Desiring Enemy: An Ontological Reading of the Military Operations and Small Wars on the North West Frontier

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Abstract

In the wake of the War on Terror, Pakistan carried out several military operations on its Northwestern frontier. These operations invited considerable amount of academic and non-academic scholarship. However, much of what was written was from geo-strategic perspective. Therefore, the question whether these small wars could be anything more than geo-strategy went unattended. The aim of this essay is to attend to this question by exploring the ontological dimension of war. From the perspective of Hegelian philosophy, states do not engage in wars just for strategic purpose, but also for encountering and seeking alterity in order to maintain their coherent self (the statehood). Alterity is imagined, created and engendered to strengthen the coherence of self, rather than at the outright elimination of the Other/enemy. In this line of argument, the so-called small wars on the Northwestern frontier—of present and of colonial past—can be seen as ontological project of the state maintaining the coherence of state, honor of the army, and "the enlightened moderation" of the people.

Introduction

"We have broken the myth that Waziristan cannot be controlled."(Hussain, 2010)
        ---Pakistan Army Chief, General Ashfaq Kayani

If we were to question the statement of the-then General Ashfaq kayani in the epigraph, what possible meanings regarding the claimed victory could we draw? One immediate response, or let us say approach to the question, we assume, would be strategic or rational-utilitarian. That is that the success of military operations in Waziristan shows anything but our military's might and strategic edge (over the Taliban and all other claimants to power). However, a more nuanced approach to the question can hardly miss to see the ontological

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undertone in the statement. That is that, first, the statement of victory aims to place itself in the backdrop of great historical war epochs: the Great Game and partial successes of British-Indian Army's small wars on and across Waziristan border, the Afghan War and the Soviet Army's failure, and the recent troubled operations of the American and NATO forces on the other side of Waziristan border. In this line, it is not hard to see how the statement in its undertone makes the claim that the three great armies had tried to break the myth, but they couldn't. That the victory eventually went to Pakistan Army. Here we would like to stop short of interrogating the victory, because that will essentially lead us to examine logistical and strategic details, which we are trying to avoid. Second, the statement of victory mentions the term "myth" and thereby hints directly about its ontological goal. The phrase "broken the myth" seems to suggest that they (and before them other armies) were fighting to break some myth or mythical enemy. Just as they broke the mythic, it needs to be asked who created the mythic that they had taken such trouble to break? Our framing of this question, however, does not aim to diminish the strategic significance of operations or small wars of the Northwestern frontier or to interrogate the military might of these armies, but purely to highlight the ontological dimension hitherto ignored in local academic scholarship.

Ontology and War

Before we set to the task of extrapolating the ontological significance of Pakistan Army's operations in Waziristan and elsewhere on the border, an explanation of ontological approach to war is in order. According to Michael J. Shapiro there are two "faces" of war. He writes:

Currently, the warfare of the modern state reveals two different faces. Its most prominent face is turned toward the light of official, public recognition, for its features are described primarily in official releases…This is warfare as an instrument of state policy and, as such, the physiognomy of warfare represents itself as expressive of a deeper logistical 'truth': the need for the state to approach a dangerously disordered world with force…The other face of warfare is ontological rather than strategic; as I noted earlier, it is focused more on the affirmation of identity than on the instrumental effects of the use of deadly force(Shapiro, 1997:47–48).

In other words, the strategic understanding of war focuses on promised material gains and/or losses, like territorial acquisition, economic or political advantages and so forth. While the ontological understanding of war, on the contrary, focuses on promised immaterial gains or losses, for instance, identity of the people, army, nation, or state. The former, Shapiro writes, is an "out-reaching role" while the latter is an "inward-reaching role "(Shapiro, 1997: 49).

The two approaches that is the strategic and the ontological differ significantly in their understanding of and relationship with the enemy/Other. The former approach understands the enemy as an autonomous individual or entity whose political and economic existence poses potential threat to ones own interests. The latter approach understands the enemy from a relational point of view. The very existence of the enemy from the relational point of view carries significance for the being of one's self—one's ontological self. The apparent difference and distance from the enemy/Other allows one to define and delimit ones moral, social and political world. One begins to engage in the process of negation of all those things one associates with the enemy/Other. Thus the enemy/Other is like the other pole of the same ontological field, and the possibility of its loss is feared to entail loss of one's understanding of oneself.

