

AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?

Babak Khalatbari / Janna Kazim

September 2001 can be seen as a historic turning point for Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is due firstly to the fact that the NATO Council passed resolutions citing Article 5 of the NATO Treaty of 4 April 1949 in response to severe terrorist attacks. This was a first in the history of the alliance. The creation of an International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) in UN Security Council Resolution 1386 followed a short time later.

Secondly, on 9 September 2001, two days before the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the leader and beacon of hope in Afghanistan as far as the North Atlantic Alliance was concerned, Ahmed Schah Mahsud, was killed by two Arab suicide bombers acting on behalf of Al-Qaeda, in the first attack of its kind in Afghanistan's history. This strategic murder not only disposed of a controversial Afghan national hero, who had been featured in 1989 on the cover of the Wall Street Journal with the headline "The Afghan who won the cold war", and who was the Taliban's last remaining adversary; it also robbed the international community of a potential partner in the alliance against the Taliban.

Thirdly, the President of Pakistan at that time, Pervez Musharraf, promised the USA his unconditional support in the fight against terrorism and confirmed that he would immediately put an end to Pakistan's support for the Taliban. In his memoirs, Musharraf makes much of the call from then-US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who is said to have uttered the following ultimatum: "You are either with us or against us." Musharraf also mentions the comments



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made by Richard Armitage, Powell's representative, who is said to have threatened the General Director of the Pakistan secret service, Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), who happened to be in Washington at that time, that he would bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age if it continued to support the terrorists.¹ This verbal exchange of fire was based on the fact that Pakistan, in addition to the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of South Arabia, was the only direct neighbor that maintained diplomatic relations with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Taliban state under Mullah Mohammad Omar.

While the events outlined above occurred around nine years ago, they still have a certain paradigmatic importance since

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the Isaf is still present in Afghanistan and an Afghani by the name of Hamid Karzai, who at that time was relatively unknown, was able to fill the power vacuum that had been left, claiming power more or less for himself and remains the president still. In addition, the Pakistani military continues – despite numerous national political problems – to profile itself as one of the USA's partners in the war against terrorism. Nevertheless, phenomena are apparent in both countries, which, in the mid- to long-term could lead to a paradigm shift in anti-terrorism policy. The crucial issue really focuses on political dealings with anti-government forces among the Afghani and Pakistani Taliban insurgents, the Jihadist groups and Al-Qaeda. In addition to the key issue of whether certain moderate forces should be integrated into the political process, the second question remaining is how to deal with people like Abdulrashid Dostum, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Mohammad Qasim Fahim, Ismail Khan, Abdurrah Rasoul Sayyaf and many others like them in the course of the internal process of reconciliation in Afghanistan. Among these people are several warlords and drugs barons, as well as a good number of 'crime lords' who are suspected of having committed countless breaches of human rights during the vicious civil war of the early 1990s. Some are said still to be in contact with terrorist groups.

1 | Cf. Pervez Musharraf, *In the line of fire – A memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 201.

In view of this socio-political conflict, it is worthwhile looking several decades into the past in order to be able to examine the events of more recent months in greater depth. In addition, the circumstances in both states will be examined in a country-specific analysis.

AFGHANISTAN

The security situation has not improved significantly in Afghanistan over the past 18 months despite the massive presence of foreign troops. 2009 was the year in which most blood was lost by the international troops since the beginning of deployment to Afghanistan in 2001: more than 500 foreign soldiers were killed in various attacks and assaults. Violence is increasing steadily, particularly in the East of the country, where the US troops are stationed, and in the South, where the radical Islamic Taliban has regained control of entire districts. Military fighting between the NATO-led Isaf troops and the strengthened Taliban are the order of the day. Battles and attacks have also increased considerably over the last year in the North of Afghanistan, in Kunduz, where the Bundeswehr is stationed and which was long considered a relatively safe area. This is due, on the one hand, to the difficult terrain and the lack of ground troops, as well as to the chronic lack of suitable military equipment, which have enabled the insurgents to successfully regroup over the last few years and return with strengthened infrastructure. This situation is aggravated by vestigial ethnic conflicts between Pashtun, Uzbeki and Tajik groups within the population. The internal conflict among the Pashtuns between the representatives of the Durrani and Ghilzai leads to tensions in relations between the central government and the provincial governments. On the other hand, meanwhile, the increase in power of the notorious "Crime Lords", whose newly re-armed militia are used to try to establish short-term regional stabilization, is highly alarming.

