



Pakistan: Operation continues in Orakzai, 10 killed in Waziristan drone strike

1,179 words

22 May 2010

09:13

BBC Monitoring South Asia

BBCSAP

English

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Text of report by privately-owned Pakistan television Dawn News on 22 May; Words in double slant lines in English

And let us learn about the latest situation of the operation in tribal areas from our bureau chief in Peshawar Zahir Shah Shirazi, who is joining us:

[Begin live relay] [Anchorperson Aftab Borika] Zahir, first, tell us about the situation in Orakzai Agency. What is the situation there now?

[Shirazi] Aftab, today at the Samdara area near Dabori, which is an important place in the upper Orakzai Agency and is known as the stronghold of Taleban, the security personnel claimed today that more than 15 militants were killed in a clash. Beside, two security personnel were also injured in the clash. Let me tell you here that the army has cleared several areas of Taleban in the central Orakzai beside lower Orakzai, but Taleban are still present in a big number in Dabori, Khiljo, Arghanjo, and Mamozai areas of the upper Orakzai and they are fighting the //security forces//. Let me also tell you here that more than 800 militants, including 200-250 foreign militants, have been killed in the operation in Orakzai Agency. The main reason for the stiff resistance in Orakzai Agency is stated to be the presence of mostly foreign militants, including Arab, Uzbek, Tajik, and Chechen, who are fighting the Pakistani //security forces// under leadership of Mullah Tufan. So far, we can say that the //security forces// have got control of some areas of lower Orakzai, central Orakzai, and upper Orakzai during the operation, which has been going on for more than a month now. However, despite that the militants occasionally attack security check-posts and convoys of security forces. So, we cannot say for sure that the //security forces// have got control of the upper Orakzai Agency.

[Borika] Zahir, beside up to 10 people have been killed in a drone strike in North Waziristan. What details do you have about this?

[Shirazi] Aftab, we have observed for the first time that official and Taleban sources have confirmed and the //Political Administration// is also confirming that children and women were also killed in this drone strike. Earlier, no such confirmation was made at official level. So, we can say that in the drone strikes not only key Taleban and Al-Qai'da leaders but several children and women have also died in such strikes as most of the drone strikes are being carried out in residential areas as residential houses of these people are built adjacent to these seminaries. As a result many civilians have been killed, but until this day neither the //US State Department// nor //Pakistani authorities// or //Political Administration// have released such //facts and figures// that can give the idea about how many civilians have been killed in these [strikes]. Let me add here that the sentiments against drone strikes and anti-American sentiments are on the rise and we have observed in this area that religious extremism and pro-militancy mindset is on the rise to a great extent. Let me tell you in this connection that now the Pakistani Government, in collaboration with international agencies, has announced such a project that will help in taking steps to overcome the trends of pro-militancy mindset and militancy training. We can say that the government is taking such an initiative to bring down the trends of militancy and religious extremism in the young people. Let us see a report which tells that how the government will take measures for bringing down the trend of extremism and militancy in the country:

After the 9/11, militancy and religious extremism spread rapidly in the tribal areas of Pakistan and several settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, including Malakand division. Not only the law

enforcement agencies paid a heavy price for this but it also paralyzed the life of the people. No matter, what were the factors for this spread of militancy in Pakistan, but the negligence of government institutions helped a lot in its promotion.

[Khalid Aziz, former chief secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, name and title identified from screen caption, in progress] These were //marginalized// people and //groups// who got out of //educational system//, the //health system//, and the //livelihood system// of the government. One //reason// or //cause// for //militancy// is this that the people being marginalized and not taken care of get annoyed with the government and carry out anti-government activities.

[Shirazi] In the two-day international conference held in the provincial capital recently, local and international experts presented their recommendations for negation of pro-militancy mindset and for rehabilitation and guidance of the young people involved in terrorism. The International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore, will also assist the Pakistani institutions in devising a comprehensive strategy against militancy, which will prove an important step toward changing the pro-militancy mindset.

[Gen, retired, Hamid Khan, former corps commander of Peshawar, name and title identified from screen caption] //Radicalization// means a thinking has cropped up in their mind and which needs to be cleansed. //Now// that thinking [pauses] First you contained that thinking by the //military operation//. After containing that [thinking] you have to fight against their //ideology// or thinking and finish that. To defeat that //ideology// you will have to take such actions which could defeat it.

[Shirazi] Experts also say that end of militancy is not possible with military operations. However, it needs a robust planning. They say promotion of positive thinking can prove helpful in stopping the inclination toward militancy.

[Gen, retired, Hamid Khan] You will have to teach people about the things they have been saying or the //misinterpretation// of Islam they have been doing. Various ways have to be adopted for that. The //community// will have to be included in that. Our clerics will have to be involved in this. In our //schools// and //colleges// such an education should be imparted which opens their [students] mind and they understand that what militants are saying is not right.

[Correspondent] Although the services of international experts have been obtained to give this project a practical shape yet they say that no project succeeds until it is not harmonious with national needs and interests.

[Khalid Aziz, in progress] that you //review// your policy and //reintegrate// these //marginalized// people and areas. A //process// should be initiated for the people who are in jails or at other places. Either there should be a legal action against them or if the legal action is not being taken they should be set free to go to their homes. And then //engage// those to //solve// their //problems// while remaining within the limits of government and //society//.

[Shirazi] Whether it is a military //operation// or any planning it will not be easy to root out militancy and extremism in the country without providing the sense of security through social and economic justice. Zahir Shah Shirazi, Dawn News, Peshawar [end live relay]

Source: Dawn News TV, Karachi, in English 0800gmt 22 May 10