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## **Conflict and Peace Studies**

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## **Editor's Note**

The current issue of *Conflict and Peace Studies* is divided into two parts. The first part carries the outcome of a recently concluded study on Balochistan by Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), whereas the second part explores the dynamics of the conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The PIPS report on Balochistan presents a strategic analysis of the conflict in the province, the first in-depth study of its kind, which intends to advance an understanding of the causal factors, key players and dynamics of the conflict in Balochistan, which have a direct bearing on national and regional security. The PIPS report endeavors to explore the strategies and options of programmatic and policy interventions which may be feasible and effective in reducing the risk of violence and insecurity in the province.

The second part is an attempt by PIPS to develop a better understanding of FATA. Brian R. Kerr has tried to unfold the Pashtun social structures in the context of the ongoing militancy in FATA. Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi has endeavored to provide insight into the tribal socio-economic and socio-political dynamics and argues that comprehending them is as important as understanding the religious indoctrination that has prompted the tribal *lashkars* (raiding parties) to take on the form of a formidable army. Khuram Iqbal has looked into the potential and capabilities of the Pakistani Taliban expanding their operations beyond the tribal region. Akbar Nasir Khan argues that Pape's thesis about the genesis of suicide terrorism, which he developed through analysis of an extensive database of suicide attacks in many countries, is not valid in the case of Pakistan and there is a need to look for other explanations for suicide attacks in the country.

It is hoped that these studies will help promote a better understanding of the context and contours of the conflict in Balochistan and FATA.

**Muhammad Amir Rana**



## Report

# **Conflict and Insecurity in Balochistan: Assessing Strategic Policy Options for Peace and Security**

*Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit*

## Acknowledgements

We owe our gratitude to a great many people whose help, insightful reviews, comments and continuous support during the fieldwork and analysis helped us complete this report successfully. Our deepest thanks go to Muhammad Amir Rana whose invaluable inputs assisted us in articulating the arguments precisely and make necessary corrections as and when needed. Special thanks to Najam U Din for editing and reviewing the report.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of field researchers, Shahzada Zulfiqar and Mufti Sanaullah in Balochistan, Ali Abbas in Islamabad, and Zahid Hassan in Lahore, who conducted interviews with a range of people successfully despite the time constraints and security risks, particularly in Balochistan.

We would also like to express our gratitude to PIPS' researchers Khuram Iqbal, Nida Naz and Shagufta Hayat for their continuous help and assistance in collection of related research literature, provision of necessary data, documents, and searching the archives with attention and care. Finally, the field and desk research for the study would not have been possible without remarkable coordination by Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore.

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## **1. Introduction and Methodology**

A federation made up of many units, Pakistan has faced the challenge of nationalist tendencies based in ethnic identities in the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amid issues of political autonomy, resource allocation and economic disparities. With regard to state-society relations, governance issues, political instability, discriminations in the economic system, and uneven social development have also been among the key challenges. Mounting economic pressures, growing economic inequalities and a sense of deprivation in less developed regions, particularly Balochistan, have indeed remained potential threats to Pakistan's internal security and stability.

Infested with a number of insurgent, religious extremist and sectarian groups, the security landscape of Balochistan has become exceedingly complex over the last few years. The death of Nawab Akbar Bugti on August 26, 2006 in a military operation had instigated the current phase of the Baloch insurgency, the fourth one since the creation of Pakistan. Baloch insurgents have launched attacks on state institutions, security forces, gas and power installations and on non-Baloch individuals in the province since Nawab Bugti's death. The role of Baloch insurgents in compounding Balochistan's law and order woes notwithstanding, a number of religiously motivated militant and sectarian groups have also grown in strength and expanded their areas of operation across Balochistan. Quetta, the provincial capital, is becoming a hub of local and foreign religious militant groups and sectarian outfits. There have been numerous media reports of attacks on barbershops, music shops and on other "un-Islamic" businesses by religious extremists including the Taliban in Quetta in the recent past. Meanwhile, the Shia Hazara community in Balochistan, with a population of around 300,000 people, is currently facing unprecedented attacks and violence, mainly from sectarian militant groups. Terrorist attacks and targeted killings, mainly perpetrated by Baloch insurgents and religious extremists, have gradually increased in the province, particularly after 2006. Around 2,400 such attacks have killed 1,186 people and injured another 3,117 in Balochistan in four years, from January 2006 until December 2009.<sup>1</sup>

The incumbent government has taken a number of steps including formulation of the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package (2009), the 7<sup>th</sup>

National Finance Commission Award (2009) and the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment (2010), which include some concessions and benefits for the Baloch people. However, Baloch nationalists and insurgents continue to dismiss the government's reconciliatory overtures, calling them nothing more than deception and a continuation of policies of former military ruler Pervez Musharraf. The Balochistan chief minister and other political leaders who are part of the government have also remained cautious in issuing any statement or taking any initiative on aforementioned measures. However, all are still advocating the need for confidence-building measures to persuade the Baloch towards reconciliation.

In addition to its direct human cost, the poor law and order in Balochistan has a negative impact on development and stability in the province, in Pakistan and in the wider region. Although the nature of political grievances felt by many Baloch towards Islamabad are reasonably well described in the available literature, and the Government of Pakistan seems to have made unprecedented efforts since the 2008 elections to address these grievances, many aspects of the conflict and the insecurity in the province are not as well understood. While most of the research work on Balochistan has focused on one aspect of the Baloch insurgency or the other, accounts of lack of security in Balochistan come mainly from the media, which is just a day-to-day coverage or analysis of incidents of violence and terrorism in the province. Serious questions exist, for example, about the extent, causes and trends of insecurity; the sub-conflicts contributing to that insecurity; the nature of Baloch insurgent groups (including their capacity, organization, leadership, objectives, funding, recruitment and locations); the extent of criminal violence, smuggling and drug trafficking; the degree to which the Afghan Taliban or religious extremist groups are now active and entrenched in certain parts of Balochistan, Pakhtun-majority areas in particular; dynamics of conflict and risks of a spike in violence; and the ways to achieve peace and security. This research and advocacy project has been designed to fill this void.

More in general, this research study intends to advance an understanding of the causal factors, key players and dynamics of the conflict in Balochistan which have a direct bearing on national and regional security. An attempt has been made to explore the strategies and options of programmatic and policy

interventions which are practicable and effective in reducing the risk of violence and insecurity in Balochistan.

This study has been conducted through a combination of desk research and interviews. More than 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Khuzdar and Gwadar, which involved comprehensive consultation with central and local government authorities, religious and political leaders, leading journalists, Baloch nationalist leaders, security officials, foreign donors, academics/researchers, local and international NGOs, community-based organizations and private sector organizations.

For the purpose of analysis, the report uses the 'Strategic Conflict Assessment' methodology, combining different levels of conflict analysis such as economic and grievance-based, etc., where applicable. By flexibly following this approach, this research study builds upon the conflict analysis taking into account structures of conflict, key actors involved, and historical, current, regional and global dynamics of the conflict. An effort has been made to suggest appropriate strategic interventions, which could be undertaken at the state and society levels, to reduce the risk of violence and insecurity.

Despite the extensive scope of this study and several thematic areas and research questions that were to be addressed, there was only a limited time of four months available to carry out the fieldwork and develop an analysis. The fieldwork in Balochistan was further constrained by issues of insecurity and political sensitivity of the conflict in Balochistan although researchers were engaged in Quetta for this purpose. Field researchers encountered difficulties in coordinating with resource persons in remote areas of the province Balochistan and in conducting interviews in such a short period. To expand the empirical base of the study and to make it more representative for all segments of Balochistan, further non-structured interviews or formal in-depth discussions with experts from across Balochistan can be conducted. Moreover, at least two focus group discussions can help consolidate the analysis of the strategic policy options for reducing insecurity and conflicts in Balochistan.

## **2. Conflict Analysis**

The ongoing conflict in Balochistan has almost all the attributes of a complex conflict system rather than a simple two-party clash or dispute. This section tries to explore the conflict lines or structures that exist in the province at the social, political, economic and security levels.

### **2.1 Structures: An Account of Factors**

#### **2.1.1 Geographical**

Balochistan lies at the cultural and geographical crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, which makes it an ideal candidate for a hub for inter-regional transport and trade. It is located on the northern tip of the Strait of Hormuz, which marks the entry point into the Persian Gulf through which much of the world's oil supply passes. Straddling Pakistan's 900-kilometre western border with Iran, Balochistan offers unique access to these mineral-rich areas. It shares a 1,002-kilometre border with Afghanistan, presenting its north-western neighbour as well as Central Asian States viable sea access. The development of a deep-sea port at Gwadar creates opportunities for trade connections for the resource-rich land-locked provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The proposed gas pipelines from Iran and Turkmenistan to Pakistan, through Afghanistan, and further to India or China will also pass through Balochistan.<sup>2</sup>

#### **2.1.2 Political**

There is a strong sense of political deprivation among the Baloch people, which emanates from a number of factors. First, at the national level, government decisions and policies are formulated and implemented by a small elite, be it the political elite, military or bureaucracy. Pakistan's political culture, which has been decidedly undemocratic, is essentially a factor in the conflict and deprives some of the social strata of their political rights. Balochistan is one of the prime examples of the sense of disempowerment and alienation spawned by this political culture. Secondly, the political culture in Balochistan is the weakest among all the provinces of Pakistan. Tribal bondages and *Nawabs/Sardars* (chiefs of tribes and clans) play a prominent role in politics, and local and provincial administration. There are internal

divisions within and among Baloch nationalist political parties which make them least responsive to realising people's aspirations. The central government has also consistently remained part of consolidating the traditional Baloch political system by strengthening the Baloch tribal elders.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, lack of education and absence of social development continues to keep the Baloch people trapped in the political structures offered to them at the national, political and local levels. Fourthly, the intelligence agencies and armed forces hold great sway over Baloch politics. This control has a long history and the Baloch believe that it is likely to continue in the future. "They don't want the political parties in Balochistan empowered beyond the limits they have set for them".<sup>4</sup>

*i. Relations with the Centre*

The nature of Balochistan's ties with the centre appears to be a patron-client relationship. This relationship has remained uneasy and skewed in favor of the centre throughout the history of Pakistan. The federal government ensures that the province only has a limited capacity and mandate to raise its own revenues, and to set and implement provincial policies.<sup>5</sup> There is over-centralisation of functions, planning and even the authority to make decisions for development expenditures which creates a huge gap between planning and implementation.<sup>6</sup>

Political analyst Zafarullah Khan believes that military and democratic regimes in Pakistan have been imposing an authoritative version of federalism on Balochistan instead of relying on cooperative federalism. As long as the Baloch were raising their voice for their rights neither the state nor the other provinces listened to them. Now, when they talk of independence or self-rule, the available options of federalism are not sufficient enough to resolve the conflict.<sup>7</sup>

The Baloch see the federal government with suspicion and lack confidence in the centre and in institutions of the state. Some believe that if the current political and administrative structures in which the centre-Balochistan relations are rooted are revisited and reconstructed on the basis of the principles of the 1948 agreement signed between Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mir Ahmad Yar Khan—the then Khan of Kalat, a princely state which is now part of Balochistan—the conflict in the province would be

resolved.<sup>8</sup> The agreement had stipulated that all subjects except defence, external affairs and communication would be the domain of the state of Kalat. The agreement was never honoured after Jinnah's death. That was the first breach of trust between Balochistan and the centre.

Then there are issues of representation of the Baloch in federal institutions and appointments made by the centre. According to former Balochistan chief secretary Abdul Hakeem Waja, 60 percent of the provincial services are appointed by the central government. Citing some of the key postings, he says, "The chief justice of the Quetta High Court is appointed by the president in consultation with the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Balochistan cannot appoint its own chief secretary. The inspector general of Frontier Corps does not listen to the provincial government while maintenance of law and order is a provincial subject."<sup>9</sup>

The Baloch are underrepresented in almost all federal institutions as well. "No Baloch heads any of more than 200 corporations in Pakistan. Not a single federal secretary is Baloch. You will not find any Baloch employee in the President House or among the 700-strong staff at the Prime Minister's House. There is not a single Baloch among Pakistan's ambassadors all over the world today. There is no Baloch among the 10 directors of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Sixteen Baloch parliamentarians represent their province in the lower house of parliament, or the National Assembly, comprising of 342 members. The upper house, the Senate, where they have more representation does not have much power."<sup>10</sup>

Under-representation of the Baloch people at the federal level has remained a catalyst for their thinking in regional and ethno-nationalist terms,<sup>11</sup> and their grievances towards the centre have increased over time.

### ii. Governance

The major governance issues in Balochistan include incompetence in the political and administrative institutions, weak writ of the government and absence of rule of law. During the interviews for this study it was noted that most of the political leaders, analysts, nationalist leaders and journalists believed that those sitting on the treasury benches in Balochistan are busy in making money and are least interested in providing facilities and services to

the people. Some analysts see the Balochistan government as weak and ineffective by its very design. It is perhaps the only example of a government in the world where all legislators are part of the executive, with the exception of two or three members.<sup>12</sup> There is a complete absence of the opposition in the legislature which is supposed to guide the rulers on governance and performance issues. The provincial civil services and the local cadre are either not competent or not interested in working efficiently. Federal civil servants assigned to Balochistan do not share the province's priorities. Therefore, provincial aspirations eventually remain unfulfilled.<sup>13</sup>

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), the decision-making for Balochistan is still firmly in the hands of the elements that were in command before the February 2008 elections.<sup>14</sup> HRCP says that there is a brazen hold of the army over Balochistan and that law and order and major governance issues are totally in its control. Others, however, think that although the provincial government cannot take 'strategic decisions' on issues related to the conflict in Balochistan and to law and order, it is free to plan and implement development projects in the territory in the provincial domain under the Constitution. However, they say that the provincial government lacks political will, resources and capability.<sup>15</sup>

Keeping in context the sparsely distributed population clusters in Balochistan, some analysts argue that district-level government and administration system could be much more effective and responsive than a provincial government in Quetta. But the government of Balochistan abolished the local government system in Balochistan in August 2010. The system was established by former president Pervez Musharraf under the Local Government Ordinance 2001. Inter-tribal rivalries, infighting, and exercise of power and money at the local level to win elections are stated to be some of the reasons that make the local government system ineffective.<sup>16</sup> Abolition of the local government system means reversion to centralization instead of devolution of powers.

More in general, the governance challenges in Balochistan have deep social roots. Political leaders at all levels are more likely to secure their position of formal authority through social networks and patronage, rather than through free and fair processes. The citizens are more likely to access basic services through personal networks of kin and *biradri* (clan/caste), informal intermediaries and facilitation payments, than through formalized

procedures and processes. Policy and legislation in many key areas is not followed through with the essential enabling legislation, rules and procedures to make them workable. Public attitudes toward political processes and service delivery reveal deep distrust and low expectations. Voter turnout in Balochistan, for instance, is among the lowest in Pakistan. People have little faith in public services and they are more likely to turn to informal systems of adjudication and service delivery, administered by local tribal elders.<sup>17</sup> At another level of state-society relations, service delivery in Balochistan has almost ground to a halt partly because of security issues, but also on account of utter neglect.

### ***2.1.3 Economic***

Pakistan's economic system is widely believed to contain inherent discriminations. Economic development and modernisation have also been uneven. As a result, the mounting economic pressures, growing economic inequalities and a sense of deprivation and disempowerment in the least developed region of Balochistan have triggered conflicts at the socio-economic and political levels. The Baloch consider the current revenue collection and allocation mechanisms, as well as economic development and economic opportunities discriminatory in a comparative context. They harbour grievances of not getting their due share in resources. The most heightened form of this concern relates to the ownership of and control over the mineral resources of Balochistan.