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SECURITY

The establishment of peace in the country, to which end around 102,500 soldiers from 47 countries are currently deployed in 27 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams' (PRTs), is proving to be a great deal more difficult than expected. In the first six months of 2009, the number of attacks by insurgents per month increased from 387 (January) to 741 (June). In the month of the election, in August 2009, the level of violence reached a total of 1,092 attacks.² The NGO security office 'Anso' recorded the deaths of 17 staff members in a total of 114 attacks on aid organizations by insurgents and criminals by September 2009. As a result, large areas are no longer accessible to aid organizations and their Afghan employees because of the security implications. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 2009 was the deadliest year for civilians in Afghanistan since the Taliban Regime was overthrown in 2001. A total of 2,412 Afghan civilians have been killed by insurgents and the allied forces - 14 percent more than in the previous year. Rebel forces were held responsible for the deaths of 67 percent of victims, the allied forces for 25 percent; the remaining victims could not be attributed to either side.³ In addition to the poor security situation, the democracy-building process, which has been making extremely slow progress, now also appears to have ground to a halt.

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IMMINENT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

2010 is an election year in Afghanistan. According to the electoral committee, the parliamentary elections are to take place on September 18, 2010 – irrespective of the international community's demands for a prior reform of voting rights. It is feared that the election will be overshadowed by unrest and attacks. The influence of the central government continues to be limited and extends primarily to the capital. Many rural areas, meanwhile, evade state controls and here the government is dependent on cooperation with regional power holders. The government's

2 | Cf. *Anso Quarterly Data Report Q.3* (Kabul: 2009), 9.

3 | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Eds.), *Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 2009 (Kabul 2010), 1.

inability to uphold public order is increasingly resulting in frustration and discontent among the Afghani population, thereby fuelling sympathies for the once-despised Taliban as the ruling power. It remains to be seen how the Taliban movement will react to the upcoming election. The spectrum of possible reactions ranges from sabotage to contesting the election with their own candidates who, under the guise of democratic reintegration, could pursue other goals entirely.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Overall, the rebuilding process is painfully slow, due to the fragile security situation. This process is being delayed further by widespread corruption within the machinery of the state, which has infiltrated even the most senior echelons. According to the International Corruption Index run by NGO Transparency International, Afghanistan is the second most corrupt country in the world (as per 2009). Under pressure from the international community, Karzai promised at his inauguration in November to take greater efforts to tackle corruption during his second period in office. At the same time, he announced a resolute fight against drug-related crime. The Taliban finance their war against the Afghan government and the Isaf troops with money earned from drugs trading, amounting to around 130 million US Dollars annually. Despite endeavors by the international community to encourage farmers to grow alternative crops, drug cultivation is still a flourishing branch of the economy. In 2009, the area on which poppies are grown decreased 22 percent in comparison with the previous year, but Afghanistan nevertheless remains the largest producer of opium in the world, with a global market share of more than 90 percent. While poppy growing is generally in decline, the cultivation of cannabis has increased: cannabis products can be distributed with less risk, since there is increasing national demand. While the drug trade is booming, the other branches of the economy in Afghanistan are stagnating. A large proportion of the population is still living in poverty, despite huge aid payments from abroad; the country is currently ranked 181 (of 182) in the Human Development Index drawn up by the UN Development Program and is

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still one of the poorest states in the world. 80 percent of the working population is employed in agriculture. Crops lost due to drought in the business year 2008/2009 meant that, at 3.6 percent, economic growth was considerably lower than expected.

PAKISTAN

Following the removal of the Taliban regimes in Afghanistan in 2001 and the expulsion of the terror network Al-Qaeda from the country, many members of these two groups, among them the Taliban leadership, retreated to neighboring Pakistan. Towards the end of 2001, many Taliban officials gathered with their fighters around founder and leader of the movement, Mullah Mohammad Omar, in the town of Quetta in South-West Pakistan. It was from here that the most senior decision-making body in the Taliban, the Quetta-Schura, organized the resistance against the foreign troops and Karzai's government. In the meantime, a considerable proportion of the leadership is said no longer to be in Quetta, but in the harbor metropolis of Karachi. Countless members of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda found a place to retreat to following the fall of the Taliban regime in

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the tribal territories of Pakistan. The border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan is large and difficult to control, meaning that the fighters in the jihadist groups were able to cross the border relatively unheeded. They settled in South Waziristan in particular, initially undisturbed by Pakistan security forces. This marked the 'Talibanization' of the semi-autonomous Pakistani tribal territories, in which Islamabad traditionally has only been able to exert limited influence.

