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One major issue being missed in the media coverage of the elections is that the Taliban have fielded candidates, while some candidates have made appeals to the Taliban. Much like insurgent group Hezb-e-Islami, which holds 12 percent of seats in the lower house of parliament (Wolesi Jirga), this tactic makes practical sense. The loose, decentralized Taliban movement recognizes that military operations alone are not enough to pursue its political ends; while on the local level, semi-autonomous operatives who wear different hats within society have an incentive to engage in the political process in a constructive way. While this development might weaken the strength of the more progressive elements within parliament, and may in fact do little to turn the tide against the Taliban's momentum on the battlefield, it could be a meaningful way to integrate extremist elements into the political mainstream.

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