

Pakistan Focused. Independent Questions. Independent Answers.



Focusing Pakistan on the issues of:

- Political and Economic Development
  - Democracy and Governance
  - Security and Terrorism
  - Environment

CRSS believes in impartial, bipartisan and realistic research on all issues Pakistani. CRSS is a non profit organization and first of its kind initiative in Pakistan with an aim to providing updates and analyses on various issues facing Pakistan and its people. CRSS is not part of any political group or party and strongly adheres to the academic and scholarly neutrality with an aim to explore any issue by asking "Independent Questions" and trying to provide "Independent Answers."

All the material at [www.crss.pk](http://www.crss.pk) is placed for public knowledge and freedom of information. CRSS will not be responsible for any political use of the information given on the website.

---

**Center for Research and Security Studies**

House # 60, Main Nazim-ud-Din Road, F-6/1, Islamabad

Tel: (+92-51) 8314801-3. Fax: (+92-51) 8314804

Email: [mail@crss.pk](mailto:mail@crss.pk). Web: [www.crss.pk](http://www.crss.pk)

# Terror Changing Tactics in Pakistan

---

## 1. Background Details:

Religious militants/extremists have always been taken as the “strategic reserves” of the Pak Military as it tested them both in Afghanistan and Kashmir for waging proxy wars against allegedly hostile regimes against Pakistan. For the militancy part in Kashmir, Pakistan has a long standing claim on the Kashmir controlled by India while India claims Pakistan as the usurper for the part Pakistan controls with its capital at Muzaffarabad. Many political observers believe that Pakistan’s strategic thinkers miscalculated the Frankenstein they were creating throughout the 1980s and 90s until 9/11 happened and this “marriage of strategic necessity” was challenged by various types of emerging coalitions and alliance at the international level. Under a UN Resolution, Pakistan had to break both tactical and diplomatic ties with the Taliban and it is commonly believed, both domestically and internationally, that Pakistan very reluctantly joined the international coalition to first topple the Taliban government in Kabul and then wage war against them to uproot the terror Taliban had perpetrated against their own people earlier and later started against the allied forces.

“Taliban and other extremist forces were disgruntled and hurt because of this U-turn in the Pakistani policy and they felt as if they were used,” Lt. Gen. (r) Talat Masood, a prominent defense analyst had commented in a television program. Pakistan’s policy of containment of the “elements of terrors” to Afghanistan only gradually crippled as the international pressure mounted on Pakistan to check the infiltration of the militants from Pakistani controlled tribal areas called FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas). Pakistan, starting 2004, started deploying its military and paramilitary forces in the rugged and unruly FATA along side the Durand Line, the historical and informal line taken as border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. By the mid of 2006, this deployment had reached nearly 90,000 regular fighting troops tasked to check and stop the infiltration of militant elements from FATA to Pakistan. In October 2007, one of the NATO commanders in Afghanistan noted that the influx of the militants from Pakistan had decreased by 42% as compared to the last year i.e. 2006.

While we consider the Taliban and like-minded militant forces as “our babies,” Pakistan’s intelligence and law enforcement machinery never thought of the “seeping out of these influences to mainland Pakistan. As a matter of record, the “seeping out started right after the first army action in 2004,” a prominent FATA analyst<sup>[1]</sup> working for a private Pashto TV channel said. The first Taliban influences were observed in the adjoining districts of NWFP in 2005 when they openly drove into Tank and tried to kidnap many governmental officials. With the passage of time, such activities only got worse and “from blowing up the CD shops in Mardan, they now are blowing up ISI buses and FIA<sup>[2]</sup> headquarters in Pakistan’s busy districts,” an Urdu newspaper<sup>[3]</sup> commentator noted. With the state’s security structure and intelligence apparatus “virtually crippled,” the terrorists are storming the Pakistani cities from mountains of Khyber to the coast of Karachi and they have now changed their tactics from “mundane bomb plantations to dynamic suicide bombings<sup>[4]</sup>.”

