

Kashmir: Failed insurgencies

JULIAN SCHOFIELD and
MUMTAZ IQBAL

ONE can interpret the proposed Muzaffarabad/Srinagar bus service from 7 April 2005 as Islamabad's de facto abandonment of the efforts to change the military balance in Kashmir through insurgencies.

Pakistan made three such attempts (1947, 1965 and 1989). All failed, largely because of Islamabad's exclusive pursuit of a focoist as opposed to a Maoist insurgency strategy.

Maoists seek political power by regime change through a flexible and integrated three-phase process: political organisation; gradually widening guerrilla warfare; and a war of movement. That's how PRC and Vietnam communist parties came to power. It's the route Nepal's Maoists and Naxals in some 15 Indian states are following.

Focoism reverses Maoism's first two phases. It banks on violence's demonstration effect to catalyse mobilisation of anti-government elements to generate popular support that is boosted by the authorities' overreaction. Cuba's the classic case of successful focoism.

KASHMIR UNREST & SOCIETY

Despite the ideal of Kashmireyan (an idyllic notion of a united and heterogeneous society), profound differences exist in Kashmir between Hindu and Muslim, Shia and Sunni, and within Sunnis.

This situation hasn't fostered widespread communal violence, in large measure because economic relations between Hindus and Muslims are mutually-cooperative, not exploitative. In turn, this has impacted cultural practices. Kashmiri Hindus accept water and food from Muslims more readily than their coreligionists in India.

Sufi traditions permeate Muslim religious practices. Hence, Kashmiri politicisation emanates more through the printed word than from madrasas. Weak Pan-Islamism amongst Kashmiris compels Pakistan-supported jihadists like Jaish-e-Mohammed to recruit largely from outside Kashmir.

Such groups, better armed and resourced, lack grass-roots support, operate close to their infiltration routes and don't really worry the Indians too much.

Muslim Kashmiris prefer independence to fusion with Pakistan or autonomy within India. Long-standing commercial and ethnic ties underwrite this desire for relations

with both states. Thus, insurgency in Kashmir would continue even if Pakistan support ceased. Similarly, Islamabad's patronage hasn't made headway in promoting union with Pakistan.

PAKISTAN AND TRIBAL FOCOISM

Pakistan adopted focoism for three reasons. First, insurgency tactics meshed with the traditional style and temperament of tribal guerrillas, the bulk of the insurgents.

Second, focoism harmonised both with Pakistan Army's British counter-insurgency legacy and Pakistani Special Forces doctrine and training under US instructors.

Third, Pakistani leaders are apprehensive about the spillover effects of successful popular Kashmiri mobilisation on their own population.

These reasons suggest that Pakistan's Kashmir strategy is a mutant of conventional focoism that can be termed tribal-focoism, whose three key elements are: pre-independence frontier warfare experience; Pakistan's Special Forces development pattern; and absence of social mobilisation.

FRONTIER WARFARE

Afghan frontier policing preoccupied the British Indian army, with half the army doing Frontier service by 1914. It interdicted Pakhtun raids (lashkars) and occasional revolts using mobile and lightly-armed forces (gashts) and developed expertise in raiding and infiltration that were exploited in WWII (LRDG-Long Range Desert Group; SAS and Chindits).

This pre-independence counter-insurgency experience formed the core of Pakistan's revolutionary warfare knowledge when the Indian army split in 1947.

The tribal Pakhtuns' principal culture Pakhtunwali is a code of life emphasising honor and shame, revenge and blood feuds while glorifying military exploits. Most males carry arms. Pakhtunwali and tribal fragmentation facilitate creating small warrior groups (Lashkars) that mounted raids and ambushes against British rule motivated in part by economic gain and political-religious proclamations.

In the Pakistani establishment, Pakhtuns (recruited principally from Mardan and Kohat settled areas) account for 30-40% of the army officer corps, far above their share of the population, and a substantial portion of Pakistan intelligence.

In all three insurgencies especially in 1947, Pakistan used small

bands of homogenous Pakhtun tribals as its primary unit of operation, supplemented by recruits from Azad Kashmir (Pakhtuns, Gujjars, Bakerwals and Rajputs) and northern areas of Pakistan (Gilgit, Dardics).

They infiltrated Indian-occupied Kashmir to conduct guerrilla raids aimed to spark inter-state negotiations, conventional invasion or a mass revolt. Little effort was made to effect grass-roots mobilisation; indigenous support was mainly urban.

INSURGENCY DOCTRINE

Pakistan received a further reinforcement in focoist tactics from U.S. indoctrination in the 1950s. Numerous senior military leaders in Pakistan, including officers on rotation through the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) and MI (Military Intelligence), had served terms in the Special Services Group (SSG), the principal vehicle for focoist insurgency doctrines, and a central actor in 1965, operations in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s, and Kargil.

The influence of U.S. doctrine came via training by a Military Aid to Pakistan team controlled by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that was designed in the Cold War context. In the event of a Soviet offensive towards the Arabian Sea, the SSG's primary mission was as a stay-behind force to train local guerrillas in Afghanistan and Pakistan, a role which it executed with great success in the 1980s.