Not only is the enemy the ontological other, her existence is almost always taken for granted. It has to exist inasmuch as and in the same sense as one exists or else it is conjured up. In other words, if at any time the enemy is feared missing, then there is strong statist tendency to conjured up one. For the ontological logic is that a state simply cannot identify itself with both good and bad features. Such identification is feared to cause chaos of identity, of defining oneself. The (bad) characteristics are normally disowned and identified to belong to the Other. Such a practice may amount to self-deception, but for the self-righteous individual/state it is very much how the process of identity-making has to work. Accordingly, it is not hard to see that the Other is conjured up over time through a consistent process of negation (of one's own self). Thus the imaginary of the enemy/Other is a "historically developed" process, and with the passage of time it gets "socially embedded" through repeated references to oneself and to the Other by way of emphasizing on difference and distance(Phrases borrowed from Shapiro, 1997:v).

To explain these two phrases—historically developed and socially embedded--further, we turn to Shapiro's concept of violent cartography. The concept is complex and often evasive to grasp. When we asked Shapiro to break it down for us, he replied: "Well, Pentagon's map is an example of violent cartography." In other words, the way Pentagon maps geopolitical world, and accordingly locates states as either rogue or friendly provides us with a simple example of violent cartography. On a higher intellectual level, the concept of violent cartography explains the "historically developed, socially embedded interpretations of space and identity"(Shapiro, 1997:v). The concept explains that enmity or Otherness and warfare are not necessarily consequences of strategic-rational thinking as are often claimed and told to us by military

strategists as well as by geo-strategic scholars. But these can be consequences of an already socially embedded and historically developed imaginary of certain geo-political spaces and people. Moreover, enmity and Otherness are reaffirmed whenever war is resorted to, inscribing them in history and institutionalizing them in new social/legal institutions.

The larger theoretical framework of Shapiro's ontological approach to war is set in Hegelian philosophy, although he also employs Lacanian philosophy and instantiates the approach by rereading Clausewitz. For Hegel, a state or a group of states "must engender an opposite and create an enemy"(Quoted in Shapiro. Shapiro, 1997, p. 43). Thus Hegel sees enemy as a "necessity," necessary in the process of negation through which identity is formed. The words to stress in the Hegel's insight are "engender" and "create." It is the engendering and creation of enemy that allows the ontological face of war to precede the strategic/rational one. Similarly in Shapiro, a violent cartography is enacted first, before any instrumental (strategic/rational) war policy is formulated and executed. We find a similar line of argument in the German philosopher, Carl Schmitt, who writes that the sovereign enacts the categories of enemy and friend before proceeding to war and violence (Schmitt, 2007).

Hegel was a "state thinker"(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:356). Like Clausewitz, he advocated for unity, coherence, and strength of Prussian state. He saw war as necessity and he believed in its significance to develop and maintain the ethical life of Prussian state and its subjects. In this line of argument Hegel's precursor was Machiavelli who advocated for citizen-army, as against mercenary armies, and saw in war an opportunity to unite the fragmented Italian state(See,Machiavelli, 1998). Hegel wrote: "War is not to be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external accident [but] necessity"(Quoted in Shapiro, 1997:41–42). It is a necessity because it propels the engine of difference and alterity upon which the edifice of the state, and its identity, are erected.