#### *i. Development*

Balochistan is the poorest and the least developed of the four federating units of Pakistan. Around 58 percent of the province's population lives below the poverty line. If poverty is considered an index of human deprivation comprising limited opportunities and social exclusion, a much larger portion of population in Balochistan would fall below the poverty line. In addition to low income, poor households are characterized by low levels of education, lack of drinking water and dearth of health and welfare services. As many as 92 percent of Balochistan's districts are classified as 'high deprivation' areas, compared to 50 percent in Sindh and 29 percent in Punjab.<sup>18</sup> Less educated and less urbanised than the rest of the country, the province also has far greater dependency ratio.<sup>19</sup>

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Balochistan has the lowest literacy rate of all the provinces, fewest educational institutions and the lowest ranking in the Gender Parity Index (GPI) across the country. The literacy rate in Balochistan is 29.81 percent, compared to the national average of 39.69 percent. The literacy ratio for males is 18.3 percent and for females in the rural areas of the province it is less than 10 percent. With regard to lowest net primary enrolment, 11 out of the 16 districts, including the four districts with the worst record, in 2004-05 were in Balochistan.<sup>20</sup>

<b>Key Statistics for Balochistan<sup>21</sup></b>	
Universities in public sector	4
Universities for boys	5
Universities for girls	1
Primary schools (boys)	7,566
Primary schools (girls)	2,876
Middle schools (boys)	583
Middle schools (girls)	137
High schools (boys)	418
High schools (girls)	122
Intermediate colleges (boys)	32
Intermediate colleges (girls)	21
Degree colleges (boys)	23
Degree colleges (girls)	7
Technical colleges (boys)	1
Technical colleges (girls)	1
Commerce colleges	1
College for physical studies	1
Number of students in boys' schools	570,032
Number of students in girls' schools	364,887
Number of students in boys' colleges	23,139
Number of students in girls' colleges	20,991
Number of hospitals, rural health centers and dispensaries	1,400
Number of doctors	3,000
Number of paramedical staff	2,900
Length of metalled and shingled roads	22,000kms
Village provided electricity	25%
Access to safe drinking water	20%
Access to sanitation	7%

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Disparities in access to education in the province are stark. Punjab has 111 vocational institutions for women; Balochistan has only one. Only 23 percent of the girls in rural areas are fortunate enough to be enrolled in primary schools in Balochistan, compared to twice that ratio in rural Punjab. Similarly, unemployment is alarmingly high and young people in Balochistan are twice as likely to remain unemployed as their counterparts elsewhere in the country.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of Human Development Index (HDI), Balochistan is the most backward province of the country. According to a recent UN human development report about Pakistan, there is considerable variation across provinces with respect to HDI. Among the districts, Jhelum (Punjab) has the highest HDI rank at 0.703, while Dera Bugti, the resource-rich district of Balochistan, is the lowest at 0.285. Balochistan and its districts were assessed to be the worst off in Pakistan. Amongst the top 31 districts with the highest HDI, Punjab had by far the largest share at 59 percent, while Balochistan lagged far behind at nine percent.<sup>23</sup>

Besides continued neglect and inconsistent policies by the central government,<sup>24</sup> there are certain structural problems associated with Balochistan's political, administrative and developments crises. Before August 1, 1970—the day Balochistan got the status of a province within the federation of Pakistan—its administrative position was much different from the rest of the federating units. Its structure was that of a State Union on the one hand and on the other a sort of federally administered tribal area also existed in the province. That meant that Balochistan remained excluded from the administrative setup and political dispensation that prevailed in other provinces for about 22 years. The impact is visible in today's least developed Balochistan.<sup>25</sup>

The violence and the security crisis in the province have also had an exceedingly negative impact on its development, particularly on education. Professor Abdul Nabi, vice chancellor of Balochistan University, does not see a bright future for the Baloch youth as far as educational development is concerned. He laments that the youth do not have institutions and teachers, and if some of them succeed in completing some level of education they do not have jobs. "They cannot compete with the youth of other provinces. Their

frustration can even force them to join the nationalist insurgents,” said Professor Nabi.<sup>26</sup>

Some analysts question the control of the central government over formulation of development policies for Balochistan. They argue that local knowledge and expertise, and cultural considerations are ignored while doing this. This is a structural factor in failure of development projects in Balochistan.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, over-centralisation of development expenditures, as mentioned earlier, is reflected in the large number of schemes in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that are regional in nature but are orchestrated through federal funds.

ii. Control and Distribution of Resources

The question of provincial and fiscal autonomy is directly linked to the problem of control over and distribution of resources. The extraction of natural/mineral resources and allocation of the revenues that the province generates plays a central role in its problematic relationship with the federal government. Balochistan has huge natural reserves of minerals, and its gas fields supply about 45 percent of Pakistan’s total gas requirements (down from 70 percent about a decade earlier), generating US \$1.4 billion in revenues annually.<sup>28</sup> Coal reserves are believed to be sufficient to cover to a great extent the country’s future energy requirements. Other important mineral reserves in the province include gold, copper, chromite, marble and granite.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to control and distribution of resources, some of Balochistan’s long-standing complaints towards the federal governments, which emerged during field interviews, were as follows:

- a. The centre owes the province billions of rupees in gas revenue arrears.
- b. The province’s share from the divisible tax pool is meagre compared to its size, given its contribution to national energy needs as well as its level of underdevelopment.<sup>30</sup>
- c. Disparity in the price of gas extracted from Balochistan and from other parts of the country.
- d. The gas sector and gas fields have been under strict central government control.

- e. The Baloch are the last people to utilize their 'own' gas resources.

However, many of these and other concerns of Balochistan regarding control and allocation of resources, and development have been addressed by three major initiatives of the government that took power after the 2008 elections: the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package, the 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award and the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. The Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package presented a set of recommendations for a joint sitting of parliament on November 4, 2009.<sup>31</sup> It recommended transfer of subjects on the concurrent list to the provinces, a lingering issue related to provincial autonomy.<sup>32</sup> On economic matters, the package deals with three sets of issues: job creation, royalties and share of Balochistan in the development and exploitation of oil and gas resources and shared power over decision-making in launching new mega development projects and managing the existing ones. At the outset, the federal government promised to create 5,000 jobs primarily to employ the educated youth of the province and to provide more funds for poverty alleviation and rehabilitation of internally displaced people (IDPs) from Dera Bugti with a grant of 1 billion rupees.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, issues related to gas revenue arrears and to the share of provinces in the divisible tax pool have been addressed through the 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award and the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. A critical appraisal of these political developments and the Baloch people's response to them is contained in section 4 of the report.

#### **2.1.4 Social**

This section discusses some societal or micro-level structures in Balochistan based on ethnicity, culture, religion, and spread of insecurity, with a view to determine if there are some localised structures of conflict.

##### *i. Ethnicity and Culture*

Balochistan is a multicultural province divided into regions dominated by Baloch, Barohi, Pakhtun, Jaat and small clusters of other ethnic minorities. Ethno-cultural factors of conflict revolve around language, culture and ethnicity.

The Baloch have a 'psychological issue with centralization of their province' and consider that the survival of their identity, land, language and culture is under threat.<sup>34</sup> Their strong sense of inheriting a unique cultural identity compels them to counter any threat of absorption or assimilation into the surrounding cultures. As Selig S. Harrison has put it, it is the vitality of this ancient cultural heritage that explains the tenacity of the present demand for the political recognition of Baloch identity.<sup>35</sup> For centuries the Baloch oral literature has been an important source to preserve and transmit language, culture and national feelings of the Baloch people. Much of the literature, with its rich oral folklore, songs, and folk poetry, is explicitly nationalist in content. The common features include the glorification of the deserts and mountains of Balochistan and the bravery, pride and honor of the Baloch people.<sup>36</sup>

Incidents of cultural discrimination have been reported from Balochistan where the Frontier Corps personnel manning the security checkpoints are said to have insulted the people by shaving their moustaches, tearing the traditional Baloch *shalwar* (trousers) and making other gestures derogatory to their culture.<sup>37</sup>

Some problematic group histories based on ethnicity and language in Balochistan are discussed below.

**Baloch-Barohi:** The Baloch trace their origin to Halb in Syria, while the Barohi call themselves an indigenous race. The Baloch-Barohi ethnic division continued for some time after the establishment of Pakistan. Both held on to their distinct ethnic identities until the 1970 elections. But the Barohis then merged with the Baloch not only politically but also ethnically. According to Balochistan Intellectual Forum member Abdul Basit Mujahid, military operations and repressive policies of the centre towards Balochistan brought the two groups together. Now any reference to the Baloch and the Barohi as ethnically distinct annoys both groups.<sup>38</sup>

**Pakhtun-Baloch:** The Baloch and the Pakhtun are two major ethnic entities in Balochistan. There is great inconsistency between the population figures that both the Baloch and Pakhtun nationalists claim and the official census of the two groups' population in Balochistan. According to the 1981 census, the Balochi language was spoken by 3.02 percent in the province.<sup>39</sup> In the 1980s,

the province received a large number of Afghan refugees, which tilted the demographic and social balance towards Pakhtuns in the northern and central districts.<sup>40</sup>

It is estimated that the Baloch make up between 40 to 60 percent of the province's population, while the Pakhtun are believed to form between 28 and 50 percent. Whatever the actual figures, there is a substantial and growing intolerance among the Baloch regarding the presence of Pakhtun refugees from Afghanistan. The provincial capital, Quetta, is currently believed to have a Pakhtun majority, with the numbers varying between 800,000 and 1.4 million.<sup>41</sup> At present, two-third of the electoral constituencies in the province have a Baloch majority. As many as 12 administrative districts of the province are dominated by Pakhtuns, while in 18 districts the Baloch population is in majority.<sup>42</sup>

There are claims and counter-claims from both communities regarding their population ratio in Balochistan. According to Usman Kakar, president of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Balochistan chapter, the leading Pakhtun nationalist party in the province, Balochistan is a bi-ethnic province, or Baloch-Pakhtun *shareek* (shared) province, where the Pakhtun have very low representation in the provincial set-up due to miscalculation of their population. For the last five years, the governor, chief minister, and speaker of the provincial assembly have been Baloch. Kakar believes that the size of the Pakhtun population of Balochistan is about the same as the Baloch population and the Pakhtuns should therefore get a proportionate number of seats in the legislature, and a share in proportion to the population in the education institutions. He says the current 80-20 ration for the Baloch and the Pakhtun, respectively, is not is justified.<sup>43</sup>

Other related issues include provincial financial allocations and job opportunities, etc.

The Pakhtun community in Balochistan and other parts of the country had condemned military operations in Balochistan during the Ayub, Bhutto and Musharraf regimes. The Pakhtun think that the solution to the conflict in Balochistan lies in dialogue and not in military operations or repression. They do not favor the Baloch insurgency and instead support a peaceful political struggle for the demands of the Baloch.

On the other hand, Baloch nationalists also acknowledge the right of Pakhtun people to their land and resources in Balochistan. They do not include Pakhtun areas in the territory they seek for an “independent Balochistan”.<sup>44</sup> Jameel Bugti, son of late Nawab Akbar Bugti, says that if the Pakhtun demand Southern Balochistan or Pakhtunkhwa, they are entitled to do so, but adds that it is imperative to first redraw the provincial borders and include the Rajanpur, Jacobabad and Dera Ghazi Khan districts of Punjab into Balochistan.<sup>45</sup>

**Settlers:** Some Baloch nationalists and politicians view Punjabi settlers as non-Baloch people who they allege are settled there only to earn money while they invest and make properties in Punjab and other parts of Pakistan outside Balochistan. Others however think that the settlers have a significant role in Balochistan’s development, particularly in the education sector and labour. Nawab Akbar Bugti had introduced the term ‘Balochistani’ for those settlers who had been living in Balochistan since 1970 and whose forefathers were buried in Balochistan.<sup>46</sup> Syed Fasih Iqbal, an expert on Balochistan, calls them non-tribal Baloch.<sup>47</sup>

Target killings of Punjabi and other non-Baloch settlers in parts of Balochistan first began with the murders of Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006 and Baloch nationalist leader Khair Bux Marri’s son Balach Marri in November 2007. Such killings have continued since then. However, the scope and intensity of such killings has grown alarmingly in the last few years. These attacks have spread to Noshki, Khuzdar, Mastung, Gwadar, Turbat and Kech, where this anti-settler violence was relatively low in the past.<sup>48</sup> As many as 252 Punjabi settlers had been assassinated in targeted killings in Balochistan in 2010 by the end of late July alone.<sup>49</sup>

There are multiple views on who could be involved in the target killings of the settlers. Most of the Baloch interviewed for this study said that it was highly unlikely that Baloch insurgents were involved. Some of them argued that the insurgents’ involvement would not only damage their movement but also undermine the development of the province.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, not all Baloch are comfortable with the settlers. Some view them as informers or spies for the establishment. Others complain that the settlers have never raised their voice to condemn the excesses against the Baloch.<sup>51</sup> Some even accuse the Pakistani intelligence agencies of involvement in target killing of

the settlers, particularly private security guards, teachers, and laborers, to malign the Baloch.<sup>52</sup>

It also merits a mention here that land mafia have exploited this situation to make money. One prevailing trend of forcing the Punjabis out of the province is by marking their residences with red crosses, which is considered a warning by Baloch insurgents for the settlers to vacate their homes. Some people say that several land mafia groups, most of them allegedly from Punjab, have done such acts themselves to force the settlers to sell their properties at throwaway prices.<sup>53</sup>

**Hazara:** The Hazara community of Balochistan has been affected the most by target killings in the province. According to Hazara Democratic Party, more than 250 Hazara people have been killed in sectarian-related target killing while more than 1,000 have either been injured or physically harassed and beaten.<sup>54</sup> Hussain Ali Yousafi, chairman of Hazara Democratic Party, was killed in one such incident in Quetta in January 2009.

Muhammad Musi Kashani, an executive member of Hazara Students Federation, does not think that Baloch insurgents are involved in target killings of members of the Hazara community: "Religious extremist groups are involved in targeting the Hazaras; the Baloch are seriously focused on their movement. There are many local and international players, who are supporting and using sectarian groups in Balochistan for their vested interests, but the Baloch are not one of them."<sup>55</sup>

The Hazara community subscribes to Shia sect of Islam but disassociates itself from Shia religious and political movements and groups in Pakistan. They think such an association can make them target of further sectarian-related violence.<sup>56</sup> The orientation of organizations of the Hazaras, such as Hazara Democratic Party or Hazara Students Federations, is ethno-political rather than religious.

#### ii. Religion

The Baloch do not believe in mixing religion with politics.<sup>57</sup> While most Baloch are Hanafi Sunni Muslims, there is a Zikri community among the Baloch in Makran region, which is non-Hanafi. Some Shia communities

among the Baloch can also be found in Sindh and Punjab.<sup>58</sup> On the whole, the Baloch are liberal, secular and forward looking in their sociocultural outlook. They do not buy into sectarian-related interpretations of Islam. On the other hand, they are extremely sensitive about their traditions, culture and language.<sup>59</sup> The general view of the majority of the people interviewed for this study was that the Baloch do not have any religious tension with any other ethnic or sectarian community in Balochistan.

Most of the Pakhtun community, mainly living in the Pakhtun belt of Balochistan and in the provincial capital Quetta, subscribes to Deobandi school of Islamic thought. Two factors are critical with regard to religious structures within the Pakhtun community in Balochistan: the large number of Deobandi religious seminaries in Pakhtun-dominated areas of the province; and the arrival and settlement in Balochistan of the overwhelmingly Pakhtun refugees from Afghanistan following the Soviet-Afghan war. Leaders of the Hazara community express apprehensions that these two factors can create religious tensions by injecting a conservative Islamic ethos among the liberal, although tradition-bound, tribal communities. They refer to Taliban's sectarian-related killing of Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamiyan, in Afghanistan, during their reign in that country.<sup>60</sup>

There are around 300,000 Hazaras in Balochistan, based in Quetta, Khuzdar, Zhob, Loralai and Dera Murad Jamali districts. One of Pakistan's army chiefs, General Musa Khan, was a Hazara. Most army officers inducted from Balochistan are also ethnic Hazaras.<sup>61</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Hazara community is worst affected by the target killings in Balochistan, believed to be perpetrated largely by Sunni sectarian groups.

### *iii. Security: Physical and Sociocultural*

The security landscape of Balochistan is punctuated by a combination of nationalist insurgency, sectarian-related militancy, Taliban presence in the northern part of the province, politically motivated target killings, attacks on NATO supplies, and activities of drug cartels and the land mafia hand in glove with criminal syndicates.