The SSG was also trained to organize resistance among already supportive populations (as was the US experience of Asia and Europe in the Second World War). Though not outlined as such at the time, US operations in the 1950s were similar in doctrinal form to the Latin American focoist doctrines: operations conducted in the expectation, rather than the careful mobilisation, of local support.

Success in Guatemala in 1954, and failure in the Bay of Pigs in 1961, indicated the limited conditions under which this tactic could succeed. Victory typically depended



Photograph of insurgent's camp near the LoC

on politically marginalised populations led by governments vulnerable to mercenaries.

SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Pakistan's reliance on tribal focoist insurgency is also influenced by a fear of an armed popular mobilisation. However, in Pakistan's outlying areas, people have been fought over rather than been the principal agents of their own independence. This has been reinforced by a general fear among regimes in Pakistan, most of which have been military, of a loss of control of its diverse population.

On 13 September, following the onset of a stalemate in the Punjab during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, President Ayub Khan sought advice from his Communist Chinese ally, Zhou En-lai advised him to continue to fight, despite the loss of one or two cities like Lahore, on the model of China's popular resistance.

Success in Guatemala in 1954, and failure in the Bay of Pigs in 1961, indicated the limited conditions under which this tactic could succeed. Victory typically depended

on population and fighting a protracted war of resistance that would have resulted in the supplanting of the traditional elite. Ayub responded that this strategy would be impossible, particularly given Pakistan's flat terrain and centrifugal social forces. Such a mass mobilisation would probably result in the break-up of Pakistan.

ROUTE OF THE THREE INSURGENCIES

The Gilgit Scouts rebellion in July 1947 and the Poonch revolt of 9 August 1947 against the Maharaja influenced the Pakistan cabinet in early September to authorise Major General Akbar Khan-involved in the 1951 Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case and later Bhutto's national security advisor-to invade the Kashmir Valley using irregulars.

Between 3,200-5,000 Pakhtuns primarily Mahsuds, Afridis and Mohmands organized by some Punjabi and Pathan officers the Brits

had left or leaving --were bussed, probably using the Sixth Lancers base as a staging area, through Yusufzai territory to Kashmir (via Batrasi north-east of Abbottabad). Tribal participation appears to be motivated by jihad and loot.

Over the next few months, the tribesmen showed their proficiency in infiltration and mobile tactics but couldn't budge Indian forces. In April 1948, Pakistani army deployed into Kashmir to prevent India's threatened push to Muzaffarabad.

The lessons GHQ Pindi learnt were that lashkars could be sent from their home base in distant Kashmir, could infiltrate the difficult mountain terrain but had limited effectiveness against Indian regulars.

On 26 December 1963, a hair of the Prophet, a sacred relic, was stolen from the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, and resulted in a wave of Muslim rioting. The civil disturbances were falsely interpreted in Pakistan as evidence of a Muslim population

ready for revolt, and prompted the planning of a covert operation to bring it about. The theory behind Operation Gibraltar was that the turmoil of a sustained infiltration would lead to political consciousness among the Kashmiris.

The insurgents of 1965, drawn mostly from Azad Kashmir, were trained and led by SSG and Azad Kashmir and Jammu (AJK) officers. In fact, shortly after the SSG was formed in 1953-1954, its founder and commander former RIMC (now IMA) Dehra Dun graduate late Lt. Col. (later Maj. Gen.) Abubakr Osman Mitha, grandson of Mumbai Memon magnate Sir Sulaiman Cassim Mitha, was asked by Ayub to consider a plan of liberation for Kashmir.

Mitha responded that creating an uprising was possible given sufficient preparation. However, the then commander of the SSG, Col. S. G. Mehdi, allegedly predicted failure at the time (1965), on the basis of the absence of local support.

Starting in the late-1950s, a civil intelligence bureau conducted low-key sabotage operations in Kashmir. Egged on by Foreign Office hawks Bhutto and Azziz Ahmed with ambiguous GHQ support, Murree-based 12 Div GOC Maj. Gen. Akhtar Malik, responsible for Op Gibraltar, with volunteers from the Northern Light Infantry, disguised as jihadis. The diplomatic defeat aside, militarily Kargil was a tactical success from the standpoint of a military raid.

There is also evidence that Kargil encouraged the local population to resist, as prescribed by focoist theory. It was however a failure if it had any intention of being a focoist inspiration for continued resistance to Indian occupation in the Kashmir Valley.

SUMMING UP

Flawed doctrine reinforced by wrong interpretations of history drive Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir and explain the insurgents' failures. In that regard, the ISI's reliance on tribal focoist tactics, rather than the use of guerrilla warfare as a step on the path of revolutionary strategy, is misplaced. Pakistan has pursued such a constrained tribal focoist strategy due to Anglo-US doctrinal influences and its own preoccupations with NWFP and Afghan Pakhtuns.

Julian Schofield is Professor, Concordia University, Montreal.
Mumtaz Iqbal is a free lance.

Deepening Indo-US military relations

BOBBY SHARMA

Can we as a nation compromise on our principled stand of supporting a multipolar world? Such a step will antagonize our long term friend Russia. It will also not go down well with China either with whom we are in the active process of improving relations. It is equally important to neutralize the nuisance value of the US in the context of the current thaw and prospects of peace with Pakistan.