THE BORDER IS A PROBLEM AREA

The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Durand Line, which spans 2,560 kilometers, is divided into a section measuring 1,360 km in the Pashtun belt and a section 1,200 kilometers in length through Balochistan. It is not easy to control this region with its three regular border crossing points at Torkham, Ghulam Khan and Chamman, as well as around 20 unofficial crossing points. Furthermore, there are approximately an additional 340

possible crossing points in the seven districts bordering Afghanistan. Moreover, nine villages are divided along the Durand Line and in the border regions there are still remains of some Afghan refugee camps that are home to around 1.5 million people.⁴ Since 2002, the militants have successfully won the support of the population in these areas and have partially installed parallel judicial and administrative systems. Pakistan's military intervention was initially half-hearted, and, thus, unsuccessful. As a result, the Taliban was able to gradually expand its influence in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) as well as in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Initially, the Afghan Taliban posed the main problem for the Pakistan government. However, the Pakistan Taliban, founded, financed and trained by the Afghan Taliban as well by the terror network Al-Qaeda soon became the greatest challenge facing the state.⁵ In December 2007, the Pakistan Taliban officially came together under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud into an umbrella organization, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). TTP has an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 members, whose focus lies mainly in fighting the Pakistani state.

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AGREEMENTS WITH THE TALIBAN – NO MORE THAN WORDS ON PAPER?

Over time, the Taliban in Pakistan attempted to expand their sphere of influence beyond the tribal territories. At the end of April 2009, the Pakistani military began a large-scale offensive in the Malakand Agency region. The radical Islamic Taliban held power in the Swat valley, once a popular tourist area for Pakistanis. The offensive was preceded by two peace agreements between the Pakistani government and the insurgents. It quickly became clear, however, that the Taliban considered themselves obligated only to implement their own agenda, but not to abide by the agreement. This has been a general trend in recent

4 | The data is taken from a presentation manuscript prepared by Imtiaz Gul, *Pak-Afghan Border Management*, which was presented at a bilateral conference held by the Universities of Kabul and Quaid-i-Azam on April 27, 2010 in Islamabad.

5 | Muhammad Amir Rana, "Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan: A Counterinsurgency Perspective", *PIPS Research Journal Conflict and Peace Studies*, 2 (Apr-Jun 2009) 2, 10-11.

years, as seen also in 2006 in the Afghan Musa Qala.⁶ While the saying that "peace can only be achieved if one speaks with one's enemies as well as one's friends", should not be discounted, there are also those who hold the view

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that negotiating with the insurgents from a position of weakness would be unproductive. Political foresight may make certain compromises necessary, but should be not be abused as a blank check to make MPs or cabinet members of terrorists. The developments of recent years support this assessment. In addition, in negotiations on reintegration, there has been a political 'upgrading' of the radical Islamists. Very recently, the Afghani president presented a 36-page paper during his Washington visit, promising the leaders of the insurrection free escort into exile if they cut their ties to Al-Qaeda. Foot soldiers would also go unpunished if they laid down their arms. Ultimately, it is important to remember in 2010 why the decision for military intervention in Afghanistan was taken in 2001. The objective of the mission was to shatter the Taliban state and destroy Al-Qaeda. If, for reasons of pragmatism, the Taliban were now to be given a share of power in Kabul, thousands of lives and millions of taxpayers' money dedicated to the creation of the new state would have been sacrificed in vain.

The mindset and motivation of the radical Islamists is clearly apparent. Apologists for negotiations with and the political involvement of these forces may, through this, be able to secure their own power for some years to come. In the mid- to long-term, however, the radical Islamists will amend the political course as they see fit. In Pakistan, for instance, they repeatedly contravened agreements by refusing to lay down arms. Moreover, the militants continued their attacks on Pakistan security forces unabated. In April 2009 alone, the Taliban claimed responsibility for 18 terrorist attacks in the Malakand region, eight of which targeted state security forces.⁷ When they then attempted to expand their control to the neighboring districts of Dir and Buner, advancing to within 100 kilometers of the capital, the Pakistan politi-

6 | The following article provides further information: Thomas Ruttig, "Musa-Qala-Protokoll am Ende", *SWP-Aktuell* 13, (Berlin) 2007.