## 2. Situational Analysis:

Taliban and extremist forces which were historically nurtured, harbored and permitted operational freedom are now on the rise and are generally categorized into three types:

1. Afghan Taliban forces operating and resisting against the NATO and Allied forces.
2. Pakistani Taliban forces heavily influenced, linked and supported by the Afghan elements.
3. Sporadic groups operating as Taliban, including some criminal rackets.

The first two types are closely linked on ideological as well as ethnic and tactical lines and it is therefore extremely hard to distinguish between them. The Afghan Taliban are also suspected of their links with Al-Qaeda elements while their Pakistani counterparts have been supporting them by providing sanctuaries and other maintenance facilities. This was the factor that the international community noted and

demanded an action from the Pakistani authorities against them. Pakistani military's deployment in FATA severed the situation and contacts with the Pakistani military, security and intelligence apparatus and "after getting the first beating, the Taliban forces have successfully retaliated leaving the Pakistani State and it's relevant structure absolutely startled," a prominent FATA analyst working for Pakistan's biggest English daily wrote<sup>[5]</sup>. It is estimated that nearly 400 people have been killed in suicide and planted bombings in the first 70 days of the new year and "this is just the beginning."

The pattern of Taliban's activities has significantly changed from "defensive terrorism to offensive and now they have taken on the Pakistani security services as they seemingly know that no technology in the world can stop a suicide bomber<sup>[6]</sup>." From their attempt to blow up the Kohat Tunnel in January 2008 to blowing up the FIA Provincial HQ in Lahore, this is "what you call proactive and aggressive terrorism targeting the strategic will of the Pakistani State who still has to score a big score against any of the cells operating against it<sup>[7]</sup>." With ordinary citizens dying every week, the state of the Pakistani society is rocking with dwindling and sapped confidence with not much hopes of improvement. The political transition in Islamabad will soon be faced with severe challenges of energy crisis, wheat shortage, water scarcity and price hike that would certainly result in growing public disenchantment from both the State and the government. Such situations are most suitable and ideal for terrorists to operate and further damage the society and with this change observed in the terror tactics of the religious extremists, it is extremely essential that the Pakistani government also reviews and changes its tactics to both handle the security situation and cap the further distancing of the FATA population.

The recent most attack on an Italian restaurant in the heart of Capital also denotes the high level of social intelligence that these elements are now capable of gathering. In this attack, the security incompetence was clearly observed as the place is thronged by the Westerners over the weekends and thus far the investigations have identified that the explosive material was planted. The domestic observers are closely and carefully watching if State's security apparatus will change its policy and tactics toward handling this problem. Also the priorities of the newly elected political government will greatly determine this change.

### 3. Recommendations of CRSS:

CRSS strongly recommends the following and encourages a quick government action:

1. The state of Pakistan must concentrate on developing effective anti-terrorism and anti-insurgency capability.
2. The Government must strengthen its civil security services by providing most modern training and equipment.
3. The new political government should realize that the single-eyed military approach has not produced desired results, therefore, a new and creative approach must be tried to help resolve this upsurge of terrorism.
4. All international players must be willing to provide "domestic solution" instead of an approach that may clash with the local political realities.
5. The FATA operation must be reviewed and weaknesses immediately addressed.
6. Pakistan must increase its intelligence and administrative cooperation with the regional nations to help forming a joint intelligence platform against terrorism.
7. The government should encourage the academia and social scientists to devise and propose new methodologies for addressing the issue at the root.
8. The government must immediately involve the religious elders and leaders for any likely assistance in handling the religious militancy.

[1] Journalist working for a Pashto language TV. Name withheld on request.

[2] ISI: Inter Services Intelligence. FIA: Federal Investigation Agency. Both are intelligence/security services.

[3] Daily Jang. March 15, 2008

[4] Comment from a Western Diplomat at a diplomatic reception.

[5] The News. March 16, 2008.

[6] Ibid to # 4.

[7] Interview with an academic at a public university.