At the level of human security, acute deprivation, underdevelopment, abject poverty, illiteracy, chronic unemployment and continuous deterioration in

the law and order situation have forced the non-Baloch to migrate to the relatively safer Pakhtun localities. The Punjabi settlers, who may have lived in Quetta for generations, are being forced to leave for other provinces. Similarly, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, use of excessive by state agencies against political rallies, illegal detentions, torture of political activists during interrogation and uncalled for house raids and searches have sowed the seeds of deep insecurity among the masses, especially the Baloch.

According to Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) annual security report, 2009 was the deadliest year ever since start of the current phase of insurgency as violence spiked in Balochistan with 792 attacks claiming the lives of 386 people and injuring another 1,070.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, during the first eight months of 2010 at least 367 people had died and 725 had been injured in 528 attacks by nationalist insurgents and religious/sectarian extremists. (See Table 1)

**Table 1: Terrorist Attacks in Balochistan (2007-2010)<sup>63</sup>**

Year	Number of attacks	Killed		Injured	
		Civilians	Security forces' personnel	Civilians	Security forces' personnel
2010 (until August 31)	531	270	97	590	165
2009	792	275	111	824	246
2008	682	197	99	549	258
2007	536	190	34	467	97

### **Nationalist Insurgency**

Despite the public apology extended to the Baloch people by the incumbent federal government for the mistakes of the past, release of detained Baloch nationalist leaders such as Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Shahzain Bugti—a grandson of late Nawab Akbar Bugti—and other political initiatives such as the announcement of the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package and the

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NFC Award, the security situation has deteriorated in the insurgency-hit Balochistan. There has been no let-up in violence since the current insurgency began in January 2005 after the alleged rape of a lady doctor Shazia—an employee of Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) in Sui—by an army captain.

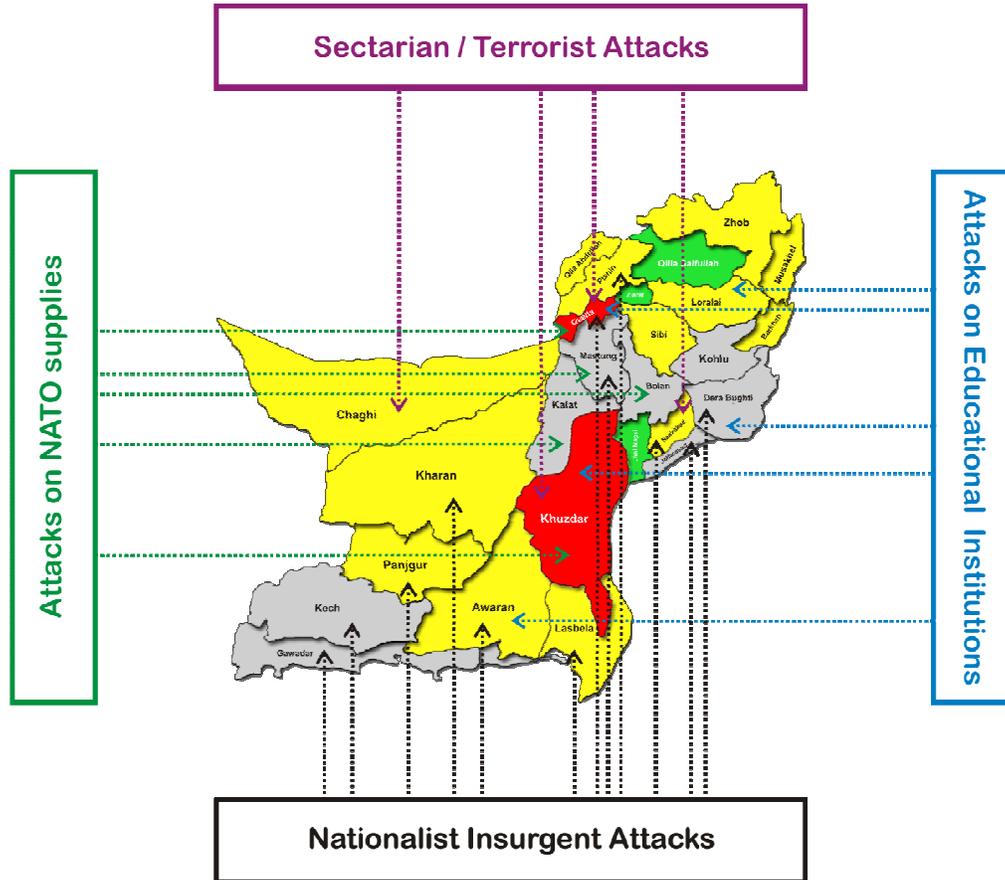
In 2010, 458 terrorist attacks in Balochistan by nationalist insurgents claimed 318 lives and injured 615 people. These attacks occurred in Quetta, Dera Bugti, Kech, Lasbela, Mastung, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Panjgur, Kharan, Chaman, Awaran, Gwadar, Noshki and Pishin. Most of these attacks were carried out by militants of Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) and Lashkar-e-Balochistan. (See Table 2)

**Table 2: Breakdown of Terrorist Attacks in Balochistan (Jan-Sep 2010)<sup>64</sup>**

<b>Nature of attack</b>	<b>Number of attacks</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>
Attacks by insurgents	458	318	615
Attacks on NATO supplies	53	12	64
Attacks on educational institutions	8	-	-
Sectarian-related terrorist attacks	9	18	36
Suicide attacks	1	11	40
Communal/inter-tribal attacks/clashes	2	8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>755</b>

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**Geographical spread of insecurity in Balochistan (Jan.-Aug. 2010)**



**Map Index:**

Red Zone	Gray Zone	Yellow Zone	Green Zone
Up to 6 Terrorist attacks / month	1 to 3 Terrorist attacks / month	1 to 3 Terrorist attacks / 3 month	No incident Reported
1. Khuzdar 2. Quetta	1. Koch 2. Bolan 3. Mastung 4. Dera Bugti 5. Gawadar 6. Chaman 7. Kalat 8. Kohlu 9. Jaffrabad	1. Kharan 2. Lasbela 3. Sibi 4. Nasirabad 5. Pishin 6. Panjgur 7. Awaran 8. Loralai 9. Chaghi 10. Qila Abdullah 11. Zhor 12. Musakhel	1. Jhal Magsi 2. Qilla Saifullah 3. Ziarat

The insurgency in Balochistan further intensified after a full-scale military operation was launched in December 2005 following the firing of eight rockets at a paramilitary base on the outskirts of Kohlu—a stronghold of Marri tribesmen—during the visit of then President General Pervez Musharraf to the area on December 14, 2005. Since then the province has been simmering with a steady increase in the number of insurgent attacks and the resultant casualties. Quetta and Khuzdar are two of the most volatile districts affected by this nationalist insurgency.

Besides proliferation of Islamist radical groups, another worrisome aspect is the widening scope of targets hit by nationalist insurgents and religious extremists. The insurgents attack a wide array of targets ranging from security forces' convoys, check posts, government offices, electricity pylons, railway tracks, bridges and the communication infrastructure in general, in almost all districts of the province. Statistics compiled for the PIPS Conflict and Security Study Database suggest that there have been 105 bomb explosions, 84 improvised explosive device blasts and 44 remote-controlled explosions in the province in the first eight months of 2010.

#### **Attacks on NATO Supplies**

Trucking routes through Pakistan bring in around 40 percent of supplies for NATO forces in Afghanistan, according to the United States Transportation Command. The Chaman border crossing in Balochistan provides the shortest and the most cost-effective land route to Kabul from the Karachi port via Quetta. Of the remainder, 40 percent supplies transit through Afghanistan's neighbors in the north and 20 are percent by air. Over the years, over 60,000 heavy vehicles of NATO supply have entered Afghanistan via the Chaman border, with 100 vehicles crossing the border per day on average.<sup>65</sup>

In 2010, at least 53 attacks had been reported on NATO supplies by August 31, compared to 35 attacks the previous year. These attacks were mainly reported along National Highway, RCD Highway, Wadh area in Khuzdar district, near the Chaman border crossing, Chaman town, Kalat, Pishin, western bypass in Quetta, Bolan and in the Choto area of Mastung district. Interestingly, attacks on security forces during the same period declined considerably compared to previous years.

Three theories exist about the perpetrators of such attacks. In the opinion of most of the people interviewed for this study, Taliban militants are behind such attacks. However, some experts believe that due to rampant crime syndicates and smuggling/drug mafias in Balochistan the involvement of criminal elements cannot be ruled out. Some experts believe that the owners of vehicles used for NATO supplies are also often involved.

According to Yousaf Shahwani, president of All Pakistan Oil Tankers Association (APOTA), major transport contractors provide oil to NATO forces in Afghanistan from Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Multan. He believes that these contractors and their workers are also involved in torching or destroying at least some of the oil tankers. After filling the tankers from the oil fields, the contractors bribe the drivers and conductors to sell the oil in the open market. The bulk of the oil is secretly sold in the market, leaving only a small amount in the tankers. Then the tanker is either set on fire or blown up with dynamite, after which an FIR is lodged in the nearest police station. Later, the contractors receive payments against the destroyed oil from NATO, and also claim insurance money for the vehicles from insurance companies.<sup>66</sup>

An investigation was launched in October after 500 oil tankers and containers of NATO supplies which had left Port Qasim in Karachi for Kandahar did not reach the Chaman border.<sup>67</sup> Theft of NATO supplies has turned into a lucrative and thriving business across the country. Transporters of NATO supplies unload the goods at convenient points. The theft can be of some of the goods or the entire container. Once a container is emptied it is set on fire and Taliban are blamed for setting the containers on fire. As many as 50 percent of the attacks on NATO supplies are stated to be faked to cover up the theft of goods. Frequent incidents of looting of NATO vehicles were reported in 2009 from Qila Abdullah, Quetta and Kuchlak. Markets in the province are awash with goods looted from NATO vehicles.<sup>68</sup>

Taliban militants are also reportedly involved in attacking and disrupting the NATO supplies passing through Balochistan. The tactics of attacks on NATO supplies in Balochistan are almost similar to those conducted by Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.<sup>69</sup> Though Taliban claim attacks on NATO supplies in other parts of the country, including the recent attack on supplies bound for Afghanistan in Shikarpur

district of Sindh, they have not made such claims of responsibility for attacks on NATO supplies in Balochistan.

### **Sectarian-related Terrorist Attacks**

Another parallel trend unfolding in the security landscape of Balochistan is sectarian terrorism/militancy. The militants of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, an anti-Shia militant group, have been targeting the Shia community especially Hazaras in Balochistan. An increase has been witnessed in the sectarian-related target killings as in 2010 alone 26 such incidents had been reported by August 31, which claimed 39 lives and left 17 people injured.<sup>70</sup> These attacks occurred in Quetta, Khuzdar, Naseerabad and Chagi districts. (See detail in section 3.3.2)

### **Attacks on Schools**

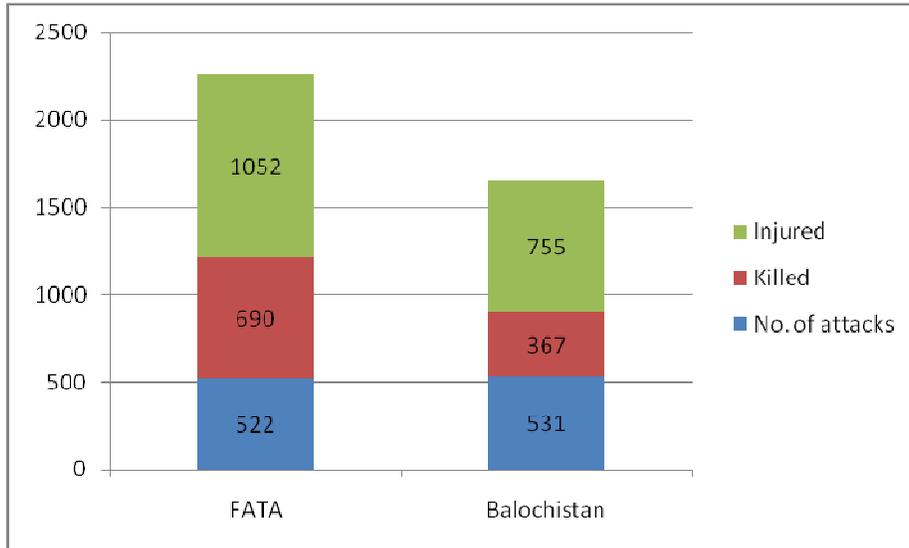
Pakistani Taliban are involved in attacks on educational institutions in Balochistan. Eight terrorist attacks on schools had been reported in Balochistan in first eight months of 2010, including seven attacks on boys' schools and one on a girls' school. The attacks were reported from Quetta, Dera Bugti, Kohlu, Awaran, Loralai and Khuzdar.

As they had done earlier in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and parts of FATA, Taliban militants have also started to threaten schools in Balochistan, including those in the provincial capital Quetta, through letters that carry warnings for female teachers and administration to observe veil in the schools or face the consequences.<sup>71</sup>

### **A Comparison of Balochistan's Security Situation with FATA**

A comparison of Balochistan's security landscape with that of the tribal areas of Pakistan suggests that there is not much difference in terms of number of attacks in the two regions.<sup>72</sup> However, the intensity and magnitude of attacks in FATA is much higher than the usually low-intensity attacks reported in Balochistan. Similarly, the casualties are much higher in FATA compared to Balochistan. (See Chart 3)

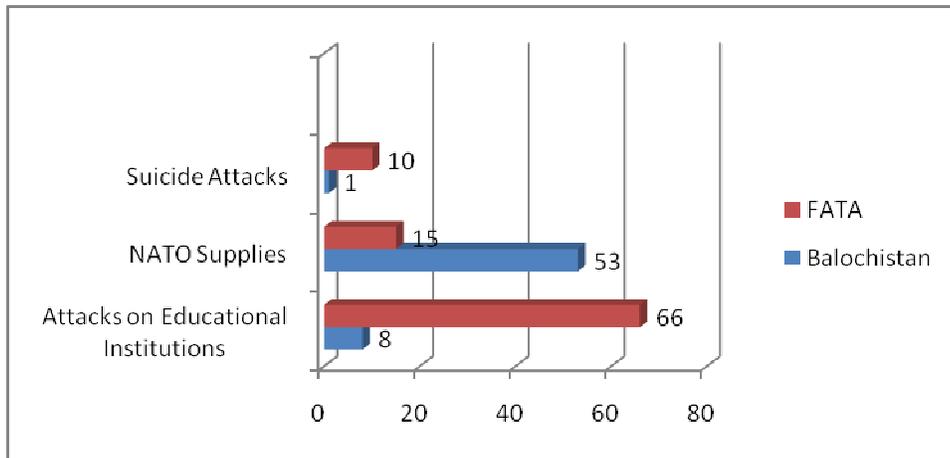
**Chart 3: Comparison of Attacks and Casualties in FATA and Balochistan (Jan-Sep 2010)<sup>73</sup>**



Similarly, the Taliban/Al Qaeda militants arrested or killed in FATA outnumber the killed or captured leaders of Taliban/Al Qaeda in Balochistan. Unlike the pattern of sectarian-related terrorism in Balochistan, which mostly revolve around the Sunni-Shia divide, the dynamics of sectarianism in FATA are much more complex. Sectarian differences between Sunnis and Shias of Kurram Agency in FATA are infused with ethnic tribal rivalries as well. Recent clashes between Mangal and Bangash tribes are a case in point. Similarly Turi and Bangash tribal-cum-sectarian rivalry has killed hundreds of people since 2007. Moreover, a Bareilvi-Deobandi divide manifests itself in Khyber Agency of FATA as well as differences between ultra-puritanical Takfiris and Deobandis, making FATA's sectarian landscape considerably more complex than that of Balochistan.

The number of suicide attacks, and attacks on educational institutions is higher in FATA while the number of attacks on NATO supplies is much higher in Balochistan (See Chart 4).