7 | Muhammad Amir Rana, "Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan: A Counterinsurgency Perspective", 9.

cians reacted and finally decided on the large-scale use of military force. The offensive by the Pakistan military against the Taliban in the Swat valley triggered a humanitarian disaster: more than two million residents fled the region to escape the conflict. The Pakistan government declared the offensive ended in July 2009; since then, there have been isolated instances of fighting in the region. According to official records, the two-month offensive cost the lives of more than 1,700 insurgents and 160 soldiers. What is striking is that the offensive in the Swat valley – unlike previous military maneuvers against the militants, had the support of the population and many of the political parties.

Shortly after the expulsion of the Taliban from the Swat valley, the Pakistani military turned its attention to a new region. In June 2009, the government announced that it intended to implement a further offensive in South Waziristan. Two months later, the leader of the TTP, Baitullah Mehsud, was killed in a drone attack. In response to these events and the imminent invasion, Islamic terrorists began a devastating series of suicide attacks and assaults in Pakistan's cities at the beginning of October 2009. The targets included the office of the United Nations World Food Programs in Islamabad and the General Headquarters of the army in the garrison town of Rawalpindi. Hundreds of civilians were killed in the attacks. Unperturbed by this, the Pakistani forces embarked on the Rah-i-Nejat offensive in South Waziristan in mid-October 2009 with around 30,000 soldiers, to force the Taliban out of the region. Since March 2010, the Pakistani army has also been running operations against the insurgents in North Waziristan and Orakzai. Observers expect an expansion of the offensive to include these areas.

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PROS AND CONS OF DRONE ATTACKS

In its fight against the Taliban, the Pakistani army receives support from the USA: since Barack Obama took over as president, the secret service CIA has carried out an increasing number of attacks against alleged Taliban hiding places using remote-controlled, unmanned drones. This method of warfare appears not only to have a certain intimidating effect on the terrorists, but also appears to

be effective and successful, as the following data analysis illustrates. In 2009, for example, the number of civilian victims was relatively low, at five percent. However, since every civilian victim is one too many, the use of drones is generally subject to criticism. Nevertheless, as the second figure shows, the number of drone attacks appears to have doubled in the first six months of 2010.

Fig. 1
Drone Attacks in 2009:
Frequency and Casualties

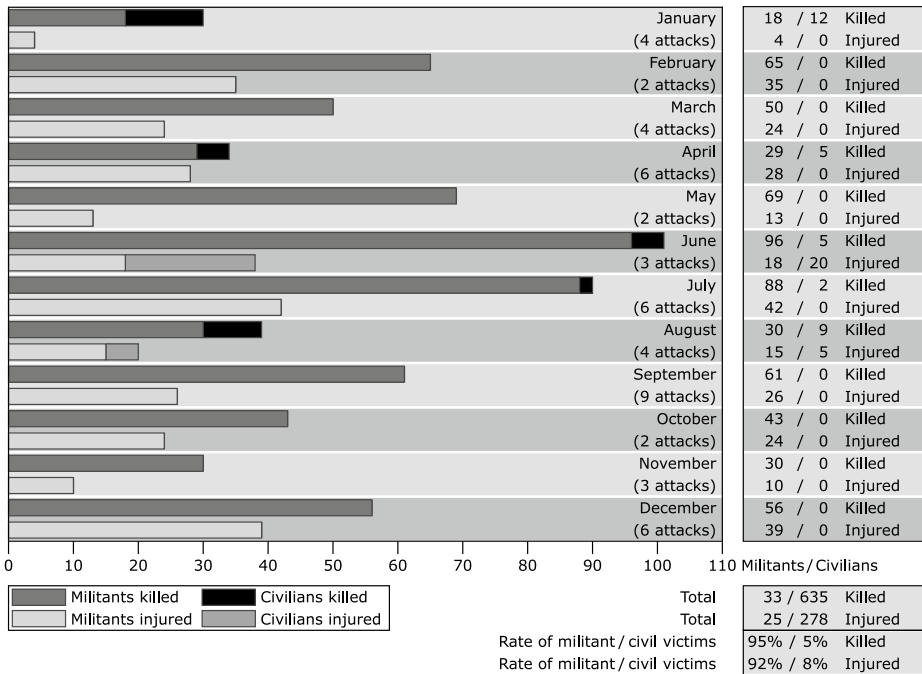
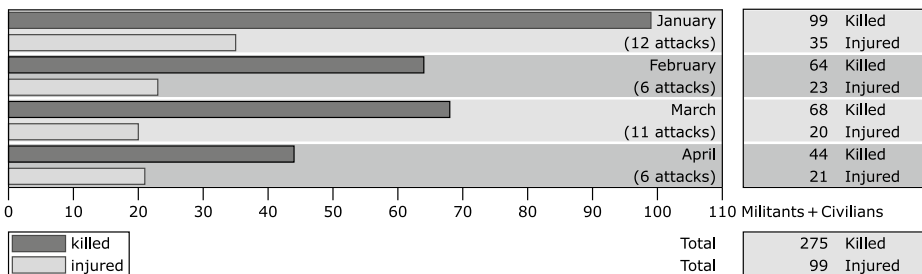