PHOTO: INTERNET

routine airlift capability, which is far more than our strategic capability. There were also the *Shanti Path* 2003 joint peacekeeping exercises, and the latest being Indian and US troops training in dense jungles and learning to flush terrorists out of their hideouts. There is also another joint air exercise being planned in Alaska.

Why is America so desperate to seek military-to-military cooperation with India? The Indian military is highly capable, well-trained and potential partners, with sophisticated

tactics, operational training, and high level of technology. Despite resource constraints, India offers geographically, a vast variety of landscapes from plains to deserts to jungles and high-altitude and snow-clad mountains.

American defense forces are essentially trained for an interventionist role and would like to train in terrain that is akin to their areas of operations. Apart from dominating Asia, the containment of China is also factored into their strategic concerns. While the Pentagon is

reconsidering its strategies to deal with terrorism, it is still worried about a rising China, which represents the most significant threat to the US, both economically and militarily. The Bush administration would like India to emerge as a counterweight to China. Americans therefore, want India to view China as a common strategic threat and may not be averse to a NATO type military alliance in the region to deal with China.

By permission, IPCS, New Delhi

The author is a defence analyst.

UZBEKISTAN-RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Strategic-political cooperation in the post-Cold War era

DR. MUHAMMAD RAFIQU ISLAM RIAD

AFTER its emergence as an independent state following the collapse of the former USSR in 1990, the top priority for the newly independent Uzbekistan was to ensure its internal security together with security in the border areas. Upto the end of 1991 none of the former Soviet Republics was able to organise its own national security force. On the basis of consent of its former Republics, the Russian Federation undertook the responsibility of preserving its former border in the framework of the Confederation of Independent States (CIS, established in Almaty).

From December 1991 to May 1992, strategic-political contact between Uzbekistan and Russia was in the process of emerging. The two countries defined the real directions of Uzbek-Russia strategic-political friendship in the framework of CIS. From October 1995 to November 1998, a warm environment of cooperation was established between Uzbekistan and Russia in the strategic-political sphere. But, in December 1998, the strategic-political relations reached a low profile that was only revived later within the framework of CIS. Eleven members of the CIS including President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan and President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation welcomed the Almaty declaration and Russia was entrusted with the protection of its former borders.

In October 1991, after the civil war in Tajikistan, President Islam Karimov was apprehensive that it might spread to Central Asia including Uzbekistan. He took initiatives to form groups of military observers and collective force within the setting of CIS. In March 1992, Agreement of Accountability entrusted Russia with providing military force to control any kind of internal conflict in the territory of CIS in case of appeal to Russia.

In May 1992, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Russia, Armenia and Kirghizia, and joined GUAM. Russia also changed its policy towards Uzbekistan and moved closer to Kirghizia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

But in autumn 1999, because of terrorist activities in the city of Yangiabad, President Karimov sought Russia's help to counter terrorism. This resulted in the formalisation of the Uzbekistan-Russia strategic and technical cooperation.

In May 2001 President Islam Karimov visited Moscow. Although he allowed US to open a military base (May 2001) in the south of Uzbekistan, President Putin's foreign policy related to Uzbekistan remained constructive.

In the post-Cold War era, a strategic-political relations was accorded less priority in the foreign policy of the two countries. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan is eager to keep emphasis on geo-economics with regards to his country's relations with the Russian Federation.



In the post-Cold War era, a strategic-political relations was accorded less priority in the foreign policy of the two countries. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan is eager to keep emphasis on geo-economics with regards to his country's relations with the Russian Federation.

riy guarantees from Russia upto the period of the formation of its national army.

In June 1992 Uzbekistan signed an agreement with Russia, which established inter-state relations and friendship for the next ten years. It also brought opportunities to expand bilateral relations between the two countries.

In March 1994, President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan visited Moscow to foster 'warm ties' with the Russian Federation. In January 1995 Uzbekistan formed the most powerful and biggest army in Central Asia with the help of Russian arms and technology.

By the end of 1998 the good strategic-political relations between Uzbekistan and Russia suffered due to political reasons, as Russia was not interested in putting pressure on the anti-Karimov opposition which made the Uzbek-Afghan border vulnerable. In May 1999 Uzbekistan left its commitment to Collective Security Agreement which it had signed together with the Russian Fed-

eration, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia, and joined GUAM. Russia also changed its policy towards Uzbekistan and moved closer to Kirghizia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

But in autumn 1999, because of terrorist activities in the city of Yangiabad, President Karimov sought Russia's help to counter terrorism. This resulted in the formalisation of the Uzbekistan-Russia strategic and technical cooperation.

In May 2001 President Islam Karimov visited Moscow. Although he allowed US to open a military base (May 2001) in the south of Uzbekistan, President Putin's foreign policy related to Uzbekistan remained constructive.

In the post-Cold War era, a strategic-political relations was accorded less priority in the foreign policy of the two countries. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan is eager to keep emphasis on geo-economics with regards to his country's relations with the Russian Federation.

The author is a Ph.D. in foreign policy studies.