

'Whole-of-Nation' Approach and its Impacts: Case of the 2009 Swat Crisis in Pakistan

Major General Syed Najeem Ahmad*

Abstract

In May 2009, Pakistan faced a serious security dilemma when Taliban militants gained varying degrees of control in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial districts of Dir, Swat, Shangla, Malakand and Buner. The Government acted decisively to re-establish its writ. From May to October 2009, control of almost 6,500 square kilometers of area was regained from the Taliban. Following this kinetic phase, prolonged stabilisation efforts led to the return of normalcy. The tactful creation of political conditions by the country's leadership, despite historically problematic civil-military relations, provided the key to success. Built on trust, the 'whole-of-nation' approach comprising the civil government, military, civil administration, political parties and the people created unity of effort and command which proved successful.

Keywords: Swat, Malakand, 2009, Taliban, Whole-of-Nation, Counterterrorism, Military Operation, Stabilisation.

* The author holds a doctorate in International Relations from the National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be reached at: ahmadnajeem67@gmail.com.