Fig. 2
Drone Attacks in 2010:
Frequency and Casualties



Source: own databases as well as the *Pakistan Security Report 2009*, Institute for Peace Studies. Data processed and updated by KAS staff member Ahmed Mushtaq.

However, the drone attacks are not without controversy. The Pakistan government officially considers these attacks by un-manned aircraft on Pakistani territory to be a breach of state sovereignty and has strongly condemned the drone attacks by the USA. Unofficially, however, the formula for success "Pakistani Intelligence on the ground + US drone strikes" appears no longer to be a subject for debate. In parallel to the military actions in South and North Waziristan, which were aimed at the Pakistani Taliban, security forces were also more consistent in their actions against the Afghan Taliban in other areas of the country: since January 2010, numerous high-ranking officials have been arrested, including the second-in-command of the Afghani Taliban, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, as well as the shadow governors of Kunduz and Baghlan, Mullah Abdul Salam and Mullah Mir Mohammed. These arrests by the Pakistani security forces dealt the Taliban a serious blow.

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Gulbuddin Hekmatyars Hizb-e-Islami in an upward trend. Seven commanders of Quetta-Schura are also said to be among those arrested, weakening the leadership. Members of other resistance movements, such as the Hizb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (HIG) and the Haqqani network, have not been affected to date. This could be interpreted as an indirect strengthening of these groups on the part of Pakistan. This interpretation is supported by a series of events that followed the arrest of the shadow governor of the province of Baghlan, Mullah Mir Mohammed. Following his arrest in February this year, bloody fighting broke out between the Taliban and the HIG at the beginning of March in the province south of Kunduz. An estimated 50 militants were killed on both sides during the fighting. These two rebel groups formed a strategic alliance in the wake of the invasion by American troops in Afghanistan, as both the Taliban and the HIG oppose Karzai's government and demand the withdrawal of foreign troops. The HIG, under the leadership of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, has been held responsible for various attacks on NATO troops. In March 2010 president Karzai met with representatives of the HIG in Kabul for the first time for cooperation talks, during which, according to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's spokesperson, Haroon Zarghun, a 15-point plan was discussed. With the

arrest of Mullah Mir Mohammed, Pakistan thus triggered a chain of events that culminated in talks between the HIG and the Afghan government concerning political power-sharing. This is because the Afghani insurgents will agree

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to lay down arms only if they are granted a share of political control in return. With the indirect strengthening of the HIG, Pakistan is creating a further opportunity to influence Afghanistan's fortunes. At the same time, this political maneuver by the Pakistani government is intended to ensure that India's influence in Afghanistan remains limited in the long term. However, the rehabilitation of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar also entails risks: it would be tantamount to according recognition to the terrorists.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM?

