper (made by General Atomics in the US) and the Watch Keeper (a joint Israeli and French collaboration). Other models include the Black Hornet, Desert Hawk and Tarantula Hawk.^{xciv} The UK has 10 armed Reapers in Afghanistan that have so far fired 94 Hellfire missiles, bringing the total number of both munitions and bombs used in Afghanistan since 2008 through the beginning of this year to 457.^{xciiv} The MoD, however, has categorically stated that it is not interested in buying or developing fully automated robotic systems and there will always be a human in the loop so long as British drones are used.^{xciiv} There is also much interest among British companies to invest heavily in conducting research into commercial, civilian drones with these companies vowing to be the world leaders in the field.^{xciiv}

British drones and lessons from the US experience

The British government can learn a lot from the US experience in Pakistan. The research above has shown how the use of drones can have profound societal consequences for the communities where they have been used. There are certain key questions concerning who is responsible for the harm to civilians perpetrated by terrorists who relocate due to drones. Could a state causing the relocation be held responsible? Or would the British government not carry any responsibility as long as its drone programme succeeds in protecting British forces abroad? These are some of the questions that the British strategic thinking concerning drones will have to keep in mind. In the end, the aim of the strikes cannot and should not be to just protect Western forces in conflict theatres, but also innocent civilians from harm, regardless of their nationality.

Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that there are major flaws in Washington's policy of conducting drone strikes in FATA. It is quite easy for terrorists of every hue to move to different parts of Pakistan to avoid being targeted by the strikes. FATA territories have been home to insurgents and terrorists for a number of years. Though measures must be taken to deal with the problem, a better thought-out solution than what has been employed so far is necessary. Various problems emanating from FATA cannot be addressed without looking at the circumstances that drive a large number of men to join the terrorist organisations to begin with. There is a need to look at the circumstances that make it possible for militants to exist and operate in FATA.^{xcix} The answer lies in the fact that FATA has one of the world's worst educational systems and a virtually non-existent rule of law.^c These conditions are the nurseries in which violent extremism thrives. Without a proper education system, most young children have no option but to go to *madrassas*, which in turn act as a stepping stone to violent extremism. Furthermore, the lack of the rule of law forces the locals to turn to *jihadi* militant leaders and their organisations to seek security, a function that should be performed by law enforcement agencies and various governmental departments. That, in turn, leads these organisations to demand the services of graduates of various *madrassas* who have few other lucrative career options.

The demand for the services of these men will not decrease unless underlying problems in FATA are addressed: as has been seen, trying to reduce demand indirectly by limiting supply has been completely ineffective. There is also a need to bring FATA into the mainstream of Pakistani politics by enacting various political reforms.^{ci} Under the current situation, once the focus of the international community moves away from FATA, the problem will reappear in that area because those who have relocated to other parts of Pakistan will come back home.

The United States also needs to re-evaluate its relations with Pakistan, which is nominally a US 'ally' in the ongoing campaign against terrorism.^{cii} It is now common knowledge that the Pakistan army, and its premier intelligence agency the ISI, have facilitated its allied militants, such as the *Haqqani* network, to form bases in FATA and to operate out of there.^{ciii} US drones have indeed targeted some of the militants closely allied with the Pakistan army, creating an obvious conflict of interest.^{civ} Unless the Pakistan army's policy of playing 'double games' is dealt with, it will continue to ally with terrorists to achieve its aims both regional (such as interference within the Indian Occupied Kashmir and Afghanistan) and internal (such as destabilising the democratically elected governments so that they cannot weaken the military's grip on deciding the country's destiny).^{cv} If the army fears that drones may target one of its allies, it will simply move them to other parts of Pakistan. As mentioned earlier, recent reports have suggested the move of Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Umer from Quetta to Karachi, was due to the fear that he may fall a prey to a US drone strike.^{cvi}

This report has looked at the consequences of the policy of drone strikes by focusing on the situation in Pakistan, a country at the receiving end of US missiles. It has argued that it will never be possible for the United States to pin down and eliminate all terrorists using drones alone.^{cvii} The counter-productive US policy of using these methods has contributed towards the deaths of nearly 50,000 civilians (along with causing mental and physical injuries to countless others) in Pakistan. The idea that the drones policy

should be characterised as a 'success' merely on the basis that it has sharply reduced the threat of terrorism in the short run against US targets is flawed and in need of immediate re-evaluation.