Hegel's model for a coherent state develops from his understanding of what it takes to be a coherent individual, since he declares much like Hobbes, "the state is an individual." He further claims that "individuality essentially implies negation"(Shapiro, 1997:43). In Hegel's understanding of the individual, coherence and unity of the self is engendered through a process of negation, negation of certain characteristics, objects and persons. In other words, an individual's perception—the process of perception and consciousness—involves creating self-other relationship. On more basic level, heeding to Immanuel Kant at this point, the process of perception involves negation which proceeds in three stages: apprehension, reproduction (contract), and recognition. Since everything is a multiplicity (having multiple

parts/characteristics) individual apprehends only certain parts and successively. Then reproduces or contracts the preceding parts to enhance the possibilities of synthesis (understanding). Lastly, the volatile complex of parts is related to the form of an object in order to cause recognition. Moreover, Kant says, "There must exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of the manifold. To this faculty I give the title, imagination"(Kant, 1965:144). On each stage, certain negation is enacted in order to reach synthesis. The negated part will remain as alterity and the synthesized part the self. "The human subject [thus] develops as a result of an 'ontological rift'"(Shapiro, 1997:41). The moment when this ontological rift becomes clear and discernable is the moment of the "uncanny." This is the moment when the negated parts suddenly enter the equation of harmonious self and disrupt it(Freud, 2003). For Hegel the state should also "experience negation in order to strengthen its autonomy and maintain its coherence"(Shapiro, 1997:42).

Hegel's contemporary and compatriot, Carl Von Clausewitz was also concerned with unity and strength of the Prussian state. Both for Hegel and Clausewitz state was "virtually the end of history, the culmination of a historical movement toward the correct political form"(Shapiro, 1997:52). War could be waged only for service of the state as an extension of its political endeavors. Hence his famous claim, "War is nothing but the continuation of politics by other means" (Clausewitz, 1976). This claim has come to over-code his entire understanding of war as strategic and rational thus obscuring the ontological aspect that pervades throughout his text. Shapiro has pointed to this problematic and cautions to segregate the "grammatical" from the "rhetorical" in order to get a better view of the ontological aspect. Focusing on grammar and epistemology in Clausewitz, for instance the grammar of above claim, gives us the obvious: the strategic-rational approach to the understanding of war. The rhetorical dimension harks toward the consummation of the individual subject and the state, as moral, ethical and spiritual beings. The primary distinction between grammatical (rational/strategic) and rhetorical (ontological/ethical) is that the former is centered in *acting* and the latter in *being*. "Whereas epistemologically [/rationally] war for Clausewitz is purely a form of acting in response to externally perceived threats in order to achieve subsequently educed objectives, ontologically, war is a major aspect of being"(Shapiro, 1997:53–54). To look at the ontological aspect of war is to look at how it "creates the conditions for the production, maintenance, and reproduction of the virtuous self, a way (for men) to achieve an ideal form of subjectivity as individuals and for the state to achieve its ideal form of collective subjectivity, as an expression of spiritual power and virility"(Shapiro, 1997:54).

Clausewitz's much quoted trinity passage has at least two dimensions that are ontological i.e., pointing not to rationality but to irrationality, while one dimension is rational. He writes:

As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a remarkable trinity—composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.(Clausewitz, 1976:89)

First, the primordial violence, hatred and enmity are regarded as blind natural force and hence not rationally transpiring factors. Shapiro points out that elsewhere in his book, Clausewitz "admits whatever enmity the people may feel for those in another nation is not 'primordial'"(Shapiro, 1997:55). For instance, Clausewitz writes that although "modern wars are seldom fought without hatred between nations," there is often "no animosity to start with." It is the fighting itself that "will stir up hostile feelings"(Clausewitz, 1976:138). This reading of Clausewitz is to refer to the *historically developed* and *socially embedded* nature of enmity which is again an ontological reference rather than rational/strategic. Moreover, Shapiro draws our attention to elements of chance/probability as well as courage in the instance of war. With chance and probability the rational force of rational/strategic argument is mitigated, and with courage the emphasis shifts toward moral ethical aspect. War allows individuals' "courage [to] take wing" as they "dive into the element of daring and danger like a fearless swimmer into the current"(Clausewitz, 1976:113). War helps individuals to achieve and test their moral virtue. He explicitly states that war is "a trial of moral and physical forces"(Clausewitz, 1976:127). Thus war involves (or should involve) feelings, senses, and moral virtue, and not merely wooden rational and strategic interests.