Chart 4: Comparison of militants' targets in FATA and Balochistan<sup>74</sup>



## 2.2 Actors: Agendas, Capacities and Locations

### 2.2.1 Nationalist Insurgents

In September 2010, the government banned five Baloch insurgent organizations: Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Baloch Republican Army (BRA), Lashkar-e-Balochistan and Baloch Musallah Difai Organization (BMDO). Their accounts and other assets were also frozen.<sup>75</sup> According to Balochistan Inspector General of Police Malik Muhammad Iqbal, the ban will not only curtail the insurgents' free movement in the province but also restrict their ability to publicly open offices and operate bank accounts.<sup>76</sup>

**The BLA** is spearheaded by the Marri tribal elders and has traditionally enjoyed strong support in Kohlu, Khuzdar, Quetta, Sibi, Ziarat, Mand, Mastung, Kalat, Makran and Hub districts. **The BRA** is led by the Bugtis with influence in areas such as Dera Bugti, Quetta, Mastung, Kalat, Noshki, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad and Chagi. **The BLF** is led by Mengal tribes and is strong in areas of Awaran, Makran and Quetta, whereas **Lashkar-e-Balochistan**, dominated by a sub-tribe of Mengals,<sup>77</sup> operates in Lasbela, Makran, Khuzdar, Kalat and Quetta. **The BMDO**, which came to the fore after the murder of Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) secretary-general Habib Jalib, is seemingly active in Quetta and Khuzdar districts.<sup>78</sup>

At present various Baloch insurgent groups do not have mutual harmony. Neither their leadership, nor tactics and goals speak with one voice. The BLA, BRA, BLF and BLUF have separatist and secessionist agendas. They no longer subscribe to moderate nationalist view of attaining political autonomy and possession of Baloch resources while remaining within the framework of the federation. Though Lashkar-e-Balochistan also has anti-state agenda but it was formed to counter the growing ambitions of the BLA and the BLF, and to maintain the influence of Mengal *Sardars* in the area. The BDMO is an anti-separatist organization which does not consider the use of violence by the aforementioned organizations against the state legitimate. A son of Naseer Mengal, chief of a sub-clan of Mengal tribe, founded the BDMO to curtail the influence of Sardar Ataullah Mengal and his sons. Naseer Mengal had developed differences with Ataullah Mengal over electoral politics.<sup>79</sup>

Strategic and counter-insurgency experts classify the current Baloch insurgency as a low-level guerrilla warfare or low-intensity conflict.<sup>80</sup> The intensity of violence fluctuates from low to medium and occasionally high levels.<sup>81</sup> Waging of such low-level guerrilla warfare does not require heavy weaponry or huge sums of money. Though traces of foreign involvement are there but so far no heavy weapons have been discovered by the law enforcement agencies.<sup>82</sup> However, some analysts believe that Baloch insurgent groups not only receive funds from Baloch Diaspora but some regional countries, particularly India, are also funnelling money to Baloch separatists.

Two discourses prevail regarding the nature and level of the current insurgency in Balochistan. One school of thought considers it violent anarchism instead of classical insurgency. It opines that the present insurgent movement not only lacks a charismatic leadership unlike past insurgencies but it is also divided with frequent infightings, and lacks coordination. The Baloch insurgency in 1958 was led by Nawab Nauroz Khan, who was highly revered by his followers. Similarly, the second insurgency from 1963-69 was led by Sher Muhammad Marri. The Parari guerilla movement of the 1970s was led by Nawab Khair Bux Marri, who also enjoyed the support of notable Baloch leaders such as Sardar Ataullah Mengal, Sher Muhammad Marri and Nawab Akbar Bugti. The present conflict is hardly a comparison by any standard, as Nawab Akbar Bugti's grandson Brahamdagh Bugti is hiding in

Afghanistan while Baloch nationalist leader Khair Bux Marri's son Harbiyar Marri is based in London.<sup>83</sup>

The other school of thought categorizes the insurgency as a manifestation of the legitimate cause of disenchanting Baloch segments, which has all the makings of becoming a mass movement of young educated middle class. They hold that public support for the movement is increasing by the day. Proponents of this view believe that frustrated and unemployed young Baloch, who feel relatively deprived, left out and neglected, are joining the insurgents irrespective of tribal divisions and internal differences.<sup>84</sup>

They believe that the young segments of Baloch society especially student organizations such as **Balochistan Student Organization (BSO)** have now risen above their historical feuds and internal differences. They consider all their slain leaders martyrs and are collectively waging a struggle for a common cause.<sup>85</sup> When they see ruthless killings of their forefathers, enforced disappearances of Baloch, the abysmal state of educational institutions, absence of institutional development and of employment opportunities, they revolt against the state. Globalization and modern communication tools such as the Internet and mobile phones have also played their role in creating awareness among young minds about the poor state of affairs in Balochistan. Now they question the unfair policies of the centre, and violation and subjugation of their legitimate constitutional rights.<sup>86</sup> Senior Baloch journalist Siddiq Baloch rejects the argument that Baloch resistance is confined to just two to three tribes. He argues that tribal affinities are not a hurdle in the way of the Baloch people. "When Nawab Akbar Bugti was assassinated in 2006 there was a complete strike in all 300 towns of Balochistan without any distinction of tribal or political affiliation. All segments of Baloch society equally felt grieved by the extra-judicial killing of a notable Baloch figure who was a torchbearer of their cause."<sup>87</sup>

### ***2.2.2 Religious/Sectarian Extremists***

Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda and local militant outfits such as Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan, sectarian outfits like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Imamia Student Organization (ISO) and Sipah-e-Muhammad, and ethno-sectarian group Jundullah are present and active in the province in one way or another. These organizations are pursuing their parallel agendas

while the Baloch movement continues to occupy central stage in the broader Balochistan conflict.

Four factors for support and recruitment for the **Afghan Taliban** in Balochistan stand out: free cross-border movement along Durand Line since the Soviet-Afghan war; presence of a large Pakhtun community in Balochistan that shares the ethnicity and religion of a substantial part of the population in Afghanistan; an extensive network of Deobandi madrassas, particularly those run by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam; and the Afghan refugee camps in the province.

The religio-political parties and some Baloch nationalists term reports of presence of Taliban *Shura* in Quetta, or Quetta *Shura*, nothing more than baseless propaganda while others maintain that Taliban keep on travelling to Balochistan in the same manner as they do to other parts of the country but they may or may not be based in Quetta.<sup>88</sup> What reinforces the international view of presence of Taliban *Shura* in Quetta can be this unchecked movement of Afghan Taliban across the Pak-Afghan border on a daily basis.<sup>89</sup> However, on account of proximity of Quetta to the Pak-Afghan border and the historical role of the city in nurturing and dispatching Afghan Taliban—by Pakistani intelligence agencies—to Kandahar in the 1990s, the possibility of Afghan Taliban's retreat and relocation to Balochistan after the US invasion of Afghanistan cannot be ruled out.

Quetta, the provincial capital, is just 100 kilometers from the Afghan frontier and this proximity has attracted Afghan refugees to the city for over two decades. The cross-border movement of Taliban between Pakistan and Afghanistan continues throughout the year. They have their hideouts in Afghan refugee camps in Balochistan from where thousands of refugees cross the border on a daily basis, making it difficult to distinguish between Afghan refugees and Afghan Taliban. Quetta's localities of Nawankilli, Khurtabad, Pakhtunabad, Killi Khotik Chashma and Killi Raiti Bulledi have significant numbers of Afghan nationals.<sup>90</sup>

Taliban leaders have been killed or captured in the province in the past. For instance, in April 2009 an Afghan Taliban commander codenamed 'Khattab' was detained at a checkpoint on the northern suburban fringes of Quetta. He was carrying important documents for his high command.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Mullah

Rahim alias Mullah Mannan, a senior Taliban commander, was arrested from Quetta. He had been the governor of Helmand province in the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup> Latif Hakimi, the chief spokesman of Afghan Taliban was arrested with along five other suspected Taliban from Balochistan in October 2005.<sup>93</sup> In January 2009, Panjgur Rifles personnel stopped a passenger bus on the Panjgur-Quetta road and arrested 48 suspected militants, most of them Uzbek and Afghan nationals.<sup>94</sup> The security forces arrested six Afghan Taliban near Quetta on February 11, 2009.<sup>95</sup>

Accounts of **Al Qaeda**'s presence in Balochistan were substantiated by the arrest of 13 Al Qaeda members from Dera Murad Jamali and Quetta in July 2009. The 13 included three Turks, two Saudis, two Kuwaitis, five Afghan nationals and a local militant.<sup>96</sup> In the past, NATO forces in Afghanistan have crossed into the Balochistan border town of Qamerdin Karaiz in Zhob district and killed suspected Taliban fighters and also detained and taken away some individuals. Similarly in February 2008, NATO forces killed some Al Qaeda operatives on Balochistan's border with Afghanistan at Noshki.<sup>97</sup>

Some media reports suggested that Taliban chief Mullah Omar had assigned Mullah Dadullah Kakar, the one-legged Afghan war veteran, and Maulvi Sadiq Hameed to Balochistan for recruitment from the seminaries of the province. Dadullah was sent to Pakistan because he was not only widely respected by members of the Kakar tribe to which he belonged, but also by many Pakhtun youths because of his bravery and fighting spirit. The most trusted of Mullah Omar's lieutenants and one of Taliban's chief trainers and recruiters, Dadullah was killed on May 11, 2007 in the Afghan province of Helmand.

After his assassination his younger brother Maulana Mansoor Dadullah was assigned the job. Mullah Omar removed Mansoor from the position in December 2007 on charges of meeting United Nations and European Union officials. Mansoor denied the charge and continued to fight in Afghanistan along with his 25,000 fighters. He was arrested along with four other militants, including his brother Haji Lala, after a gun battle with the Pakistani security forces near the Afghan border on February 11, 2008.

The presence of Taliban is much pronounced in Chaman, the Pakistani town on the border with Afghanistan. Several madrassas located in the area have

been a major center of recruitment for the Taliban. More than 3,000 students graduate from these seminaries annually, a majority of them Afghans who are potential recruits for the Taliban.

Afghans have a large presence in Khurtabad and Gulistan, small towns on the outskirts of Quetta. According to official statistics, Afghans now constitute almost 30 percent of Quetta's total population. Families of many senior Taliban commanders have settled in these areas, as have some senior officials of the ousted Taliban government, under changed identities.<sup>98</sup>

**Pakistani Taliban** surfaced in Balochistan in 2009. However, they disassociate themselves from Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the outlawed umbrella organization of Pakistani Taliban. Engineer Asad, the spokesperson for Pakistani Taliban in Balochistan, asserts that members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan (TTB), as he names his organization, are all Pakistanis. "The struggle of the TTB is against non-Muslims and Western forces that have attacked and occupied Islamic countries. The TTB is opposed to fighting the Pakistani security forces and law-enforcement agencies and turning Pakistan into a battlefield. The TTB is committed to fighting the enemies of Islam."<sup>99</sup>

Afghan Taliban and their local associates may be using Baloch territories as a safe haven to retreat and focus on their activities in Afghanistan for now, but their long-term presence along with activities of Pakistani Taliban can trigger large-scale Talibanization in the province in the future. Strategically, it is in the interest of Taliban in Balochistan to not create trouble for Pakistan and not give the Pakistani security forces any excuse to go after them, or else they may lose their sanctuaries in the province.

**Jundullah** has emerged as a new phenomenon in Pakistan, blending the religious sectarian agenda with a nationalist separatist ideology. It is an anti-Shia and anti-Iran militant outfit which operates in the Iranian province of Seistan-Balochistan, bordering Pakistani districts of Chagi, Kharan, Panjgur, Kech and Gwadar. The number of Jundullah activists is estimated to be around 800. According to an ABC report, the group is also getting financial support from US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>100</sup>

Jundullah's activities are growing in Iran and have already proved to be an irritant in Pakistan-Iran relations. A further upsurge in violence orchestrated

by Jundullah can strain relations between the two countries. The group can also align itself with anti-Shia outfits in Balochistan such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan to target the Shia Hazara community.

Sectarian outfits also have a significant presence in Balochistan. Sectarian-related target killings, especially of members of Hazara community, have become a regular feature of Balochistan's security landscape. These outfits are pursuing their agendas with relative freedom compared to the insurgents and the Afghan Taliban.<sup>101</sup> Haji Muhammad Rafiq, a former member of **Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan** (SSP) did not deny the presence in Balochistan, particularly in Quetta, of sectarian groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Sipah-e-Muhammad, and Sunni Tehrik. He said they are all underground organizations and that Sipah-e-Sahaba is not involved in target killings of the Shia community in Balochistan. "We are fighting a legal war against Shias to stop them from publishing hate material against the *Sahaba* (companions) of Prophet Muhammad. Another objective we are pursuing is the enforcement of *Shariah* across the length and breadth of Pakistan."<sup>102</sup>

Another member of the banned SSP responded during an interview that his organization had no link with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi: "We believe in a legal and constitutional struggle. But you cannot rule out a reaction when Shias are patronized and Sunnis jailed."<sup>103</sup> Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, former provincial minister of information in Balochistan, links the Shia-Sunni rift to their 'donors', Iran and Saudi Arabia, respectively. He believes the religious clerics of the two sects get a lot of funds to promote the agendas of their donors.<sup>104</sup>

**Lashkar-e-Jhangvi** (LeJ) is another anti-Shia Sunni outfit which operates in and around Quetta. Two splinter groups of the LeJ known as Usman Kurd group and Qari Hai group are active in Balochistan. The LeJ concentrated in Balochistan and other parts of Pakistan after its terrorist camps in Kabul and Kandahar were destroyed when the US forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001. The SSP, the parent organization of the LeJ remains a silent supporter of the latter. The SSP has a big support base in Balochistan. The SSP has been banned twice by the government but in Balochistan it remains intact and provides ground support for LeJ terrorists.<sup>105</sup>

**Imamia Students Organization (ISO)** is a well-structured group which has an influential role among Shia youth as well as mainstream Shia politics. Its

president Nasir Shirazi claims that the ISO is not a sectarian organization but it has always played an important role in sectarian-related violence.<sup>106</sup> Outlawed Shia sectarian group **Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan (SMP)** has former ISO members in its fold. In Quetta, the ISO has remained engaged in sectarian-related clashes with other sects. Like other major Shia parties in Pakistan, it also has support from Iran.<sup>107</sup>

### **2.2.3 Smugglers and Criminal Syndicates**

Almost all Afghan refugee camps along Quetta-Chaman Highway are used by criminal gangs. Drug mafia, land mafia, car thieves and other criminal elements use these camps as their hideouts.<sup>108</sup> Afghan refugees are allegedly involved in crimes like robberies, car theft, kidnapping for ransom, drug peddling and gun running.<sup>109</sup>

At some level the insurgent groups have links with crime syndicates and gangs. Several criminal gangs and groups from Sindh are also active in Balochistan.<sup>110</sup> They are involved in crimes along RCD Highway—which passes through Mastung, Kalat, Khuzdar and Lasbela before entering Sindh—and Northern Bypass in Karachi.<sup>111</sup> Insurgents from the coastal cities of Balochistan such as Hub and Makran take refuge in Lyari in Karachi.

Smuggling is now virtually a parallel economy in Balochistan. It has become an invincible trade which is being run by big barons, *Sardars*, public representatives and influential people of the province for many decades. Human trafficking, gun running, drug smuggling and illegal trade of contraband items are rampant in the Pak-Iran and Pak-Afghan border regions. Around 150 gangs of drug and weapons smugglers and human traffickers operate in Balochistan along these borders. The area is known as South Asia golden triangle for drug smuggling since 1979.<sup>112</sup>

Balochistan's long and porous border with Afghanistan is the biggest reason for the growth of smuggling and illegal trade in the province. Cross-border trade relations are strong and most Afghan importers and traders have their offices and establishments in Quetta. There are two main cross-border trade routes through Balochistan, one is via Chaman to Afghanistan and the other is via Taftan/Zahedan to Iran. However, dozens of official and semi-official crossing points also exist. The difficult terrain that characterizes the border

region has made these areas major crossroads for smuggling and illegal trade. A common feature of the Pak-Afghan and Pak-Iran border areas is the homogeneity of demography. Tribes that share the same language and kinship are settled on both sides of the border and frequently cross over to the other side. There are approximately 35 truckable and 250 unfrequented routes along the border. The remoteness of these areas and inability of the government to provide efficient governance contributes to involvement of local population in such illegal activities.<sup>113</sup>

In the recent past, smuggling and stockpiling of illegal weapons has also increased manifold in Balochistan. The province is a hub of weapons trade. Illicit weapons of all types and sizes are available, including guns, grenades, rockets and even landmines and surface-to-air missiles. Smugglers of heavier weapons are broadly known to have the backing of government officials across the border and influential tribal leaders in the tribal areas.<sup>114</sup> The weapons smuggled into Balochistan from Afghanistan subsequently find their way to all parts of Sindh and southern districts of Punjab. The districts of Pishin, Zhob and Qila Abdullah, which includes the town of Chaman, have become well known for weapon smuggling. Small towns of Khurtabad and Gulistan on the outskirts of Quetta are also famous for illicit weapons trade. Similarly, Mirjawa, a town on the Iranian side of the Pak-Iran border is another key transit point for weapons smuggling.<sup>115</sup>

The weapons trafficking to Sindh is done through the Sariab-Sukkur section of National Highway; while the weapons headed for Karachi are transported through RCD Highway. In addition to Baloch militants/insurgents, other potential buyers of these illegal weapons include different tribes of Jacobabad, Kashmor, Larkana, Khairpur, Usta Muhammad and Kandhkot areas of Sindh and Balochistan where these weapons are used in tribal feuds and clashes.

