

PESHAWAR SCHOOL MASSACRE

The limits of Pakistan's counterinsurgency strategy

ASM ALI ASHRAF

IN the Peshwar school massacre, the facts that 132 children were killed, and another 120 injured while the school Principal Tahira Kazi was burnt alive in front of the children, reveal the terrorists' intention to combine physical assaults with psychological trauma.

The Pakistan Government has responded to the attacks with a two-pronged strategy. First, the security forces cordoned off the area to rescue

officers were injured in the rescue operation.

The second component of the government's response strategy includes a re-invigorated military offensive in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). The Pakistani military claimed that in less than three days of the Peshawar incident, 119 militants were killed in the FATA—62 in ground operations and 57 in air strikes. Upon pressures from the military forces, the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif has also lifted a moratorium on death

and therefore are unlikely to succeed in combating the evolving threats of Taliban militancy. The problems with a rescue operation are manifold. First, it is reactive and not proactive, and therefore focuses more on the killing of militants and less on arresting them. But the dead terrorists tell no tale about their organisational structure, funding strategy, and operational details. Such information, if extracted from negotiations with terrorists during a hostage crisis or after their arrests and interrogation, could prove to be useful in foiling future attacks. Another problem with a commando operation lies in its unintended consequences of killing innocent civilians. Interestingly, the official account of the rescue mission does not report any collateral damage; nor does it say anything about any negotiation plans with the hostage takers.

The death sentence of convicted terrorists is also seen quite problematic as none of them relate to the Peshawar school massacre. For instance, Aqeel was hung for an alleged role in a deadly attack on Rawalpindi military headquarters in 2009, whereas Mahmood was hung for his involvement in a plot to assassinate former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in 2003. The United Nations human rights office has asked the Pakistani government not to "succumb to widespread calls for revenge" while international human rights advocates have called for a "measured and reasoned response" in dealing with hundreds of convicts.

More challenges relate to Pakistan's faulty counterinsurgency campaigns in the FATA. Security analysts identify at least two major problems with Pakistan's counterinsurgency operations. First, most soldiers deployed in the tribal areas know little about the demographic structures, topography, and local language, and thus are widely seen as an occupying force in the Pashtun society. Second, the Pakistan army's training and doctrine are largely informed by the country's historical

experience of fighting three wars with India in 1947, 1965, and 1971, and thus place a heavy emphasis on conventional war preparedness. This has made Islamabad largely incapable of fighting a protracted insurgency in the FATA—a tribal region where the central government has historically had minimal control, and thus delegated power to the tribal leaders. The bitter political divide in the country, especially between the Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan and the incumbent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has further worsened the crisis as Khan has consistently criticised the military campaigns in the FATA delegitimising the Sharif government's counterinsurgency strategy.

The Pakistan army's weak counterinsurgency campaigns are further compounded by the poor structure of its paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC). The FC soldiers are primarily drawn from the tribal areas, and thus are familiar with the local culture and terrain. This could make them an ideal counterinsurgent force. However, the FC is not a regular military force, and its training and preparedness focus on patrolling the frontiers and fighting cross-border smuggling. As a result, fighting insurgency and militancy have largely been alien to the FC personnel. When deployed for counterinsurgency purposes, along with Pakistani military forces, the FC has lacked the leadership and equipment, and demonstrated poor performance against the Taliban insurgents.

Poor intelligence collection and coordination have added more challenges to Pakistan's war on terrorism. The issue of poor collection was apparent in a statement made by military spokesperson Major General Asim Bajwa, who admitted "there were general threats regarding a terrorist attack on government and army installations since the start of Operation Zar-e-Azb, but the [Peshawar army] school had not been mentioned specifically" (The Express Tribune, Dec. 16, 2014). Put

simply, the army acquired strategic intelligence about the TTP's possible intentions but it lacked any actionable intelligence on the potential targets.

The problem of intelligence coordination is also evident in the overlapping responsibilities of the civilian-run Intelligence Bureau or the Federal Investigative Agency, and the military-controlled Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, widely known as the ISI. While each of the three agencies has some counterterrorism intelligence related tasks, there is no effective coordination among their collection and analytical efforts. The problem is further complicated as religious extremists in Pakistan operate with various names, making it hard for the agencies to monitor them.

Although Islamabad created a national counterterrorism authority in March 2013 and adopted a national internal security policy in March 2014 to overcome the problems of intelligence coordination, these domestic efforts need to be bolstered by regional and international cooperation. This is precisely why a day after the Peshawar school attack on December 17, 2014 Army Chief Raheel Sharif visited Kabul and shared classified intelligence with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and ISAF coalition force commander U.S. General Joseph Dunford. It is widely believed that Pakistani Taliban leader Maolana Fazlullah, who is hiding in Afghanistan, has ordered the Peshawar school attack. General Raheel has asked the Afghan authorities to extradite Fazlullah. As the Afghanistan War draws to an end, the Peshawar tragedy and Pakistani Army Chief's Kabul visit may give more credence to a U.S. plan for maintaining a small footprint in Afghanistan in the coming years.

The writer is Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at the University of Dhaka. He is also a member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), London. Email: aliashraf@du.ac.bd.