Although Hegel's understanding of war and its necessity for states is framed from the point of view of international system of sovereign states that possibly meet each other on battle fields, it has the possibility of extending to encompass non-state assemblages which have in our times (as well as in the past) encountered state armies on battlefields. When monolithic state power, for instance currently America or a century ago the Great Britain, did not find state adversary in their international systems they encountered (or engendered?) non-state enemies. Interestingly enough one of the common non-state enemies they come to encounter or engender, although a century apart, was to be found on the Afghan borderland. In recent war literature, such encounters with non-state enemies have been conceptualized variously. Paul Virilio, for instance, calls them "impure war"(Lotringer, 2008), Mary Kaldor

"new war"(Kaldor, 1998), and others, especially those strategists associated with the American military establishment, call it "asymmetric warfare" or "irregular warfare"(See, Barnett, 2003; Metz & Johnson, 2001; Thornton, 2007). However, there is yet another equally interesting term that comes from the war literature published by officers of the British-Indian Army. This term is "small war."

Small Wars at the North West Frontier

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, punitive military operations were part of a standard policy of the Raj in India to deal with the unruly people on colonial borders, especially on the northwest and the northeast. These punitive military operations were often named generically, for instance, "military expeditions" or "punitive military expeditions." However, starting in 1859 until the turn of the century, they were increasingly viewed as proper wars, even though of relatively smaller scale. As a British army officer of the Victorian Army, Charles Callwell, put it: "Hill warfare may fairly be said to constitute a special branch of the military art" and indeed "almost the most trying which disciplined soldiers can be called on to undertake"(Moreman, 1998, p. xxii). Elsewhere he explicitly observed these military operations as wars: "The conduct of small wars is in fact in certain respects an art by itself, diverging widely from what is adapted to the conditions of regular warfare, but not so widely that there are not in all its branches points which permit comparisons to be made"(Moreman, 1998:53).

Although the term small war was already in use in military circles of the British Imperial Army, referring to encounters with renegade, revolting and unyielding tribes in Asia and Africa, Charles Callwell's 1896 book *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practices* gave it further currency in the military discourse of the time(Callwell, 1896). Toward the end of 19th century, as well as the first quarter of 20th century, a debate in British military circles regarding the need for special training of imperial soldiers for small wars reached its highest point. Hence with this debate for training, organization and equipment, apparently small wars saw a moment of rivaling regular/conventional wars. For instance, in 1899 in a lecture at the RUSI, Major Arthur Yate summed up the opinion of many officers and condemned the military authorities for failing to provide an official training manual for small warfare on the north-west frontier:

Our best frontier officers and soldiers found themselves foiled and at times worsted by these unorganized guerrillas. Surely the inference to be drawn from this is that in the future Her Majesty's officers and soldiers must be systematically educated to meet these foes. It is not a matter to be left in the hands of irresponsible and unofficial essayists…A manual of instruction for

uncivilized warfare is required. Her Majesty's troops, and more especially those stationed in India and in our colonial possessions should be instructed and practiced, not only in the exercises and manoeurvers prescribed for modern European warfare, but also in the irregular methods of fighting which must be adopted against uncivilized races. (Quoted in Moreman, 1998:82)

Similarly, General Sir John Gordon, who chaired the meeting, advocated for special training manuals, reconsidering organization, and equipment for small warfare. He concluded:

I believe thoroughly in our Drill-Book. Its principles, when properly applied, suffice for the world-wide field which the British Army is constantly called on to act in. We do not require forms or rules; principles are the only guide in war, and we must fit them to the locality or enemy. We must study our enemy and his country. Each tribe, each clam, has its characteristics and special tactics, and a knowledge of these is half the battle.(Quoted in Moreman, 1998:84)