The unexpected arrests of the Afghani Taliban in Pakistan can be viewed as the first phenomenon of a potential paradigm shift in the fight against terrorism by the Pakistani secret service ISI. This is because in the past, the Pakistani leadership had often seen the Afghani Taliban as an essential tool in their Afghanistan policy and had therefore given them free rein. The explanation for this pattern of behavior lies in the past: following generous support and in some instances even training for the seven Mujaheddin groups based in Peshawar, Pakistan, in the 1980s, Islamabad's vassal Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his Hizb-e-Islami were not in a position, following the retreat of the Soviet Union from the Afghan civil war, to assert themselves by military means, as had apparently previously been assumed by the Pakistanis. 1994 marked the birth of the Pakistani Taliban 'sponsorship' in the form of the support of Mullah Mohammad Omar, based in Kandahar, since Islamabad hoped that this alliance would afford them a crucial political influence on the Afghan neighbor. This approach was based on the perception of "strategic depth": in the event of any conflict with India, Pakistan sees Afghanistan as a potential military place of retreat. This basic doctrine was upheld even after US intervention in 2001 and the ensuing war against terrorism, which Pakistan became involved in. Although Pakistan first and foremost supported the USA in its efforts, it

had a huge vested interest in not sending its old Afghani companion - a potential ally of the future - to its doom. Since 2009, however, this doctrine seems to be crumbling and it appears at least that a partial and pragmatic rethink is underway.

Firstly, because the Pakistani state and its military considers its fundamental tenets to have been attacked and is now taking more resolute action. Afghani Taliban on Pakistan territory are no longer spared. The arrests to date can by all means be seen as a success, but do not yet represent a paradigm shift in tackling terrorism. Future arrests of people like Mullah Mohammad Omar, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Osama bin Ladin or Gulbuddin Hekmatyar would be an indication of a complete change of tack.

Secondly, Pakistan's actions can be understood as a reaction to the change in America's position. The chemistry between the American commander-in-chief and the head of the Pakistan army, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, as well as the head of the secret service, General Lieutenant Ahmad Shuja Pasha appears to be good. The Pakistani government recently extended the period of office of both military leaders. The Pakistani airforce will also be given the long-awaited additional equipment for its F-16 fighter planes. The outstanding payments in the amount of 656 million US Dollars from the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) were rendered by the USA at the beginning of May 2010.⁸

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Thirdly, the progressive lack of power of the Pakistani secret service over the Taliban structures can also be cited as an explanation for the new approach. The last secret negotiations in the Maldives, for instance, are said to have been held without any Pakistani involvement whatsoever. Without a guaranteed direct influence on the command and planning structures, the Afghani Taliban does not appear to represent a particularly high additional value for

8 | The CSF, established by the United States in 2001, are payments intended to support Pakistan as well as 26 other nations in the fight against terrorism. Pakistan received the last payment from the CSF in January 2010. The amount was 349 million US Dollars and was paid for Pakistan's efforts in 2008.

the Pakistani secret service. The progressing emancipation of the Taliban thus appears to be counterproductive for the movement.

Fourthly, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his HIG appear to have become a fixed political and military variable in Afghanistan again. It can be assumed that he still maintains extremely good relations with the Pakistani secret service. Should Hizb-e-Islami have a large election campaign budget for the parliamentary elections in the Fall, and attempt to seize control, a conflict of interests between Iran and Pakistan is likely to break out with regard to this arrangement. Furthermore, it will not be easy for Karzai to

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integrate into his political system someone who has been on the USA's most-wanted list since 2003 listed under Executive Order 13224 as a "global terrorist". Rumor has it that Hamid Karzai is proposing a peace plan that entails Hekmatyar going into exile in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for several years in return for his son-in-law Ghairat Bahir being granted an important position in Karzai's cabinet. Should a pact of this kind in fact be implemented, it is highly likely that many European parliaments would call the prolongation of the Isaf-mandate into question, since the HIG committed many crimes against humanity during the civil war and is thought to have killed more Afghan civilians than Soviet soldiers.

CONCLUSION

What is important for the future relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the related holistic approach to tackling terrorism in the region is that the idea of "strategic depth" is losing importance.⁹ During a conversation with Pakistani journalists, analysts and politicians, Afghanistan's national security advisor, Dadfar Spanta, put forward the view that "relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have improved enormously since the Musharraf era, and that greater stability and prosperity can be

9 | There appear to be some developments in this direction. Cf. the following newspaper article: Rasheed Khalid, "Strategic depth idea should be discarded", in: *The News*, April 2010 (Islamabad), 4, http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=236378 (accessed June 8, 2010).

achieved using the instrument of regional integration.”¹⁰ This point is hugely important since, without improved regional cooperation, in particular between Kabul and Islamabad, it will not be possible to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Five divisions with a total of 145,000 soldiers are currently deployed in the tribal territories in Pakistan. Pakistan contributes far more to the fight against terrorism than is perceived and, more importantly, acknowledged to date by the West. This was brought up several times during political talks with a Pakistani delegation of MPs in Berlin in May 2010. In addition, Pakistan pays a high price for this war on its own soil: now, more Pakistani soldiers, policemen and civilians are being killed in the war against the Taliban than in Afghanistan.