Endnotes

- ⁱ FATA territory is nominally a part of Pakistan. It is composed of seven tribal agencies including Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan. FATA areas also include 6 frontier regions in addition to the tribal agencies.
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- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*
- ^{iv} Daniel Byman, 'Why drones work,' *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2013.
- ^v See C. Christine Fair, Karl C. Kaltenthaler and William J. Miller, 'You say Pakistanis all hate the drone war? Prove it,' *The Atlantic*, 23 January 2013.
- ^{vi} Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann, 'Washington's phantom war,' *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2011.
- ^{vii} See 'Living under drones: Death, injury and trauma to civilians from US drone practices in Pakistan,' A report compiled by Stanford International Human Rights & Conflict Resolution Clinic, 24 September 2012, available at <http://www.livingunderdrones.org/living-under-drones/>
- ^{viii} Mehtab Haider, 'Major reshuffle in revenue body,' *The News Pakistan*, 18 July 2013.
- ^{ix} See Arif Rafiq, 'Will Karachi Crumble,' *The National Interest*, 5 August 2013.
- ^x See for example, Isambard Wilkinson, 'Islamabad Marriot hotel bomb killed 52, says Pakistan', *The Telegraph*, 21 September 2008.
- ^{xi} Nadeem F. Paracha, 'The curious case of Karachi,' *Dawn*, 22 October 2009.
- ^{xii} *ibid.*
- ^{xiii} *Mohajir* literally means 'migrant.' The term is used to denote the descendents of those who migrated to Pakistan after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The *mohajirs* constitute around 50 per cent of the city's current population. For details of Mohajir support for the Islamic parties see *Islamic Parties in Pakistan*, International Crisis Group report No. 216, 12 December 2011, p. 7. The report available from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-asia/pakistan/216%20Islamic%20Parties%20in%20Pakistan.pdf>; last accessed on 4 June 2014
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- ^{xvi} Sahar Habib Ghazi, 'Pakistani troops ordered to use bullets to quell Karachi turmoil,' *The New York Times*, 8 July 2011.
- ^{xvii} *ibid.*
- ^{xviii} Paracha, 'The curious case of Karachi.'
- ^{xix} See the report by International Crisis Group, *Karachi's madrasas and violence extremism*, 29 March 2007; Available from <http://www.cfr.org/radicalization-and-extremism/international-crisis-group-pakistan-karachis-madrasas-violent-extremism/p13889>; last accessed on 4 June 2014
- ^{xx} The data is obtained from the New US Foundation's programme on drones. For more, see <http://natsec.newUS.net/drones/pakistan/analysis>; last accessed on 4 June 2014.
- ^{xxi} Ashraf Khan and Nahal Toosi, 'Taliban Finding safety in Karachi,' *Associated Press*, 17 May 2009.
- ^{xxii} See Salma Jaffar, 'Make space for the Pashtuns,' *The Express Tribune*, 16 July 2011; see also 'Fear of Taliban influx looms in Karachi,' *Dawn*, 17 May 2009; see also Khan and Toosi, 'Taliban Finding safety in Karachi.' There is an estimated population of three and a half million Pashtuns living in Karachi; for more, see 'Prospects for a "quick finish" in Swat,' *Daily Times*, 13 May 2009.
- ^{xxiii} Imtiaz Ali, 'Karachi becoming a Taliban safe haven?' *Combating Terrorism Centre*, 13 January 2010; available from <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/karachi-becoming-a-taliban-safe-haven>; last accessed on 4 June 2014.
- ^{xxiv} *ibid.*
- ^{xxv} 'How the Taliban gripped Karachi,' *BBC News*, 21 March 2013.
- ^{xxvi} see 'Fear of Taliban influx looms in Karachi,' *Dawn*, 17 May 2009.
- ^{xxvii} *ibid.*
- ^{xxviii} Interview with a Pakistani security official, May 2014.
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- ^{xxxii} Tom Hussain, 'Karachi is part of Pakistani Taliban plan to bring war to urban centres,' *McClatchy News*, 29 April 2013.
- ^{xxxiii} *ibid.*
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- xxxvii *ibid.*
- xxxviii see the database compiled by the New US Foundation at <http://natsec.newUS.net/drones/pakistan/analysis>; last accessed on 4 June 2014.
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- xlvi *ibid.*
- xlvii The tally is obtained from New US Foundation's Drone Programme website: <http://natsec.newUS.net/drones/pakistan/analysis>. The details are correct as of 4 June 2014.
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- l *ibid.*
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- liv *ibid.*
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- lvi Rehman, 'The Battle for Kurram.'
- lvii *ibid.*
- lviii see for example Abou Zahab, *Unholy Nexus*.
- lix Rehman, 'The Battle for Kurram.'
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- ^{xc} See Ghani Kakar, 'Guns smuggling on the rise in Balochistan,' *Central Asia Online*, 9 April 2010, available from http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/pakistan/2010/04/09/feature-01; last accessed on 2 June 2014.
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- ^{cii} *Countering Militancy in FATA*, p. 19
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