Small Wars on the North-West Frontier: An Ontological Reading

Apparently, the above debates highlight the ascendance of military strategic rationale in the colonial discourse. However, there always underpinned a deeply inscribed ontological logic in it. For instance, in the colonial discourse Pushtun tribes were often represented as a "savage" enemy facing a civilized Brisith-Indian or the British themselves. Moreover, we can notice that the practice of collection of information on the tribes was not merely meant to serve the effort of war against them, but also to strengthen the British identity as a civilized empire and their armed forces as civilized. The colonial discourse exhibits another indirect way of positing the ontological logic and identity-making. At times as the discourse presented the tribes as uncivilized, several of their tribal features, ethical virtues and social codes would be invoked to favorably juxtapose them against those of the British. These features included their physical bravery, warfare skills, mountaineering, and codes of honor, which would be often matched with those of the British. To give instance, in 1897, at the end of a small war in Tirah with Afridi tribesmen, which did not yield good results for the British-Indian Army, a memorandum was issued which said:

It must be that the Force [Tirah Expeditionary Force] is opposed to perhaps the best skirmishers and best natural rifle-shots in the world; and that the country they inhabit is probably the most difficult on the face of the globe. The enemy's strength lies in his knowledge of he country, which enables him to watch our movements unperceived by us, and to take advantage of every rise in the ground and every ravine…It is to be hoped that we may have the

opportunity of wiping out all old scores with the enemy before many days have elapsed, and meanwhile there is no occasion for us to be depressed because some of us have been outnumbered and overwhelmed by the enemy. (Quoted in Moreman, 1998:65)

We are tempted here to present another example that is in the form a fragment from a poem by the colonial poet-historian, Rudyard Kipling. In his *The ballad of East and West* Kipling depicts an instance in which a British soldier and a Pushtun warrior stand face to face on the rugged terrains of the Frontier:

OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth! (Kipling, 1899)

At this juncture, let us return to the triumphant claim made by Pakistan Army Chief Kayani given at the outset of this essay. In his claim as Kayani boasts driving out the Taliban from Waziristan, we notice the ontological undertone. It goes without saying that the recent small wars in Waziristan (2009-2010) and those in the Swat valley (2008-2009), if viewed from strategic point of view, have achieved hardly any strategic gain. It is partly because the tribal agencies are not foreign enemy lands that were battled over and eventually conquered and controlled. Moreover, it cannot be ignored that they have been under full territorial control of the central government since independence and even before that of the Raj through the institution of political agent and army camps. On the other hand, Afghanistan is not a militarily and financial strong country that it could pose a threat of conspiring with the Taliban or other Pushtun nationalists for secession. Thus the major strategic gain, if any, appears to be keeping the Taliban on the move in order to show the United States that Pakistan Army has played its expected role and fulfilled its promise.

Viewed from historical lens, the claim sounds odd because before Pakistan Army the British-Indian Army in late 19th and early 20th centuries marched over Waziristan and controlled it with an iron hand. The primary significance of the claim then seems to lie in the term myth: not actually breaking it, but rather placing emphasis on it, such that it causes its the intended ontological effect. Thus the emphasis on the myth should work in such a way as to present Waziristan a foreign land, a no-go area, not lived by Pakistanis, but rather by a people who are dangerous to the political system of the country and to its social fabric. In this way, the myth produces Waziristan, and with it the rest of tribal areas as the Other, different from Pakistani identity. Interestingly, such

othering of Waziristan is not a unique practice employed by Pakistan Army. International media, for instance, when speaks of operations in Waziristan, it often ignores to mention it as a part of Pakistan. Rather it presents Waziristan as a geo-political space in itself, having its own separate identity. It is presented as an Other of the West. So Waziristan comes to play a double role, as the Other of Pakistani state and as the Other of the West, even though Pakistan and the West have different identities.

We need to notice that Army Chief's claim is set in the backdrop of the fame that Afghanistan and the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland has as "the graveyard of Empires." Now that Pakistan Army has come to control the borderland, the insinuation is that logically it becomes more powerful than all those empire armies that failed control it. In this sense, Waziristan provides good opportunity to build the image of an army that does not have much to claim in its conventional wars.

