

# The taliban insurgency: democracy in dangerous places case study

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



President Obama once noted that the Taliban's momentum had been crashed down in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the Obama administration noted with concern that his government was already in the process of withdrawing the US troops from Afghanistan because the pacification process was almost being concluded (Joscelyn & Roggio, 2012). However, it is interesting to note that similar utterances and affirmations have been echoed in the past by most of the western powers that have had long term interests in the developments taking place in Afghanistan. In particular, the officials in the Obama administration have regularly made such statements. This also explains the reason why the US troops in Afghanistan are supposed to clear from this war-torn country by 2014.

We may not refute the fact that the Afghan surge made crucial steps towards the southern regions of the nation. Even before the onset of this surge, startling gains had already been made by the Taliban and close allied forces. As a result, the Taliban forces managed to seize Kandahar and Helmand territories that they had lost earlier. It is vital to mention that several parts of the country are still in control of the insurgency contrary to the popular notion that they are only concentrated in the southern parts of Afghanistan (Joscelyn & Roggio, 2012). The grand question still remains to be whether the insurgency will succeed or fail in spite of the heavy presence of the US and UN troops.

Despite the fact that we can tentatively present an argument that towards the south the surge was successful, it is vital to recall that other parts of the country did not receive a similar counterinsurgency attack. From this

perspective, it is undeniable that the UN and US troops have not fully broken the Taliban's momentum. Therefore, we may as well argue that the insurgency has higher chances of succeeding than failing. Unless a thorough counterattack is uniformly carried out in other parts of the country, it may prove to be extremely difficult to streamline the activities of the Taliban insurgency.

In order to reasonably weigh the war effort as well as its overall impact, it is perhaps instrumental to take stock of the events before the emergence of the Taliban movement and how the rebellion has always conducted itself in the warfront. Information obtained from the Coalition fatalities per annum, crucial data gathered from the National Counterterrorism Center as well as data obtained from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have been used in this analysis (Galula, 2006).

The Taliban-led insurgency still has the potential of causing serious mayhem throughout Afghanistan according to the data obtained from the above reports. In spite of the fact that the above resources are not harmonious in terms of the contents reported, they still have a converging conclusion that the Taliban insurgency is far from over. Each of the resources measures the degree of violence using different criteria. Most importantly, one of the outstanding weaknesses of these resources is that the insurgent's capability to take full control of a territory has not been measured even though it is a vital aspect that can be used to determine the success or failure rate of such a movement (Joscelyn & Roggio, 2012). For example, it is historically understood that before the close of 2001, the group used to operate without

the insurgency label even though it was a relatively powerful force in Afghanistan.

Hence, the effectiveness of this insurgency group has been measured by the limited available statistics that may not fully take into account all the parameters of success or failure. The big picture of the outright ability of this insurgency may not be visualized on account of the limited studies on violence that have been carried out in the recent past. In fact, if the US and United Nations' troops are compelled to rely on such paltry data, it may significantly mislead the entire operation. As already mentioned, the Taliban insurgency has better chances of succeeding in future than it is currently perceived (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2009).

Due to lack of readily available and reliable data, the Taliban's command structure and its cohesiveness have not been gauged by the resources at hand. For instance, does this insurgence have the ability to train new leadership structure as well as new fighters who can be deployed readily? As a matter of fact, executing the ring leaders may not be a surety that the group has been disengaged. In spite of several years of continuous attacks against the Taliban insurgency, it is apparent that the group has the ability to regenerate itself into vibrant leadership structure and command systems that are capable of fighting back viciously.

Moreover, the Quetta Shura's top leadership cadre has not even been attacked all these years bearing in mind that they are largely stationed in neighboring countries like Pakistan. The leadership structure is also well

organized with various levels of command structure that have been adequately trained to succeed the immediate seniors in case of any eventualities (Collier, 2009). Reports also indicate that the losses incurred (in terms of killed or captured soldiers) in Afghanistan have always been compensated by the Taliban leadership that is operating in Pakistan. Hence, soldiers who are killed or captured are regularly replaced in order to replenish the team.

It has been indicated that the degree of violence has worsened in Afghanistan than it was before the beginning of the surge. Even if violence is measured using data obtained from ISAF and the Defense Department, the same result is still attained. It appears that the increasing incidences of violence have been aggravated by the presence of peace keeping troops. There have always been attacks and counter attacks from both sides of the divide. Any gains made by ISAF and the Defense Department have often been reversed by the Taliban insurgency. Since the current overall incidents of attacks are higher than the past, the information provided by the military that the attacks are declining is indeed misleading (Joscelyn & Roggio, 2012).

In 2011, substantial growth in the IED attacks was observed. It has also been noted that the rate is higher than it used to be before the onset of the surge. The campaigns of the Taliban insurgents are usually executed using the IRDs. Most of the attacks targeted at the civilians are mainly facilitated by IEDs.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the Taliban insurgency will continue to launch successful attacks in future as opposed to the notion that they have been weakened (Collier, 2009). There are new leadership structures and commands that are inaugurated on a regular basis in order to replace those who have been captured or executed by the US and UN command troops.

Collier, P. (2009). *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers.

Galula, D. (2006). *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory And Practice*. London: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

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