PHOTO: NBCNEWS.COM

the hostages and prevent the terrorist from fleeing. While the civilian and military police units sealed the school premises, the army's Special Services Group (SSG) commandos intercepted the terrorist's communications system, and engaged them militarily in a rescue operation. The eight-hour long commando operations killed the seven militants in sniper attacks and direct engagement, and more importantly rescued 960 of the school's roughly 1100 students present on that day. Seven commandos and two army

penalty which has been in place since 2008; and hanged two convicted terrorists—Mohammed Aqeel alias Dr. Usman and Arshad Mahmood. Punjab's home minister Shuja Khanzada claimed the terrorist executions would "boost up the morale of the nation" and that the government was "planning to hang more terrorists next week."

Pakistan's hostage rescue operations, execution of convicted terrorists, and the military offensives in tribal areas constitute only a short-term strategy.

Traits of politicians in Bangladesh

Do they matter?

ASHIKUR RAHMAN

THE recently launched "The State of Governance in Bangladesh Report 2013" by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) aimed to understand the outcomes that democratic politics has delivered since the post 1990 period, when parliamentary democracy was re-introduced. In particular, there is an explicit focus on the role of political parties, because there is general concern that the democratic deficit observed is ultimately shaped by how political parties behave in our socio-political space. Against this backdrop, one of the key components of the research examined those who have emerged as political representatives in Bangladesh through receiving political support from the dominant political parties. More specifically, the types of leaders who are elected to parliament received noticeable scrutiny, and it explored whether leadership type has any significant relationship to parliamentary performance.

The focus on the personal characteristics of legislators is essential for two reasons. First, while it is often vividly noted that effective institutions enhance the quality of government, it is worth appreciating that

institutions which are weak offer only limited restraints on politicians. Therefore, the individual motivations of public servants are likely to play a significant role in determining policies and socio-economic outcomes. Second, empirical evidence indicates that leader type can have significant policy implications both at the national and local level.

Thus, this examination contributes to this discourse by exploring the types of politician who have found representation in the national parliament and how such personal characteristics are correlated with parliamentary performance of legislators. More specifically, distinct personal features of legislators are examined, which include: {i} legislative experience of lawmakers; {ii} gender; {iii} educational achievements; {iv} dynastic identity; {v} age; {vi} criminal profile and {vii} professional affiliation. The study examines how MP traits have changed over time, especially between the 8th, 9th and 10th Parliament. The analysis then explores if personal traits of legislators are associated with their legislative performance. To this end, three key indicators of parliamentary performance of legislators are examined, which are: {i} attendance in the parliament; {ii} budget speech par-

ticipation; {iii} attendance in standing committee meetings.

Collectively, the detailed evaluation of legislator characteristics allows the study to provide the following insights:

- There has been a considerable rise of female leaders in the parliament since independence.
- There is a strong presence of dynastic leaders in both the 8th and 9th National Parliament. To be precise, 17 percent of elected MPs are dynastic and they have a noticeable representation in AL, BNP and JP.
- The presence of businessmen in the 8th, 9th and 10th National Parliament witnessed a remarkable rise as more than 50 percent of the parliamentarians are businessmen by profession in the 9th and 10th National Parliament. Additionally, across all the major political parties (AL, BNP, JP and Jamaat-e-Islam), businessmen continues to be the dominant profession among elected legislators.
- There is a significant injection of first-time MPs in the 10th and 9th National Parliament in comparison to the 8th National Parliament.
- The analysis shows 54 percent elected MPs has or had a legal charge against them in the 9th National

Parliament and more than 40 percent MPs has or had legal charges against them in the 10th Parliament. The investigation also noted that in both 9th and 10th National Parliament at least 10 percent had corruption charges against them.

- More than 80 percent elected legislators have an undergraduate degree in the 8th, 9th & 10th Parliament, even though there is a slight decline in this ratio from 88 to 82 percent between 8th and 10th National Parliament.
- There is a strong presence of lawyers in the 8th, 9th and 10th Parliament. In contrast, there is a decline in the proportion of ex-military personal.

These findings also brings to attention some important questions that future research can explore. For example, what factors have aided the rise of businessmen within our political process? Is it because the political parties are increasingly dependent on businessmen for financing elections and other activities? If so, how is this phenomenon shaping our overall state of governance within our society? The descriptive evidence is also suggestive that dynastic MPs have a strong presence in the parliament. Even though it is still not understood what explains

the emergence of dynastic leaders and how they influence the quality of governance within their respective political space. Lastly, the noticeable presence of legislators in the parliament with legal and corruption charges highlight the quality of our electoral arrangements in screening clean political candidates and is indicative that the dominant political parties accommodate individuals with undesirable track records.