Historically, the borderland has served as a testing ground and a touchstone for army trainings. The British and Indian units of the British Indian Army were regularly tested and trained here. The British military generals came to consider Pushtun marksmen as good and unsparingly punishing trainers for the army. Rough and rugged mountainous terrain tested the physical strength of soldiers, especially as they were loaded with heavy equipments in expeditions that would often last for months. Military expeditions often proved more valuable in training soldiers in the art of (mountain) warfare than meting out punishments to tribes for which these expeditions were carried out in the first place. For instance at the end of a small-war in Tirah in 1897 against Afridi tribesmen colonel Thomas Holdich observed:

They have taught us something of the nature of that new phase of transborder military existence, which is rapidly developing on our borders i.e., the existence of a people brave and warlike (as, indeed, they have ever been), becoming daily better trained and educated in military science, armed with weapons as good as ours, and just beginning to feel their way towards military combination under experienced leadership…If we have purchased our recent experiences in Tirah somewhat dearly, we have at least secured much matter for useful reflection. Like the man in the fable who created a tiger, we have now to consider what to do with our creation.(Quoted in Moreman, 1998:70)

Similarly, at the end of a small-war in Waziristan during 1919-20, Sir John Smyth, the Brigade Major observed: "We had realized that our troops were untrained in mountain warfare and they would have to buy their experience but we had hoped that the price would not be so high. Only a few

people…realized how close we had come to a real debacle"(Moreman, 1998: 111).

The desire to keep the Northwestern frontier and its tribesmen as the Other of the colonial state of India, British Raj established a semi-political and administrative system for it instead of the regular colonial administrative system. Although some parts of the frontier were brought under the regular administrative system, the border areas comprising of vast tracts of mountainous country were converted into semi-political and administrative tribal agencies. A political agent was appointed for each of these tribal agencies supported by small administrative staff. This administrative system was meant not to administer political, economic and social affairs of the agencies, but rather to study the tribes and to keep their activities under check. Political agents acted more or less like colonial diplomats seeking and building liaison with the tribes. In the long run, the administrative system only served to engender and perpetuate identity rifts between the tribal agencies/tribes and the rest of the state in India.

After independence Pakistan inherited this quasi-political and administrative system on the Northwestern frontier without making any changes to it, even though an opportunity was created in 1956 with the decision of Supreme Court in *Dosso* case. Thus from political and legal dimensions the tribal areas of the North West frontier remained as, to borrow Giorgio Agamben's phrase, an "included exclusion" in the Pakistani state system(See, Agamben, 2005). During 1980s their unique status allowed the Army and its intelligence agencies to use them for *jihadi* activities against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The result was a new cult of Islamic warriors, the so-called *mujaheedin*, some of who later became Taliban.

The Taliban: An Object of Desire or Desired Enemy

As I have tried to demonstrate above, for almost a century, the British Imperial project in India projected Pushtun tribes as the Other, and the enemy. From ontological perspective, they were desired as enemies, or to fill the place of a desired enemy. It is therefore (and as a consequence as well) a) they were projected as a formidable armed adversary for the British Indian Army, which needed a battleground and an enemy to learn and new practice war skills, b) their Pushtun Code especially the aspects of honor, gallantry, revenge, and so forth were projected to as equal to those of the British, but then at the same time reduced to savagery and therefore c) projected as a constant threat to colonial India, its defense and way of life. The projection of this desired enemy more or less continued after independence, even as the tribes never rose in rebellion against Pakistani state.

Beginning in 1980s and extending into 1990s the appeal of desired enemy begin to grip the imaginations of Pakistani strategists. During 1980s as Afghan War heats up, and military strategists desperately needed to recruit young men, they look toward the tribes and once again play on the same warrior attributes that a century ago the British had invoked, projected and deployed in the Great Game. In 1990s, as civil war rages in Afghanistan and different groups fight for spoils of Afghan War, and as different regional powers indirectly interfere, military strategists in Pakistan look toward the tribes, especially tribal youth in *madrassas*. For strategists these tribal youth turned Taliban become "strategic asset."