Smuggling of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is also on the rise. The IEDs are smuggled via the Pak-Afghan border. In Balochistan, South Waziristan and in other tribal areas, militants now frequently use IEDs against military or government targets. The growth in casualties caused by IEDs has been a source of anxiety for Pakistan and the data monitored from the media and other sources shows that IEDs explosions have caused 70 percent of casualties in terrorist attacks since start of 2010.<sup>116</sup>

Most of the IEDs explosions in Balochistan have been caused by the insurgents and 907 IED blasts have been reported in the province in the past eight years. According to Balochistan Bomb Disposal Squad, the IEDs used by rebels in Balochistan are mostly detonated by a transmitter such as a mobile phone set or a hand-held radio, while others are triggered by washing-machine timers.<sup>117</sup>

Drug and crime syndicates have outreach to almost all parts of Balochistan, from the bordering areas to the provincial capital, and from coastal area to industrial cities like Hub. Their role in the overall Baloch conflict is an implicit but significant one. They not only enjoy close collaboration with Afghan Taliban for smuggling of drug and weapons from Afghanistan into Pakistan but at some level coordinate with Baloch insurgents as well – who are their potential customers for smuggled weapons and provide them safe passage within Balochistan.

#### ***2.2.4 Relations and Nexuses***

Formal linkages between Baloch insurgents and sectarian outfits like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jundullah were termed as highly unlikely by many of the stakeholders interviewed for this study. However some of them did not rule out the possibility of personal relations between individuals of different insurgent and religious/sectarian groups. According to the Quetta Capital City Police Officer (CCPO), there have been some instances when the LeJ and the BLA helped each other by sharing information and infrastructure in carrying out terrorist attacks.<sup>118</sup>

The nexus between Afghan Taliban and Baloch insurgents is also unlikely because the two movements are the ideological anti-thesis of each other. The former champions the cause of nationalism while the latter has its discourse grounded in religion.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, hints of cooperation between drug mafia/ criminal syndicates and Baloch insurgents exist. Baloch militants provide safe passage and cover to drug cartels and criminal syndicates in return for money and weapons.<sup>120</sup> A greater level of cooperation is present between Taliban militants and drug mafia of Afghanistan. In fact, Afghan refugee camps situated along the Pak-Afghan border serve as forward operating bases for the criminal syndicates.<sup>121</sup>

### **2.2.5 Political Parties**

There are three types of political parties in Balochistan: mainstream political parties, Baloch and Pakhtun nationalist parties and religio-political parties. All have their own style of politics, capacities and approach to the Baloch conflict. All political parties except those that were part of All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM) contested the 2008 general elections.

The general view discernable from interviews of the politicians for this study is that the political parties do not have the 'mandate'<sup>122</sup> or the capacity to play a decisive role in resolving the conflict in Balochistan.<sup>123</sup>

Baloch nationalists have historically been part of parliamentary politics. They have remained part of alliances with mainstream political parties in Pakistan at the provincial and federal level. Most Baloch nationalists think, despite the repressive politics at the centre towards Balochistan, that the greater part of efforts to resolve the Balochistan conflict lies in the parliamentary process and not in the insurgency. Ten year earlier, leading Baloch nationalist leaders including Nawab Akbar Bugti, Nawab Khair Bux Marri, Sardar Ataullah Mengal and others were part of the parliamentary process. Baloch nationalist political leaders know that there would be more international support for their democratic struggle and that they would get more benefits through the parliamentary process. It depends mainly on the state on how and to what extent it encourages the democratic political discourse in Balochistan.<sup>124</sup> Currently leading Baloch nationalist parties are out of the provincial and national legislature on account of their boycott of the 2008 elections. However, they have representation in the Senate, the upper house of parliament.<sup>125</sup>

There are also some internal rifts and ideological differences among Baloch nationalist parties. For instance, Mengal tribe chief Ataullah Mengal and his son Akhtar Mengal believe in parliamentary politics, renounce violence and work within the framework of the federation, while Nawab Khair Bux Marri champions the cause of a separate homeland for the Baloch. Ironically, Marri's son, Changez, is a member of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and believes in mainstream, or national-level, politics. Similarly, the heirs to Nawab Akbar Bugti are divided along political lines. His grandson Brahamdagh Bugti demands a separate homeland for the Baloch through

violent means, while Akbar Bugti's sons Talal and Aali believe in parliamentary politics. Both Talal and Aali head their own factions of Jamhoori Watan Party.<sup>126</sup>

Some analysts hold that Baloch nationalists can be categorized into distinct nationalist discourses such as moderates, hardliners and insurgents. They argue that the views and opinions of Baloch nationalist forces are ultimately almost the same. They may have different postures on a tactical level, but there are no significant differences on the strategic level.<sup>127</sup> Others suggest that if there are some rifts then Baloch nationalists including insurgents and political forces should evolve a consensus on major issues of the Baloch conflict with regard to their strategic roadmap. Fragmented efforts such as the current struggle are least likely to deliver the desired results.<sup>128</sup>

Baloch nationalist parties include National Party (NP), National Party-Hai Group (NP-H), Baloch National Party-Awami (BNP-A), Jamhoori Watan Party-Aali (JWP-Aali) and Jamhoori Watan Party-Talal (JWP-Talal). The discourse of these parties stems from Baloch nationalism and they demand political autonomy, Balochistan's control over the province's resources and minimal interference in provincial affairs by the centre. Although they are pro-federation, hints of separatism can be detected, with bitter feelings and sentiments discernable in the statements of leaders of these political parties. The near unanimous rejection of the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package and of other reconciliatory steps by the federal government is a case in point. However, they openly renounce violence and prefer political dialogue to resolve the issues of Balochistan.

The case of Balochistan Students Organization (BSO), a student political body of Baloch youth, is however different. Recently it has openly started supporting the cause of an independent Balochistan and its members are also involved in violent activities. Though it does not participate in electoral politics, some BSO factions have links with nationalist political parties such as the NP and the BNP. Former BSO members have been elected as members of the provincial and national legislatures from the platform of different political parties.<sup>129</sup>

BSO was founded on November 26, 1967, replacing the Warna Wannda Gal (The Educated Youth Forum) that was founded in 1961 in Quetta with

Siddique Azat as its first president. In its early days, BSO was heavily influenced by the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, particularly the modes practiced in Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Africa. During this phase, Shah Muhammad Marri, a prominent Baloch secessionist leader, advocated a combination of Baloch secessionism and the Marxist-Leninist philosophy. He began stressing upon the efficacy of guerilla warfare to the Baloch cadre. Baloch guerillas were known as Pararis.<sup>130</sup> The Parari conducted ambushes and raids on military installations. In 1969, the federal government negotiated a ceasefire with the Parari. But the ceasefire did not last long. Differences on the strategy vis-à-vis the Pakistani government led to schisms within the Baloch secessionist movement in 1972 with a dissident group forming another military wing called BSO-Awami.<sup>131</sup>

Currently there are three major factions of BSO:

- a. BSO-Azad (Independent), led by Bashir Zeb Baloch<sup>132</sup>
- b. BSO-Pajar, or Bajar, led by Wahid Rahim Baloch
- c. BSO- Mutahidda (United), led by Dr. Imdad Baloch

While the last two are student wings of Balochistan National Party (BNP) and National Party (NP), respectively, BSO-Azad, an independent faction as its name indicates, does not associate itself with any political organization. However, its support for Nawab Khair Bux Marri, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Brahamdagh Bugti's armed activities is an open secret.<sup>133</sup>

BSO-Azad came into being in February 2006 when three factions of the organization, BSO-Mutahidda, headed by Dr. Imdad Baloch, BSO-Mengal, headed by Amanullah Baloch, and BSO-Hai group, headed by Asif Baloch, joined hands. BSO-Azad disassociated itself from all mainstream nationalist parties. Since its creation it has been plagued by extensive defection and infighting over activists' dissatisfaction with the group's chairman Bashir Zeb Baloch. As many as 60 activists quit the group in early 2009 citing disappointment over the 'undemocratic' and 'domineering' role of Bashir who refused to quit his office of chairman to pave the way for the up-and-coming leadership to assume the charge of the organization.<sup>134</sup>

The BSO-Azad has influence in all those areas where nationalist political parties have strongholds. Colleges, universities and higher education institutions in Balochistan's urban areas are strongholds of BSO.

Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) and Awami National Party (ANP) are the major Pakhtun political parties in Balochistan. Their discourse is embedded in Pakhtun nationalism. These parties advocate that there are two major sub-nations in Balochistan, Baloch and Pakhtun. Pakhtuns have their own distinct culture, language, identity and areas of concentrated population. Pakhtun nationalists support Baloch demands for provincial autonomy, and control over the province's resources but renounce the use of violence.

Mainstream political parties in Balochistan include Pakistan People's Party (PPP), PML-N, PML-Q, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). These are pro-federalism political parties and believe in parliamentary politics as a means to resolve the conflict and crisis in the province. Currently all mainstream political parties except the JI (which did not contest the 2008 elections) are part of the ruling coalition in Balochistan. Mainstream political parties generally support Baloch demands of provincial autonomy and denounce the injustices done to them.

The religio-political parties are also pro-federation. Religio-political parties have historically enjoyed a good support base in Balochistan politics. But divisions within religio-political parties have undermined their role in the broader politics of Balochistan.<sup>135</sup>

These parties see the involvement of international actors in Balochistan through their anti-American and anti-West shades which more or less resonate with the worldview of militants and sectarian organizations.<sup>136</sup> On the other hand, nationalist and mainstream political parties have a range of perspectives on international involvement in the province, which are based on energy politics, economics, regional politics and international politics.

Religious political parties, mainly the JUI and the JUP, do not renounce the struggle of the Baloch people but most of them do not support the militant version of their struggle. They align with the state discourse of nationalism; which is based on Islam and not ethnicity. Maulana Asmatullah, patron of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (ideological faction), thinks Baloch and other ethnic

nationalist tendencies in Pakistan exist due to the secular nature of state affairs. "The state has failed to build and promote an Islamic national identity. A Baloch is still a Baloch and a Pathan still a Pathan. Such ethnic and separatist tendencies do not exist in the areas where *Ulema* (Muslim scholars and religious clergy) have influence."<sup>137</sup>

Some segments of Baloch nationalist parties see no role for religio-political parties in the Baloch conflict. They consider them pawns in the hands of intelligence agencies which helped to promote sectarianism in the province which in turn dented the greater cause of the Baloch.<sup>138</sup> Although religio-political parties support the Baloch cause verbally, they have always aligned with anti-Baloch forces with active support from the establishment—a phrase the Baloch use to describe 'Punjabi-dominated military and civil bureaucracy'—which, according to Baloch nationalists, has damaged their struggle in general.

#### ***2.2.6 The State and its Security Apparatus***

Currently, police, Levies, Frontier Corps (FC), Balochistan Constabulary (BC), Anti-Terrorist Force (AFT) and a host of other agencies are entrusted with maintaining security and law and order in the province.

Confusion exists about the mandate, jurisdiction and roles of different law enforcement agencies in Balochistan. Although law and order is a provincial subject, it is under complete control of the centre in Balochistan. The federal government selects the senior police officers as part of the national cadre known as Police Services of Pakistan (PSP), and appoints officers of the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASPs) and above and thereby trumps the powers of the provincial governments in matters of law and order. The provincial police officers thus promoted beyond the ASP level become part of the PSP cadre and are no longer answerable to the provincial government. Besides the police, paramilitary forces are also entrusted with policing.<sup>139</sup>

The general view that emerged from discussions with most of the people interviewed for this study suggests that law enforcement agencies have the required manpower, but their personnel are poorly trained and underequipped. They not only lack the required wherewithal to stem the tide

of insurgency but also do not have the resources to carry out their routine duties adequately.

Police have to rely on Frontier Corps (FC), which is a federal agency, in case of law and order issues and emergencies as the police neither have the resources nor the power to control law and order on its own.<sup>140</sup>

When the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf introduced the local government system, Levies was merged into the police department in Balochistan. Prior to the introduction of the local government system, around six percent of Balochistan's territory, mainly urban centres referred to as 'A' areas, fell under the jurisdiction of police; while 90 percent mainly rural and semi-rural areas referred to as 'B' areas came under the purview of Levies personnel.<sup>141</sup> After eliminating the local government system, the provincial cabinet restored the traditional Levies force in Balochistan to its pre-2002 position on March 6, 2009 within the revenue limits of 23 of the 30 provincial districts. The provincial assembly of Balochistan approved the Balochistan Levies Force Bill 2010 on April 5, 2010.<sup>142</sup>

The current formula for bifurcation of 'A' and 'B' areas is being reviewed by a four-member committee consisting of ministers of law, home, tribal affairs, and revenue and treasury in Balochistan Assembly. Under the present framework, police have jurisdiction within a five-kilometer radius of the police station in the headquarters of each district while Levies has jurisdiction over the remaining areas. At times, the arrangements vary from district to district.<sup>143</sup>

**Frontier Corps:** FC Balochistan is a federal force which operates under the Ministry of Interior under Section 3 of FC Ordinance 1959. Around 44,000 FC troops are currently deployed in Balochistan. They include 300 officers. There are about 500 FC check posts in Balochistan, more in cities and towns than along Balochistan's borders with Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>144</sup>

In addition to guarding the international borders with Afghanistan and Iran and maintenance of law and order in the province, Frontier Corps Balochistan is also assigned the responsibility to counter smuggling. The Government of Pakistan had delegated the power of the Customs Department in Balochistan to the Frontier Corps in 1974 under Custom Act 1969, empowering FC

personnel to seize contraband items within 60 kilometers of the international border. However, there is no such limit on FC's authority to seize narcotics, weapons and ammunition anywhere in the province.<sup>145</sup>

The FC performs policing jobs in the province in aid of the civilian government. Repeated requests by the Balochistan chief minister to bring FC under provincial government's control have not had any effect. Until recently a tug of war was going on between the Balochistan chief minister and the former FC Inspector General (IG) Lt. General Saleem Nawaz.<sup>146</sup> Gen Nawaz had been in office for seven years, while under statutory laws no one could hold the office of the IG for more than three years. Such a state of affairs points to the powerlessness of the civilian government vis-à-vis the establishment in Balochistan.

**Police:** The police have the mandate to maintain law and order in around six percent of the province's territory and have 16,000 personnel, including 3,000 personnel of Anti-Terrorist Force (ATF) who are called upon during operations in sensitive areas. Almost 90 percent of Balochistan's area falls outside police jurisdiction. According to Malik Muhammad Iqbal, Inspector General of Police in Balochistan, "The insurgents are using low-level guerrilla tactics; they perpetrate one or two incidents and run back to their hideouts. On the other hand, almost all the suicide attacks in Balochistan have been carried out by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. We try to hunt down and arrest the militants within our capacity and jurisdiction in a very proactive way to prevent acts of terrorism and target killings."<sup>147</sup>

**Balochistan Levies:** There are 13,000 Levies personnel in Balochistan, including 9,500 personnel of provincial Levies and 3,5,00 of federal Levies force. They are mandated with maintaining law and order in 'B' areas of Balochistan, which constitute almost 90 percent of the province.