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Furthermore, the war against terrorism also costs Pakistan dearly in terms of economic and socio-political aspects, as the chair of the committee for petroleum and resources, Sheikh Waqas Akram, reported. During political discussions with German delegates he demonstrated on May 5, 2010, that the numerous NATO supply convoys that travel through Pakistan pay only 40 rather than the regular 80 Pakistani Rupees for a liter of fuel. He also reported that the heavily-laden transport vehicles make intensive use of the infrastructure, causing a great deal of wear and tear. Another MP, chair of the committee for water and energy, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, furthermore added that, “the war against terrorism has robbed Pakistan not only of a political leader and unifying figure (Benazir Bhutto) but is also causing Pakistan serious economic damage. The decrease in foreign investment by up to 50 percent, growing inflation rates of up to 13 percent and the reduction in the value of foreign currency and the gross national product are, the result, *inter alia*, of the situation brought about by the escalating conflict.”¹¹

10 | The talks took place on February 24, 2010 in the Afghani presidential palace. The participants were members of a delegation invited to Kabul by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung as part of the Afghani/Pakistani Dialog Forum.

11 | This is the German/Pakistani parliamentary friendship group, represented by Minister Masood Abbas (ANP), Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah (PPP), Sardar Ayaz Sadiq (PML-N), Sheikh Waqas Akram (PML-Q), Dr. Nadeem Ehsan (MQM) and Senators Humayun Khan Mandokhel (IND) and Semeen Siddiqui (PML-Q) who visited Berlin on KAS' invitation for political talks from 3-7 May 2010.

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Against this background, it sounds cynical for the West to demand repeatedly that Pakistan does more to fight the Taliban. Instead, there is a need for a rethink: Pakistan is part of the solution, not part of the problem. It should be seen not only as a partner in the fight against terrorism, but also as a partner for peace in Afghanistan. In this regard, the resolution of disputes between Pakistan and India would be a valuable contribution to the stabilization of the entire region. The relationship between the two states, which is in any case strained due to the smoldering Kashmir conflict, reached a new low following the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. While a conventional war between these two South-East Asian countries may appear strange and incomprehensible to the West, this is not the case with the then-commander of the Indian army, General Deepak Kapoor, nor doubtless also with many Pakistani hardliners.¹² At the turn of the year, Indian media let it be known that the country was prepared for a war on two fronts against China and Pakistan and that it would be able to decide such battle in its favor within just 96 hours. Of course, statements like this are more of a rhetorical maneuver, but they nevertheless impede trust-building measures or even rob them of all substance. Given this strained political climate, Pakistan is not prepared to recall any more troops from the Indian border and relocate them to the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight the Taliban. Equally, in the mid-term, measures must be taken to tackle the sources financing the radical Islamists. Like a conventional army, the Taliban also need financial resources for equipment, training and upkeep of their combat units. The income from the drugs sector, put at approximately 130 million US Dollars, will not be sufficient for the approx. 35,000 footsoldiers and 900 commanders of the Taliban movement to achieve a military victory, but it could prolong a guerilla war.

The coming months will show whether there will actually be a paradigm shift in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or whether the recent events including eliminations and arrests were nothing more than strategically

12 | General Deepak Kapoor retired on 31 March 2010. The new Indian commander-in-chief is General Vijay Kumar Singh. He fought in the war between India and Pakistan in 1971.

motivated concessions. It is not possible at present to predict whether Islamabad is double-dealing with Kabul with regards to tackling terrorism; sacrificing disloyal, Afghani Taliban members in order to strengthen Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his HIG strategically and in military terms. In Afghanistan, people are saying that as a result of the confusing alliances, trying to win the war is like trying to eat soup with a knife. In view of the complex muddle of national interests as witnessed currently in Hindu Kush, this saying from the time of the civil war seems again to be gaining relevance.