In fact, they come to serve the dual purpose of being strategic asset and ontological asset. While the former dynamic is often debated in media as well as in academic circles, the latter dynamic often goes unnoticed. It is this latter dynamic that we have been interested, and trying to tease out. Apart from their being strategic asset to the Army in its defensive and offensive plans, the Taliban—their ideology, vision of governance, and social values—have always been some how contrasted to the identity of Pakistan, the vision of democratic governance, and "enlightened moderation" in social life. It is worth noticing that more often than not what the Taliban are or stand for is explained not by them, but projected by military strategists, politicians, media talking heads and even academia.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that despite the difference and now the challenge that they have come to pose to the state, we know that the Army raised them as a force, and still desires them, (especially as now strategists have begun to mull over the expected NATO troops withdrawal). Since 1990s they have been provided with arms and funds by not only Pakistan but also by Saudi Arabia. However, after 9/11, Pakistan had to change its open support to the Taliban, but support on strategic interests continued with them(See Rashid, 2008). This was the moment, the 9/11 and with it the change in Pakistan's open support for the Taliban, that the ontological/identity-making project vis-à-vis the Taliban began. Thus with an indirect strategic project and a more direct ontological project the Army's policy toward the Taliban is serving dual purposes. On the one hand, they are strategically indispensable assets, and on the other hand they are enemies, desired enemies needed for making and sustaining (a religiously moderate) identity of Pakistani state.

By now we can see how Hegelian ontological argument fits to explain the dual relationship between the Taliban and Pakistan Army and the state. For Hegel, as mentioned above "states need enemies for their health and solidarity"

(Shapiro, 1997:43). He considers the state as an individual, and claims that individuality essentially entails negation. Individual's consciousness of self or perception arises in the process of negation, the negation of those characteristics of the self that render it unstable. And negation is a constant process. Those characteristics of the self are constantly conjured up and/or projected so that those could be negated. It is in this sense that they are desired/desirable to simultaneously conjure up and negate. They are object of desire while desire is "animated by a resistance to being absorbed into the object" (Shapiro, 1997:44). The enemy as an object-of-desire "is therefore an opportunity for the self-affirmation of the state body, an essential moment in the production of its coherence through a recognition of its autonomy and freedom"(Shapiro, 1997:44).

Hegelian model fits well to explain the ontological project of Pakistani state. For long time, it was the rivalry with India that provided for the desired enemy such that Pakistan developed its discourse of difference and statehood. For instance, Pakistan distinguished itself from India by its very name which means "the land of pure." While India is still presented as the Other, the Taliban have become a more viable and strong candidate for being the object-of-desire. As against India which is an independent nation, and the differences with them are now understood more in terms of strategy than identity, the Taliban's existence is dependent on Pakistani state; they are insiders, and they are radicalization of Pakistan's own religious identity. Therefore, their radicalization presents as more the suitable Other, whose negation can help establish Pakistan's moderate religious identity. Similarly, the ethnic identification of the Taliban with Pushtun is negated to safeguard Pushtun code of honor from perversion.

Even from strategic point of view, the Taliban pose a constant threat to Pakistani identity. For instance when in early 2009 the Swat valley fell to them, the people had no choice but to acquiesce. In this way, Pakistan saw how its identity fell prey to the very object of its desire. Later out of such fear, a military operation was carried out to defend the absorption of local and national identities into what should remain as the Other. On the other hand, the operation was also designed to reemphasize national identity over local identity in the valley.

To further demonstrate how the Taliban are made the object-of-desire (as well as the object of violence) of the state, we want to turn to the arrest of a Taliban commander, Mullah Barader. Barader was one of the top ranking Taliban commanders, and a former governor in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. He was arrested in a mosque on the outskirts of Karachi. Since 2001, he is believed to have been living there. He has freely traveled in the country.