### ***2.2.7 Civil Society and Development Agencies***

Two main views emerged from interviews and field research about the role of civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international development agencies in Balochistan. According to one view, the role and work of civil society organizations and development agencies have no impact on the overall conflict in the province. Arguments in support of this view

assert that civil society organizations operate on non-political basis. They are neither part of the ruling establishment nor can they support the nationalists in achieving their cause. Hence they cannot be part of conflict resolution. Secondly, in the absence of rule of law, and in view of widespread insecurity and a critical role of intelligence agencies in the province, civil society organizations and international development agencies cannot play their role to its full potential. Their role, however, remains that of providing services without having any direct impact on the broader Baloch conflict,<sup>148</sup> particularly the political aspect of the conflict.<sup>149</sup>

Contrary to this line of thinking, another school of thought is undertaking development work believing that with increasing level of development and awareness people will be less prone to violent tendencies.<sup>150</sup> Some civil society and human rights organizations hold dialogues and discussions on Balochistan which promote awareness not only about the state of human rights in the province but also about the conflict. This too has obvious significance.

A major issue with civil society organizations in Pakistan is that they are largely dependant on foreign donors. That has often caused misgivings about their agenda. Charity in Pakistan is almost exclusively religious and not sociocultural or political. Therefore, civil society organizations are forced to rely on foreign donors, which makes any initiative by civil society less acceptable. Secondly, although civil society can contribute to the intellectual discourse by raising awareness of issues, the key to resolving the problem lies with various state actors, even according to the proponents of the second view.<sup>151</sup>

At present, all civil society organizations and development agencies working in Balochistan are operating at a much localized level, mainly running small education, health, and water provision projects. They hire the local people for their projects and avoid upsetting the cultural and political sensitivities of the people. The magnitude of the problems they face can be imagined from the fact that at times movement becomes very difficult even for the local people. For example, it is almost impossible for a person from Turbat to work in a project in Gwadar and vice versa. The work of many projects focuses on small villages and outsiders are easily identified and not accepted as NGO or civil society workers.<sup>152</sup>

The views of most of the people interviewed for this study made it abundantly clear that there had been a broad transformation in Balochistan with regard to tribal elders' opposition to development and welfare projects. Several organizations are actively working in the health and education sectors in areas of influence of nationalist leaders. For instance, according to Ziaul Noor, country manager of Muslim Hands, an international relief organization, the organization is operating at least 70 schools in Kohlu and Mach districts of Balochistan.<sup>153</sup>

Civil society organizations work with the permission of the government which makes people believe that civil society is towing the government line. Although the insurgents largely have an ambivalent attitude towards civil society organizations, and generally do not oppose their work, they have their apprehensions that NGOs change the mindset of their political workers.<sup>154</sup> They believe that this can undermine their objectives and struggle.<sup>155</sup> On the other hand, some analysts suggest that intelligence agencies and the government also bar several international NGOs and human rights organizations from working in Balochistan for fear that official agents' "massive human rights abuses" would be exposed.<sup>156</sup>

There is little representation of Balochistan in the media at the national level. Newspapers have lost their national character and have become regional in news coverage. For example, the news that appears in the Quetta edition of Urdu daily *Jang* usually does not appear in other regional editions of the newspaper.<sup>157</sup> The current wave of media liberalisation in Pakistan has certainly not reached Balochistan so far. There are only a few regional newspapers owned by the Baloch. There is not a single TV channel in the province owned by a Baloch. Some Baloch journalists are also among the victims of enforced disappearance in Balochistan. There is lack of access to reliable information in other parts of the country about events in Balochistan.

Major international development agencies play little or no role in Balochistan. Volatile security conditions, governance issues and lax government attitudes have resulted in suspension or winding up of major development projects initiated by the World Bank, United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc.<sup>158</sup>

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For example, the World Bank's National Trade Corridor Improvement Program, meant to improve the railway and road infrastructure from Gwadar to Quetta and Rattodero in Sindh, has been hanging in the balance for the last 5 years or so. Meanwhile, another mega development project of the World Bank for regulatory reforms in the mines and mineral sector has been on the backburner for two years due to the prevailing insecurity and governance issues in the province. Similarly, an ADB project regarding agri-business could not be initiated as the Balochistan government did not fulfil the loan conditionality stipulated by the ADB. The bank had even opened its offices in Quetta a couple of years ago but no further development has happened on that front since.<sup>159</sup>

The Planning Department of Balochistan is now virtually sitting idle. The second phase of Balochistan Resource Management Programme is difficult to implement for the same reasons, while Balochistan Rural Development Programme has come to an end. The World Bank's Balochistan Education Programme was also never implemented.

The UNDP and the World Bank have their own security and transportation arrangements but they are barred by the government from entering the areas where the law and order situation is not satisfactory. Some of their development projects, however, continue at the grassroots, employing the local population.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is extensively engaged in registration, welfare and repatriation of Afghan refugees as well as flood relief activities in Balochistan. According to the latest statistics available on the UNHCR website, by August 2010 the UN refugee agency had provided tents, plastic sheets, mosquito nets and buckets to some 46,000 people in Sibi, Naseerabad, Kohlu and Jaffarabad districts of Balochistan.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Crescent (ICRC) is providing food, water, shelter and medicines to victims of the 2010 floods in Balochistan in collaboration with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society. But it also has concerns about security and restrictions on the movement of staff in the province, which hamper relief and other humanitarian services.<sup>161</sup>

While development experts argue that there is little development taking place in Balochistan, the government's budget figures show significant amounts

flowing into the province's Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) from international donors. The component of Foreign Project Assistance in the PSDP of Balochistan increased from a revised estimate of 1,751 million rupees in 2009-10 to 3,951 million rupees in 2010-11.<sup>162</sup>

## **2.3 Dynamics of Conflict**

### ***2.3.1 Long-term Trends or Historical Context***

The interviews conducted for this study suggest that some fundamental issues or sub-conflicts that were there even at the time when Pakistan emerged as an independent state have led invariably to the present state of conflict in Balochistan. They can be summed up in the following manner:

- a. Conflicting national identity perspectives of the state and Baloch nationalists;
- b. Under-representation of the Baloch at the national level;
- c. Political and fiscal autonomy, and development issues; and
- d. Hybrid manifestations of Baloch nationalism, i.e., nationalist political discourse and insurgent tendencies.

Successive Pakistani rulers have attempted to propagate Islam as the basis of state nationalism in the hope that religious homogeneity would supersede ethnic heterogeneity and would eventually serve to unite and integrate the country's various ethnic groups.<sup>163</sup> However, the issue of Baloch national identity has remained at the heart of Baloch politics, culture and social life. Most of the Baloch interviewees began their description of the Baloch conflict from the manner in which the state of Kalat was merged into the independent state of Pakistan.<sup>164</sup> To many it was an effort to amalgamate the Baloch identity, deep-rooted in their land, language, culture and pride, into Pakistan's national identity under the banner of 'Islamic nationalism'.

Another aspect of these conflicting perceptions of what political analyst Tahir Amin calls 'state elite and ethnic elites in the provinces' was grounded in alternative traditions of thought that were diametrically opposed to each other. The views of the state elite, rooted in both the Western liberal and Islamic traditions envisioned a unitary nation-state on the Western pattern with some incorporation of Islam. The ethnic elite in Balochistan, and in

Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the other hand feared a strong centre and proposed a loosely federated state with maximum provincial autonomy within the socialist framework. The conflicting perceptions of national identity and nature of the state have continued throughout Pakistan's history but they are almost insignificant now in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. However, state efforts to neutralize the ethnic self-assertion and identity with Islamic appeal have not been successful in the case of the Baloch.<sup>165</sup> There is a historical context to it which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The nationalist movements in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan had in fact originated from pre-partition regional autonomy movements of British India. These movements had emerged against the political policies of the colonial state and assumed the character of ethno-nationalist movements, espousing goals bordering on autonomy-secession continuum.<sup>166</sup>

The most formidable challenge to the Pakistan movement came from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the powerful mass-based Pakhtunistan movement led a campaign to boycott the special referendum held by the British to determine whether Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, called the North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) at the time, should join India or Pakistan. But the boycott failed as the people overwhelmingly voted in favor of joining Pakistan.<sup>167</sup> The Pakhtunistan movement gradually declined in the post-independence era. The decline became dramatically clear in the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the post-9/11 scenario, particularly in the 2002 election, which resulted in the formation of a government of religious political parties in the NWFP, as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was then called. With the passage of time, the Pakhtuns started to support those political and religious parties also which were against the Pakhtunistan movement. One of the structural factors for this change was that the Pakhtuns were overrepresented in the military and roughly evenly represented in the top civil bureaucracy. Continuing recruitment of the Pakhtun educated middle class, especially from those areas which had formed strongholds of the Pakhtunistan movement, into both the army and the bureaucracy, ensured that the Pakhtunistan movement did not attract the middle class.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, the Sindhi nationalist tendencies in today's Pakistan manifest themselves in the form of ethno-political violence mainly in Karachi and parts of rural Sindh but secessionist or separatist trends exist no more or do not

enjoy public support. This can be attributed to popular support in Sindh for the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) which is a leading mainstream political party in Pakistan, and also the Mutahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM), which has electoral support in urban Sindh. Although nationalist parties still exist in Sindh, they do not have a popular support base.

The case of Baloch nationalism however remains critical. In the post-independence scenario, the Baloch perception of national identity, opposed to the state perception as discussed earlier, was further strengthened by continued under-representation of the Baloch at the national level, particularly in the military and the civil bureaucracy. The composition of the military and civil bureaucracy during the Ayub regime (1958-1969) was such that Punjabis, Pakhtuns and Mohajirs were fairly well-represented or overrepresented while the rest were either unrepresented or greatly underrepresented.<sup>169</sup> Until the 1980s, the Baloch did not have any representation in the top military elite while they were highly underrepresented in the federal bureaucracy—0.74 percent in 1983 and 0.25 percent in 1973. The figures have not changed much even today. This is what most of the Baloch interviewees alluded to as a Punjabi-dominated establishment, the army and the intelligence agencies in particular, which they accuse of repressing the Baloch.

Another long-term feature of Baloch demands has been the issues of political and fiscal autonomy and development. The economic grievances of the Baloch date back to the British era. As the British developed industries and agriculture in Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, they ignored Balochistan. Baloch nationalist leaders believe that the British rulers thought that an economically and politically enervated Balochistan would lend itself to be used more easily; the British imperialist interest in Balochistan was not primarily economic but rather of a military and geostrategic nature. It was in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that some railways and communication infrastructure was installed there.<sup>170</sup>

After its accession to Pakistan in 1948, Balochistan was on the whole the most deprived region of the new country. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was conscious of the long-standing grievances of the people of Balochistan. He said in his address in Sibi on February 14, 1948: "I have thought and thought, considered and pondered, over the ways and matters of

improving the lot of our people in this province and of enabling them to secure for themselves the same position and the same political status within the polity of Pakistan..."<sup>171</sup> But Balochistan on the whole continues to be the most deprived and least developed region of Pakistan. Even natural gas, which was discovered in Balochistan in 1952, was immediately piped to other provinces whereas it reached Quetta, the provincial capital, in 1985.<sup>172</sup>

The Baloch people's struggle for political and economic rights had begun as soon as the state of Kalat signed an instrument of accession with the new-born state of Pakistan on March 31, 1948. Since then, first as a part of One-Unit (that comprised all of West Pakistan)<sup>173</sup> and then as a separate province since 1970, Balochistan has persistently demanded greater autonomy and control over its rich natural resources. The Khan of Kalat had signed the instrument of accession despite the fact that it was rejected by both houses of parliament of Kalat state. Other tribal elders, opposed to the idea of accession, turned to armed resistance under the leadership of Prince Abdul Karim, the younger brother of the Khan of Kalat. The government of Pakistan launched the first military operation in Balochistan in 1948 to quell the armed struggle. The second military action in the province took place in 1960 to defeat an uprising led by Nawab Nauroz Khan Zarakzai. Despite the military action throughout the 1960s, Marri tribesmen, led by Sher Mohammad Marri, remained organized as the Baloch People's Liberation Front (BPLF) and continued guerrilla attacks on Pakistan Army.

The first general election in Pakistan in 1970 resulted in a victory for Baloch nationalists under the banner of National Awami Party (NAP). They formed an alliance with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and Sardar Ataullah Mengal became the chief minister of Balochistan. The most critical moment in that period was the signing of the new constitution after the secession of East Pakistan. Even though he was not entirely satisfied with the provincial autonomy provided in the 1973 Constitution, leading NAP leader Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo signed the document because he considered it a good start. But other key Baloch leaders in the constituent assembly such as Nawab Khair Bux Marri, Dr. Abdul Hai Baloch and Jennifer Musa, the Irish wife of prominent Baloch politician Qazi Musa, did not follow suit. The NAP government of Sardar Ataullah Mengal was dismissed by prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto just nine months after it took office. Baloch nationalists believe that the dismissal

of Mengal's government and arrest of the Baloch leadership was a critical point which distracted some Baloch from political struggle.<sup>174</sup>

Eventually thousands of tribesmen and disgruntled youth gathered to wage yet another armed insurgency against the state. The insurgency intensified as the Bhutto government launched a military operation, third of the four major military operations in Balochistan, which continued until the military takeover by General Ziaul Haq in 1977.

Zia freed all political prisoners and announced a general amnesty for the rebels in Balochistan. By and large, Baloch nationalists remained inactive until the 1988 general elections when all the nationalist parties got together to form the Balochistan National Alliance (BNA) led by Nawab Akbar Bugti. The alliance emerged as the single largest party in the province. The BNA-led government lasted for 18 months. It remained locked in confrontation with the PPP central government over control of development programs. Subsequent civilian governments in the 1990s also failed to address the fundamental demands of Baloch nationalists—mainly revolving around provincial and fiscal autonomy, unequal development and 'injustices of the army', even though the quasi-democratic process did provide the nationalists a platform to raise their voice through the elected assemblies. With the 1999 military takeover, Balochistan once again plunged into a state of violent confrontation with Islamabad and the military establishment, which still continues.<sup>175</sup>

### **2.3.2 *Triggers of Violence***

Some of the major events and developments which triggered the present phase of Baloch insurgency included the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti, enforced disappearances of the Baloch, conflict-induced internal displacements, and increasing incidents of target killing.

#### *i. Nawab Akbar Bugti's Murder*

The Baloch live in a society where honor, expressed through the forceful and uncompromising response to challenges to oneself, remains a pre-eminent value. Specific acts of assertion and vengeance flow from and constitute Baloch cultural logic and history. In their hierarchical social order, the *Nawab*

or *Sardar* (tribal chief) actively and intentionally epitomizes those values, and continues to demonstrate the capacity to influence the course of events in Baloch society.<sup>176</sup>

Against this backdrop, the murder of Nawab Akbar Bugti in August 2006 virtually changed the entire landscape of Baloch resistance against the center. The manner in which Bugti was killed and the subsequent treatment meted out to his heirs for handing over his body sowed seeds of deep-seated mistrust and hatred among the Baloch masses, especially the Bugtis. This in turn not only contributed further to separatist fervor but also radicalized the Baloch masses, particularly the youth.<sup>177</sup>

Seen in sociocultural matrix, the symbolic importance and reverence attached to the persona of the Baloch *Sardar* redefined the resistance in a new fashion. Prior to his murder in 2001, an emissary of General Musharraf had gone to see Nawab Akbar Bugti in Dera Bugti with an invitation for a meeting in Islamabad which the latter accepted. Even a plane was sent from Islamabad to fetch Nawab Bugti. However, General Musharraf developed cold feet and cancelled the meeting minutes before Nawab Akbar Bugti was to leave Dera Bugti. Similarly, the monumental mistakes of killing Sardar Ataullah Mengal's sons in the 1970s and Balach Marri in 2007 have caused what many consider to be irreparable damage in the Balochistan-centre relations.<sup>178</sup>

#### ii. Enforced Disappearances

The issue of enforced disappearances or missing persons remains at the heart of the Balochistan conflict. The intelligence agencies have allegedly been picking up people and holding them in custody ad infinitum in order to subdue the insurgency in the province.