The overall examination has also offered some insights on what kind of personal characteristics matter in shaping legislative performance. For example, there is evidence that legislative experience has a strong negative association with attendance. Likewise, there is also some indication that businessmen and legislators with corruption charges on average have lower levels of attendance. Remarkably, these results are not difficult to reconcile with political suggestions that argue political parties should offer lower support to businessmen or individual with corruption charges. Our findings also do not validate claims that educated legislators are necessarily better in their legislative duties than others. The research also identifies a strong role of political parties in shaping two types of parliamentary perfor-

mance: attendance and budget speech participation. Nevertheless, there is no indication that political parties influence the extent parliamentarians attend standing committee meetings, and findings show that even MPs from the opposition bench do not necessarily underperform their respective legislative duty in this regard. Thus, there is a hint that political parties might be a key source of underperformance of legislators in the parliament.

To conclude, as eminent political scientist V.O Key argued, "...Let there be emphasis on those we elect to office". This, in essence, has been the central motivation of the discussed analysis. In that spirit, this study examines the democratic implications of leadership characteristics by offering an empirical investigation of a political arena that is almost devoid of scientific inquiry. Taken Together, the descriptive and empirical evidence also indicates that it is essential to further examine the systematic relationship between *who* leaders are and *how* they behave, and what it means for the overall democratic nature of our political landscape.

The writer is Senior Economist, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI). Email: ashrahman83@gmail.com

QUOTABLE Quote

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

Thomas A. Edison

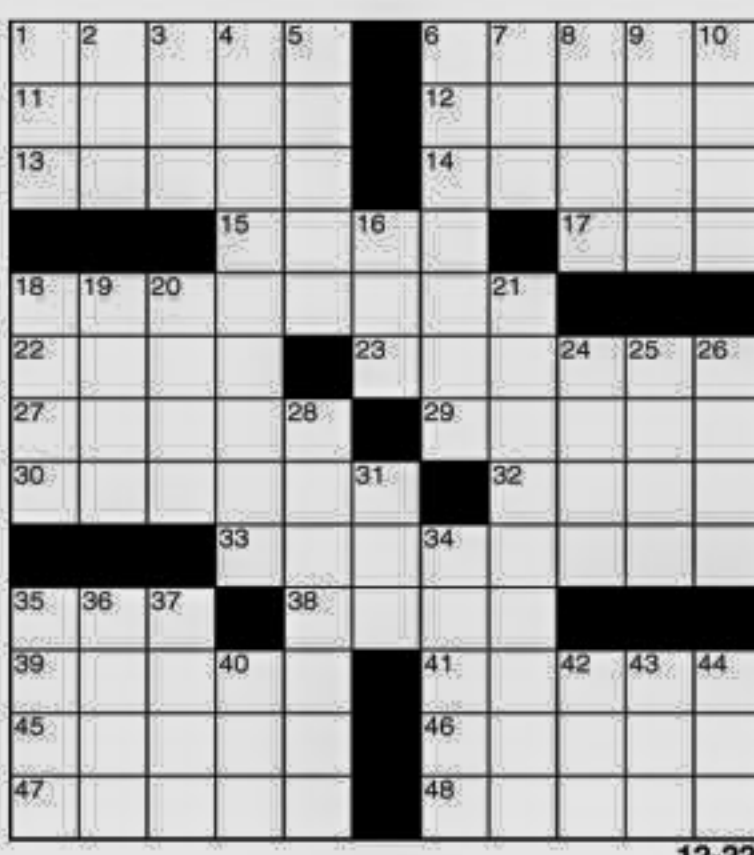
CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

- Christmas song
- Christmas Eve
- "O come, let us—Him"
- Rose hazard
- Singer Summer
- Sprinted
- Region
- Lock opener
- Entries for 6-Across
- Impolite
- Acquit
- Hollywood deal smaker
- Andrea—(ill-fated ship)
- Confer
- Piece of Christmas mail
- Glitters
- "Honest" president
- Eins and zwei
- Cowboy contest
- Uses shears
- Basketball star Patrick
- Wading bird
- Winter gliders
- Russian rulers

DOWN

- Scoundrel
- Brouhaha
- Harry's friend
- Tree decorations
- Get smart
- Wandered
- Cry of insight
- Fit an arrow to a bow
- Christmas symbol
- Tennis star Roddick
- Twisty fish
- Zodiac animal
- Colossal
- Midmonth day
- They're hung before Christmas
- Test type
- "Chestnuts roasting on an open—"
- Crazes
- Dominant ones
- Simple card game
- Stopwatch button
- God of war
- "...like a—full of jelly"
- TV's Falco
- Wrap up
- Writer Levin
- For each
- Ave. intersectors



Yesterday's answer

AVERT AHEAD
LEVER DANCE
AROMA STATE
STNICK MOM
KEN KISSERS
AXE SPIELS
HOODIE
FORWENT AYE
OWN GRACES
ONAIR AVILA
LOTTO CONEY
SWEAT KNOTS

CRYPTOQUOTE

H VYXWG NZIDKN RHI YF Z JXBJPHE ZFG
DZOK HI ZWW IY BURKWA, IDZF QK
MNYVGKG YF Z OKWOKI MXRDHYE
—DKFNU GZOHG IDYNKZX

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE: SCIENCE FICTION IS NO MORE WRITTEN FOR SCIENTISTS THAN GHOST STORIES ARE WRITTEN FOR GHOSTS.
—BRIAN ALDISS

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



HENRY

by Don Trachte