And interestingly, it has after his arrest turned out that he controlled and coordinated *jihad* in Afghanistan from his residence in the mosque. For some time he had been coordinating the Quetta Assembly of Afghan Taliban who are believe to be the backbone of *jihad* in Afghanistan. In Pakistan his arrest was much hyped in media to show Army's achievement. But surprisingly, Afghan President, HamidKarazai did not welcome the arrest. It appeared strange in the beginning that the arrest of Baradar was not welcomed by the Afghanistan President. However, later it turned out that Baradar and the Afghan authorities were working on a secret plan to settle the Taliban *jihad* by giving the latter some share in the government. The secret deal was either with their Paksitani counterparts or the latter did not agree to the terms. Whatever may be the case, it soon became clear that Pakistan's intelligence agency was closely monitoring the Taliban commanders and their activities.

Thus the episode of Mullah Baradar is a good example of the "object of desire" turned the "object of violence." The role he played for almost a decade for Pakistan's intelligence agency, as he resided in the mosque, explains the nature of Pakistan's war against the Taliban. The relationship between Pakistani Sate as well as afghan state and the Taliban is one of complementary enmity, by which I mean that the apparent enmity and secret communion complement both the Taliban as well as the two states. And as soon as Baradar sought to by-pass his benefactors he is transformed into an object of violence (i.e., arrested).

To explain this transformation from the object-of-desire to the object-of-violence we once again turn to Shapiro. He notes, while building on Lacanian theory, that "this transformation [from desire to violence] is always already involved in the ontological work of the self in its projects of coherence." And that "we must recognize that objects of both desire and violence are similarly arbitrary. Both derive their ascriptions as desirable or dangerous from prior interpretive expectations in which the subject (individuals and collectivities) already have places for them, places for appealing Others or enemies" (Shapiro, 1997:96). The transformation from an object-of-desire to an object-of-violence is only a subtle change. It is because there is already some violence involved in the process of desiring, desiring an object which is the Other. In this way, arresting and executing an object of desire would result in upsetting the equation of the self-Other relationship, which is so much essential to coherence of the self. Barader's arrest not only brings a loss of the 'strategic asset', but also the loss of the object of desire. However, this process establishes one thing that is the arbitrariness in first creating him as the object-of-desire and later transforming him an object-of-violence. It is worth mentioning that over the years we notice that the Taliban as an object-of-desire are not completely destroyed. Only individual leaders, especially

those on low ranks, are turned into the object-of-violence. Their complete elimination, it seems, is not desired. The ranks vacated due to the execution of leaders are quickly filled and the cycle between the object-of-desire and the object-of-violence is completed, carrying out the ontological needs of the Pakistani State.

Conclusion

There are two ways of understanding Pakistan Army's success in South Waziristan—strategic and ontological. As the Army Chief made a big claim that Pakistan Army broke the myth of an uncontrollable Waziristan, we need to place his words in these two ways of understanding. From the former, that is strategic, we find that his claim tells the story of success of military operations, not only in Waziristan but also elsewhere in the tribal agencies. From this approach, we are also able to place the military operations in a larger historical context. We find that such operation have been carried out on the tribal borderland since the time of the Great Game. From pure strategic perspective, military operations of past and present did succeed against the poorly armed tribesmen. However, eventually all armies pulled out, and the tribes regained their territorial control. From the ontological approach, we find that these strategic military operations and the claims of success were not just about strategic gains and territorial control. But that they more so served the purpose of high identity making. In colonial times, the British Indian Army often carried out operations against the tribes and Afghan kings to put the army to practical exercises and boost its morale, as well as to show military might to the colonial people. Pakistan Army's claim of success in South Waziristan is not different from its predecessor.

The ontological approach is grounded in, or at least begins from Hegelian philosophy. For a Hegelian state to survive and thrive, existence of the Other is essential. Alterity and its negation—negation but not complete elimination—are desired parts of modern state's war policy. For instance, do we not see that the Taliban are at once the Other and the desired enemy? In other words, are they not the object of desire as well as the object of negation. We want them (e.g., for strategic goals) and we also negate them. The success and the claim of 'breaking the myth that South Waziristan cannot be controlled', is a far cry from reality. The claim is meant to boost the morale of Army, and to win people's confidence and praise, rather than to show any strategic achievements.

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