Authentic figures to determine the number of missing persons in Balochistan are not available. Figures and statistics of different organizations vary greatly.<sup>179</sup> Baloch nationalist forces claim that the number of the illegal detained is around 9,000.<sup>180</sup> A list has been prepared by BNP (Mengal) and handed over to various national and international human rights organizations. However, these figures have not been independently verified so far.<sup>181</sup> The number of missing persons put forth by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is 600.<sup>182</sup> Out of these 600 missing persons,

particulars of 240 have been verified while 40 have been killed in mysterious circumstances.<sup>183</sup> According to Defence for Human Rights, the number of missing persons in Balochistan is 1,700—including 144 women—and a list of these missing persons has been submitted to the Supreme Court of Pakistan as well.<sup>184</sup> Reports published by Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) estimate that the number of missing persons in Balochistan is around 1,000, and the figure was confirmed by the federal interior minister on February 14, 2009. However, the Balochistan chief minister says that he has a list of 800 missing persons.<sup>185</sup>

Under the law anyone arrested and accused of a crime must be produced before a judicial magistrate within 24 hours of the arrest. None of the missing persons had been produced before any court of law for months and often for years after they were taken into custody. No charges or cases were submitted against them within the stipulated 14 days. Despite the matter being raised in the Supreme Court in 2007 and pressure exerted by national and international human rights organizations, only some of the missing persons have been traced or released.

*iii. Conflict Induced Internal Displacements*

The crisis of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Balochistan has been overshadowed by the conflict in the region. The internal displacement in Balochistan has not been officially acknowledged by the federal government.<sup>186</sup> At least 200,000 people were displaced from their homes and ancestral lands in the wake of military operations in Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts in 2005. Between 8,000 to 10,000 people died during the exodus due to a blockade of Marri and Bugti areas, malnourishment, disease and lack of proper shelter. The military regime of General Musharraf had rubbished all media reports about a looming humanitarian crisis due to mass internal displacement in Balochistan. However, such denials were debunked by UN International Children's Emergency Fund's (UNICEF) internal assessment report which was leaked to the media as well. According to the report, the IDPs were living in deplorable conditions in makeshift camps in Jaffarabad, Naseerabad, Quetta, Sibi and Bolan districts.<sup>187</sup>

The government announced one billion rupees for the rehabilitation of Bugti IDPs in the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package in 2009. However, before

the government could begin work on IDPs' rehabilitation, a new and deadly conflict broke out in Dera Allah Yar between two groups of Bugti tribes. The militants of tribal *Lashkar* (private militia) of Nawab Aali Bugti attacked the camp of Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti with heavy weapons and rockets. At least 16 people were killed, including 12 children and three women. The provincial government requisitioned FC troops to restore law and order to the area.<sup>188</sup>

So far the IDPs have not been resettled in their hometowns. Despite official assurances, the issue of IDPs' settlement remains unresolved and the affected people remain deprived even of the assistance and relief given to those displaced in the province during the 2010 floods.<sup>189</sup>

*iv. Target Killings*

Currently three parallel trends of target killings are simultaneously under way in Balochistan: politically motivated targeted killings of moderate political leadership; targeting of non-Baloch settlers; and ideologically motivated sectarian killings of members of Shia Hazara community. Target killings in Balochistan are not specific to one ethnic or religious/sectarian group. Almost all ethnic entities in Balochistan including Baloch, Pakhtun, Hazara and Punjabi have been affected. If this trend continues for long it can give impetus to further violence and even to the Baloch insurgency as well as create cracks in the social fabric of Balochistan.

The target killing of moderate political leaders by Baloch insurgents is a recent phenomenon. The Baloch victims, mainly those killed in Khuzdar and Makran, have been accused of spying for and working as agents of the Pakistani state.<sup>190</sup> During first eight months of 2010, there had been 11 attacks on political leaders, compared to nine and 12 attacks in 2008 and 2009, respectively. These target killings can have serious political fallout, further alienating the Baloch and generating antagonism among them against the state.<sup>191</sup>

Yet another new trend is the targeting of teachers and other professionals, which began after the assassinations of Ghulam Muhammad Baloch, president of Baloch Nationalist Movement (BNM), Lala Munir, joint secretary of BNM, and Sher Muhammad, secretary general of Baloch Republican Party

(BRP) in Turbat. The three leaders were killed in April 2009 after abducted UNHCR official John Solecki's release from the custody of Baloch insurgents.

Punjabi teachers are being targeted in Quetta, Mastung, Kalat, Khuzdar and Hub as well as some other parts of the province. It is not clear who is behind the target killings of teachers although at least some of them have been claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). While claiming responsibility for the murder of the vice-principal of Technical Training Centre in Hub Industrial Township, BLA spokesperson Sarbaz Baloch said on May 24, 2010 that they were carrying out target killings of those teachers who were spying for intelligence agencies.<sup>192</sup>

Some of the leading teachers assassinated in target killings in Balochistan include Khalid Mehmood Butt, vice-principal of Balochistan Residential College at Khuzdar; Professor Amanat Ali of Government Commerce College Quetta; Javed Ahmed Lodhi of Government Pilot Secondary School Mastung; Professor Safdar Kiani, acting vice chancellor of University of Balochistan; Professor Khurshid Ansari of Balochistan University; and Professor Fazle Bari.<sup>193</sup>

Several non-Baloch teachers have asked the Balochistan Education Department to transfer them from Baloch-majority areas of the province to Quetta or to the Pakhtun-populated areas. Such a state of affairs has in turn created greater difficulties for the Education Department in the placement of teachers. So far 14 college lecturers and 22 school teachers have been transferred from Baloch-majority areas to other parts of the province.<sup>194</sup> They also include senior PhDs, including Dr Masoom Zai, Dr Semi Naghmana Tahir, Dr Mansoor Ahmed Kundi, Dr Nadir Bakht and Dr Shafiq-ur-Rehman.

The target killings have compelled many Punjabi families to leave Balochistan. According to some media reports and field research conducted for this study, approximately 100,000 Punjabis have migrated from the province after selling their properties at throwaway prices on account of a growing sense of insecurity.<sup>195</sup>

The sectarian-related target killings have been perpetrated mainly against Shia Hazara community in and around Quetta. The present wave of intensified sectarian killings of Hazaras had begun in 2009. Not a single

culprit has been brought to justice so far. Police never seem to complete their investigations. One example of the attackers escaping justice is the escape of target killing masterminds Usman Saifullah Kurd and Sahfeeq Rind, who are affiliated with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The two had been apprehended by Karachi police. They escaped from the heavily fortified jail of Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF) in Quetta Cantonment, implying that they were helped by elements from within the security establishment.<sup>196</sup>

*v. Floods*

The devastation caused by torrential monsoon rains and floods in Balochistan in the summer of 2010 has all the ingredients of becoming a potential trigger in the broader Baloch conflict. Unlike other provinces, the Balochistan government has fewer resources and little capacity to cope with such a calamity. The extent of damage is so high that unless timely measures are taken the situation has the makings of turning into a major humanitarian crisis. The floods have caused a loss of one trillion rupees to Balochistan.<sup>197</sup> The flood torrents washed away 75,261 houses, standing crops on 700,000 acres of land, 305 kilometers of roads and hundreds of official premises in 12 districts of Balochistan.<sup>198</sup>

According to UNHCR, there were around two million people affected by the floods in Balochistan, one million of them were displaced from Sindh and had found shelter in Balochistan.<sup>199</sup> However according to official figures approximately one million people were affected by the floods including 500,000 from Sindh. The areas most affected by the floods include mostly Baloch-populated areas such as Jhal Magsi, Barkhan, Kohlu, Naseerabad, Sibi, Bolan and Jaffarabad.<sup>200</sup>

The state's failure to adequately address the needs of the displaced and affected population can create a void which will provide space to separatist elements to exploit the situation for their own ends. Even if they do not succeed in recruiting people for their agenda, they can win sympathies of the uprooted families languishing in the relatively unattended IDP camps by justifying their struggle against an indifferent state.<sup>201</sup>

**2.3.3 Regional Context and External Factors**

### *Conflict and Insecurity in Balochistan*

Balochistan is located at the cross-section of competing and conflicting interests of local, regional and international powers. A wide array of issues and interests ranging from global strategic concerns of countries like the United States and China, to less ambitious regional security and economic concerns of India, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as energy politics have affected the conflict in Balochistan in one way or another. Moreover, the reincarnation of a new 'great game' in Afghanistan, border issues and the US-led war on terror have made Balochistan all the more important. It contains within its borders all the contradictions that affect the region, including the war on terror.<sup>202</sup>

Balochistan's long border with Afghanistan has strategic importance for NATO and US-led allied forces in Afghanistan, not only because of the presence of terrorist networks along the Pak-Afghan border but also to secure the main overland supply routes for the international forces especially when attacks on NATO supply convoys continue unabated elsewhere in Pakistan. US drone operations in Afghanistan are launched from Pasni and Dalbandin in Balochistan. Another factor which enhances US interest in the province is the presence of Taliban there. The cross-border movement of Taliban also has ramifications for the war on terror and Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan and the US.

The recent deployment and the surge of US troops in southern Afghanistan, in areas bordering Balochistan that have traditionally been strongholds of Taliban, can force Taliban militants to cross the Pakistani border and flee into Balochistan in case an operation is launched by the US-led forces. The interviews conducted for this study revealed that besides free movement of Afghan nationals across the Pak-Afghan border, many Afghan Taliban injured in the fighting have already been coming to Balochistan for medical treatment. The security forces maintain it is not easy to spot a Taliban commander or militant as their appearance and features are similar to those of the Pakhtuns living in Balochistan. As stated earlier, the Afghan Taliban have a significant presence in Chaman where religious seminaries have become a hub of militant recruitment.<sup>203</sup> Afghan nationals form 50 percent of the population in Chaman and it is very difficult to tell them apart from local Achakzai and Noorzai tribes of Chaman due to their similar appearance and features. These tribes are split by the Pak-Afghan border but maintain close ties.<sup>204</sup> A Taliban retreat to Balochistan notwithstanding, the US military

operation in southern Afghanistan can also increase Taliban recruitment in the province for the war in Afghanistan.<sup>205</sup>

Attacks on NATO supply convoys in Balochistan can also increase amid military operations against Taliban in southern parts of Afghanistan. Similarly some analysts, who believe that the US supports Jundullah, argue that an escalation in the conflict in Afghanistan along Balochistan's border areas can encourage Jundullah to perpetrate more attacks inside Iran's Seistan-Balochistan province. In such a scenario, Jundullah activities can also increase in Pakistani Balochistan against the Shia community.<sup>206</sup>

The US has other interests in Balochistan as well. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Balochistan's importance has increased in US estimates, because of the region's proximity to the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, two most strategic points for the US military in the Persian Gulf. Proximity of the province with Afghanistan, Iran and China also makes Balochistan a key area for US interests. Balochistan also puts the US in a unique position vis-à-vis China. India—located on Pakistan's eastern border—shares many security, economic and geostrategic interests of the US and would be a natural ally of the US as a counter-weight to China. The US seems considerably perturbed by China's participation in the Gwadar port project, perceiving it as a bid to gain traction in the north-western part of the Indian Ocean, where the Americans maintain a formidable naval presence through a chain of military bases and concentration of warships and submarines.<sup>207</sup>

The construction of the port in Gwadar is also a worrisome development for India for a number of reasons. It complicates India's naval strategic planning as it diversifies Pakistan's naval defense. Moreover, India sees the port as another link in China's chain encircling India.<sup>208</sup> Some political analysts assert that India is providing active support to Baloch separatists to destabilize the province so that the Gwadar deep-sea port project does not materialize, thus enhancing the prospects of the Iranian Chahbahar port through Zaranjan-Delaram Highway.<sup>209</sup>

Although Pakistan does not have any boundary dispute with Iran, the cross-border presence of Jundullah has remained a common concern for Iran and Pakistan. Iran has a Baloch population of one million and has always

remained apprehensive of Baloch nationalism since the Shah of Iran's time. Therefore, Iran not only has concerns over growing anti-Shia feelings in Balochistan but also apprehensions that Baloch separatist movements may have some impact on its part of Balochistan.<sup>210</sup> In the recent past, there have been many terrorist attacks in Iranian Balochistan, which had allegedly been perpetrated by Jundullah militants. On October 18, 2009, a suicide attack in Seistan-Balochistan killed over 40 people, including senior commanders of Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The shadow of Jundullah indeed looms large on bilateral relations. Tehran has alleged that Jundullah has been using Pakistani territory to launch terrorist attacks in Iran. Some analysts believe that the arrest and hanging of Jundullah chief Abdul Malik Regi<sup>211</sup> helped ease Pak-Iran relations as Regi was traveling on an Afghan passport and not a Pakistani one when he was apprehended and also because the Pakistani government's assistance had helped Iran in apprehending Regi.<sup>212</sup>

Islamabad has always assured Tehran that its territory will not be used against Iran. Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan have already agreed to develop joint counter-terrorism mechanisms in a meeting of the three presidents in Tehran on May 24, 2009. The trilateral summit envisioned a joint strategy to tackle terrorism, militancy and narcotics trade in the region, in addition to strengthening economic cooperation. Experts argue that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's decision to host the meeting was an effort by Tehran to show that it has a role in bringing stability and peace to the region. Such a regional mechanism to forge a new long-term common vision reflecting common security and economic interests of the three countries will have implications for Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan. A volatile and lawless Balochistan has the potential to hamper materialization of proposed gas pipelines and other projects of economic cooperation for these countries.

Afghanistan has given asylum to Brahamdagh Bugti, a grandson of late Nawab Akbar Bugti. Brahamdagh is currently leading the insurgency in Balochistan and is suspected to have the full backing of Kabul and New Delhi.<sup>213</sup> Moreover, Afghanistan has embarked on an ambitious journey to pressurize Pakistan by cultivating closer ties with India. The underlying motive is to distance itself from Pakistan so that Pakistan may not be able to manipulate the process of nation-building and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's major interest in the region is benefiting from the gas pipelines from Central Asia via Afghanistan to Pakistan and beyond. The transit route

will earn Afghanistan considerable revenue through transit fees. Afghanistan enjoys cordial relations with India and Iran. Both India and Iran are apprehensive of Pakistan's ties with the US and its past role vis-à-vis both these countries. This convergence of interests of the three countries makes a case for Afghanistan to take an anti-Pakistan stance.

China has a vital interest in the Gwadar port because it gives China access to warm waters on the one hand, and secures year-round oil supplies from Iran and Persian Gulf states on the other. Baloch nationalists had strongly criticized the government for handing over the Gwadar port to Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). Some nationalists even assert that it should have gone to China.<sup>214</sup> On the other hand China has also shown her readiness to join Pakistan and Iran in their gas pipeline project if India does not join in.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, Chinese interests in Balochistan stem from presence of US airbases and military outposts in the province. US presence in the province directly clashes with Chinese interests pursued through the construction of the Gwadar port.

Pakistan inherited boundary disputes on its eastern and western borders with the departure of the end of British rule in 1947. These disputes caused insurgencies and separatist movements on the borders. Balochistan shares a 1,002-kilometer border with Afghanistan, roughly 900 kilometers with Iran and has a 900-kilometer coastline. Though the focus has not been as much on the Durand Line recently, the issue has the potential to flare up again. Given the discourse of Pakhtun nationalist parties of Balochistan, especially Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), the Pakistani establishment is constantly pre-occupied with all the possibilities that can arise out of the Pak-Afghan border disputes.<sup>216</sup> The Pak-Afghan border in Balochistan has an added significance being the shortest transit route between Karachi and Kabul via the Chaman border for supply of fuel and other provisions to NATO forces in Afghanistan. On top of all that, there is the cross-border movement of Taliban on a daily basis.

#### ***2.3.4 An Analysis of Future Scenarios***

There are several threats and challenges to peace-building in Balochistan as well as some significant positive developments. In view of these aspects some future scenarios can be predicted. Materialization of any of these scenarios,

however, depends on a variety of domestic, regional and global factors, prominent among them is the presence of international actors in Afghanistan across the border from Balochistan; the future course of centre-province relations; implementation of the packages and promises announced by the federal government for Balochistan; role of the military and the establishment in Balochistan affairs; economic and political development of the province; and the attitude of international players – particularly Iran, the US, India and China – towards Balochistan.

### **Scenario One: Moving Towards Peace and Conflict Reduction**

Political and democratic culture is strengthened at the federal and provincial levels, paving the way for dialogue with all stakeholders through a political process. Political initiatives of the federal government including the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package, 7<sup>th</sup> National Finance Commission Award and the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment are implemented, benefiting all strata of Balochistan. With such political developments in the province continuing without interruption, Baloch nationalists' trust in parliamentary democracy is revived. This in turn politically isolates the insurgents who lose public support.

Efforts for resolving the Balochistan conflict gain ground following interest from regional actors, with developments on the proposed Iran-Pakistan & Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipelines, Gwadar port and the war on terror. The stakes and interests of various regional countries attached to these projects persuade them to work out regional mechanisms, such as Pakistan-Iran-Turkey trilateral deliberations to counter terrorism and achieve peace and security in Balochistan.

### **Scenario Two: Status quo**

In the prevailing circumstances, status quo is likely to continue with some variations in the level of insecurity and intensity of violence. The state and the nationalists continue to stick to their usual narratives. The stand-off between the insurgents and the security establishment continues, without any flexibility in their stated positions, and the role of the political dispensation and nationalist political forces of Balochistan pales into insignificance. Consequently, democratic forces remain weak and ineffective in Balochistan

and the hybrid Baloch political discourse continues to oscillate between parliamentary politics and separatist tendencies.

### **Scenario Three: Moving towards State Failure or Bloodshed**

More triggers of violence are added to the existing ones. The state fails to sustain the status quo and the situation is tilted in favor of the insurgents. Baloch nationalists who earlier put their faith in parliamentary politics join the insurgents and political options of conflict resolution diminish. With a boost in the form of merger of insurgents and nationalists, Baloch resistance gets significant mass-based support. Regional and global factors develop in a negative way as opposed to their development mentioned in scenario one. Either the state fails or gets a handle on the situation through massive use of force and widespread massacre of the Baloch.

These are the best, worst and mid-way scenarios based on future projections. The first scenario seems to be the least likely to materialize at present. There is very little evidence that internal and regional developments can become so conducive to peace in the near future. It is indeed a long-term projection. The last scenario is almost equally unlikely. It is based on assumptions that all the things that can possibly go wrong will go wrong. The most likely scenario, then, becomes the second one, particularly in the short-term.

### **3. State Responses and Capacities**

This section undertakes critical appraisal of the role and capacity of the incumbent governments to reduce the violence and insecurity in Balochistan. To start with, as described by the Balochistan governor, the government has the political option of negotiating with the aggrieved Baloch but, at the same time, it cannot give a free hand to those who take law into their hands. If the government rules out the option of using force then it has to face a total loss of writ of state at a certain point in time.<sup>217</sup> Historically, the use of force has remained the top priority of successive governments, particularly the military regimes. There have been only a few examples where the state used the political options to address the Baloch grievances; dialogue with the insurgents has never been an option.

However, the incumbent government has tried to rely on political options. It has given concessions to Balochistan in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Finance Commission (NFC) Award and has also announced a special 'rights' package for the province. Some clauses of the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment also envisage addressing the issues of Balochistan.

Under the NFC Award the issue of gas distribution surcharge (GDS) has been resolved and the amount due to Balochistan with effect from 2002 will be worked out on the basis of a revised formula and paid by the federal government. The centre has agreed to pay the GDS arrears since 1991, almost Rs. 120 billion, which will be paid over 12 years.<sup>218</sup> The NFC Award has indeed introduced significant changes in the resource distribution mechanism. The federal government has agreed to increase the share of provinces in the divisible tax pool to 56 percent in the first year of NFC and to 57.5 percent in the remaining years of the award from the existing 47.5 percent. To increase the share of Balochistan to 9.09 percent, the other three provinces agreed to slash their shares. The centre also gave the option to the provinces by allowing them to collect sales tax on services. In the past, the formula for distribution of resources was based on population. This has been changed and other criteria such as inverse population ratio, backwardness, poverty and resource generation have been taken into consideration.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment also talks of provinces' equitable share in the federation: According to clause 10, under-representation of any class or area in the service of Pakistan may be redressed in such manner as may be determined by an Act of parliament. Clause 12 says the provinces' shares in all federal services, including autonomous bodies and corporations established by, or under the control of, the federal government, shall be secured and any omission in the allocation of the provinces' shares in the past shall be rectified.

Similarly, the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package gives a comprehensive roadmap to reverse the injustices done to the Baloch in the past. It also has made recommendations related to withdrawal of army and missing persons, etc.

Nationalist political parties including Jamhoori Watan Party, Balochistan National Party-Mengal, Balochistan National Party-Awami, National Party

and Balochistan National Movement have stated that the package will not be able to deliver its promises without the relevant constitutional amendments and release of all political prisoners. Therefore, the success of the package becomes highly conditional to a consensus on the recommendations of the Constitutional Reforms Committee (CRC) regardless of the sincerity displayed by the federal government.<sup>219</sup>

With regard to the disparity in the gas price offered to Balochistan and the other provinces, an anomaly had existed in the pricing. The Sui gas deposits were discovered in the mid-1950s and the subsequent increases in the price were made using the original price as a benchmark. On the other hand, gas from Qadirpur gas field in Sindh was priced using the benchmark of international oil prices. Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Naveed Qamar however asserts that over the last 18 months, a significant change has come about. The government has addresses the gas-price anomaly to a large extent. Rikodiq, where large reserves of gold and copper have been reported, has been handed over to the provincial government and the Saindak copper and gold project will be handed over soon.<sup>220</sup>

A quick glance at the government's political responses and initiatives reveals that these initiatives cover a bulk of the demands being put forward by Baloch nationalists. But experts argue that that is not the case. They point out that the major demands of the Baloch including an army pullout, release of missing persons and prosecution of the people responsible for murder of Baloch leaders are only recommendations so far.

Indeed two main branches of opinion were found in discussions with a range of sources during the research for this study. One opinion completely dismissed political initiatives of the federal government and called them useless and irrelevant. The proponents of this opinion argued that the policy-making and implementation power, particularly with regard to Balochistan, still remained with the military establishment. Secondly, the political governments had nothing to do with the issues of reducing or abolishing military cantonments, and missing persons, etc. They also dismissed the prospects of an effective dialogue between Baloch nationalists and the political governments on the same ground that the latter did not have the authority or the mandate, even if they had the political will, to address the issues of Balochistan.<sup>221</sup>

The second opinion was related more to the implementation side of these initiatives including the issues of insecurity, absence of good governance, civil bureaucracy's relations with democratic governments, province-centre relations, and economic recession, etc. Although, the proponents of this opinion expressed concerns regarding implementation of the initiatives but they did not dismiss political efforts as useless. To them, 50 percent control of the provinces' over resources is a big achievement and the manner in which the government has provided safeguards to the NFC Award means that the federation cannot take back from the provinces what it has given them, unless it amends the constitution.<sup>222</sup> They in fact wish that government initiatives are implemented in their true spirit because they fear that all efforts will be wasted if their impact does not reach the angry Baloch youth.<sup>223</sup>

Another state response has come recently in the form of recruitment of Baloch youth in Pakistan Army. For this purpose the military leadership has relaxed the physical requirements and academic qualifications for Baloch recruits. A public awareness campaign has also been launched to persuade the Baloch youth to join the army and to dispel their doubts and ambiguities. The program has received public appreciation so far.<sup>224</sup>

After relaxation in rules for recruitment, some 8,339 Baloch—including commissioned officers—have joined Pakistan Army. (See Table 5) The Baloch are reluctant to leave their areas for training and deputation. To overcome this barrier the recruits are being trained in Sui and Quetta. The majority of the instructors deputed for the trainings are also Baloch. After completion of training the Baloch are given the choice to be posted for duty at any place of their choice in the country or within the province.<sup>225</sup>

Table 5: Recruitment of the Baloch Youth in Pakistan Army (2005-2009)<sup>226</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2005	502
2006	1,052
2007	1,374
2008	1,841
2009	3,570
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,339</b>

It is too early to analyze the impact of the government's political efforts. Apparently there are no imminent signs of a halt in the Baloch insurgency. On the other hand, the military operation in Kohlu and Sui in Dera Bugti is reportedly over and the army has been withdrawn and replaced by the FC.<sup>227</sup> But some analysts argue that although no military operation is currently under way in Balochistan, the number of missing persons is increasing.<sup>228</sup> The government claims that "out of 992 missing persons of Balochistan, 262 have returned to their homes".<sup>229</sup>

#### **4. Strategic Policy Options for Peace and Security**

There are multiple problems in the political, social, economic and administrative set-up of Balochistan. Besides the presence of multiple actors and factors of conflict in the province, some conflict reduction mechanisms, including military operations, recently announced political and constitutional steps, and development projects, have been applied at the state and societal level so far. While most of the people consider resolution of the Balochistan conflict possible only through state actors who can address the political, constitutional and development issues, some others assert that the role of civil society, international agencies, and other actors of peace and development is equally important. However, the state has the options of intervening politically and militarily, unlike the non-state actors who can either create awareness about peace or engage in development activities in the province.

Some recommendations, in light of discussions with different stakeholders, observations and analysis, with a view to get some practical and strategic interventions at the state and societal levels have been documented below.

##### **To the Federal Government**

- Demilitarization of the province is extremely important. The government has taken the initiative to withdraw the army from two districts of Balochistan. This process should continue until there is only a minimum-level presence of army in the province.
- The government should ensure implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award, the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package, and the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. So far Baloch nationalists are skeptical of

these political initiatives, and only a visible change on the ground can help reduce the nationalists' separatist and anti-federation sentiments.

- The security forces and law enforcement agencies including the FC, police, Levies and Balochistan Constabulary should be trained, equipped and resourced to maintain law and order in the province. The Levies system should be strengthened instead of giving policing responsibilities to the FC. Levies and Police departments are ill-equipped and the personnel are poorly trained to maintain law and order in the province. There are ambiguities regarding the mandate and jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies. Such confusion should be done away with by assigning each agency their mandated roles.
- All illegally detained and missing persons should be released or produced in courts immediately. So far the government has failed to solve the issue of the missing persons, whose number is on the increase. A judicial commission that has the confidence of families of the missing people should be set up to probe the issue and also to look into the charges and/or cases filed against them.
- Unregulated movement of people across the borders with Iran and Afghanistan is a permanent threat not only to Pakistan but also to Iran and Afghanistan. Taliban, Jundullah and sectarian extremists can take advantage and easily cross to the other side after making mischief in one country. The three countries should make efforts to enhance vigilance on the borders in order to stop infiltration from any side.
- Job quota for the Baloch should be increased in all the sectors. Special job packages should be announced for the Baloch that may include jobs from Grade 12 to 20. Livelihood prospects also need to be improved for the segments with little or no education.

#### **To the Provincial Government**

- The Balochistan government should work out a roadmap for international development and donor agencies with a view to guide

them properly to invest in various priority sectors such as education, health, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in areas like mining, marble, coal and fisheries, etc., where development projects can be launched. The government should prepare and share with international agencies project proposals which must include details of a roadmap, and guidelines for launch, monitoring and implementation of projects in a transparent manner.

- To encourage foreign investors and international development agencies, improvement in security and law and order is pivotal. The provincial government should ensure the international and local development agencies' personnel are provided with adequate security, particularly at development sites.
- The Balochistan government should establish polytechnic institutes with a view to train people as skilled workers and create a workforce that could be utilized in ongoing and future development projects and different industries in the province. This will not only create job opportunities for the youth but will also allay fears of the Baloch about being robbed of their rights and resources by outsiders. The main objections by some Baloch segments to mega development projects such as Gwadar Deep-Sea Port has been that few local workers had been engaged and no training facilities were provided to enable the local youth to join the workforce of these projects. Such training programs should be based in the areas where they can respond to the requirement of work opportunities in that particular area so that the locals benefit the most.
- Fishery related industries with efficient storage and packaging facilities should be established. At present the fish caught in the coastal areas of Balochistan is sent to the Persian Gulf states for packaging as the coastal areas of the province lack the skill and infrastructure.
- Livestock management facilities and infrastructure are needed at priority basis in the province. Education and research institutes to enhance livestock management skills and capacity should also be established.

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- The marble industry can easily flourish in Balochistan, ensuring employment for around 150,000 people and also lead to \$5 billion in annual income to the government.

#### **To Political Parties**

- Political parties should initiate debate on different aspects of the conflict in Balochistan in and outside the parliament with a view to engage Baloch nationalist parties and leaders in evolving a consensus on how violence and insecurity can be reduced in Balochistan.
- Political actors should also exert pressure on the federal government to implement the promised political and constitutional steps in the form of the NFC Award, the Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan package and the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

#### **To the Security Forces**

- Extrajudicial killings especially those of civilians have a negative impact on the Balochistan conflict. The security forces should try to put in place safeguards to prevent such casualties.
- Transparency about the conduct of affairs must be ensured because misgivings over illegal detentions have dented the image of the security forces in the eyes of the Baloch people.

#### **To International Agencies**

- International development agencies can initiate small and local-level projects in collaboration with the provincial government particularly in the health and education sectors.
- According to many analysts, the political elite's role today is far less significant than Pakistan's security establishment in Balochistan. This is due to weak political institutions, particularly in Balochistan, unstable democratic processes, and governance issues. Most of the people interviewed for this study suggest that a large part of conflict resolution efforts for Balochistan should be in the political domain. It

is however not possible to do so without strengthening the political culture and democratic dispensation in the country and making their roles more relevant and significant. This will eventually influence the security establishment, which according to Baloch nationalists has the main role in Balochistan, to give more space to political actors. Therefore, to reduce violence and insecurity in Balochistan, international actors should utilize their financial resources and energies to strengthen participatory democracy, political culture, and good governance in Pakistan.

- Since Balochistan's population is sparse, there are very few educational institutions in villages in remote areas. It is difficult to provide fair and uniform opportunities of education in all these villages. The education facilities that are available are generally in an abysmal condition and lack adequate staff and infrastructure. In order to improve access to education and increase enrolment, secondary, higher and professional (technical) educational schools/institution with boarding facilities should be established in major urban centers. In these boarding schools and higher educational institutions competent lecturers should be appointed and teachers affiliated with the main universities in the country should also work as visiting faculty.
- On the same pattern, model health units should be established in major urban centers and then should be linked to peripheral rural areas either through road infrastructure or mobile services.
- Some area-specific educational institution should be established keeping in mind the potential and landscape of the areas such as agriculture education institutions in Dera Murad Jamali and livestock education institutions in Sibi, etc.
- Vocational training institutes exclusively for women should be built to make the female population skilled and self-sufficient.
- Balochistan has the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in South Asia due to lack of access to basic health facilities and scarcity of trained female paramedical staff. Being a traditional tribal society,

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the Baloch do not send their women to hospitals. So during pregnancies they avail antenatal care from trained birth attendants (42% urban and 16% rural). There is a great scope to train female paramedical staff which could cater to a large number of women in remote villages.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> The statistics are based on the Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) annual security reports.
- <sup>2</sup> White Paper on Budget 2010-11, issued by Finance Department, Government of Balochistan. available at [http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=category&sectionid=4&id=23&Itemid=136](http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=4&id=23&Itemid=136), accessed on October 7, 2010.
- <sup>3</sup> Interview with Zahid Hussain, senior editor monthly *Newsline*, Karachi, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>4</sup> Interview with Abdul Qadir Baloch, Member National Assembly, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010. Mr Baloch has also served as the Balochistan governor and the Quetta Corps Commander; Interview with Usman Kakar, president PKMAP, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010.
- <sup>5</sup> Marco Mezzera, Safiya Aftab, "Pakistan State-Society Analysis", Initiative for Peace building funded by the European Union, January 2009.
- <sup>6</sup> Jennifer Bennet and Maha Jahangir, "Governance, Democracy and Human Security: Lurking Echoes," in: Jennifer Bennet (ed.), *Pakistan: Haunting Shadows of Human Security*, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2009), p. 41.
- <sup>7</sup> Interview by Ali Abbas in Islamabad, August 2010. Zafarullah Khan is executive director Centre for Civic Education, Islamabad.
- <sup>8</sup> Interview with Ahmed Baksh Lehri, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Waja Abdul Hakeem Baloch, former Secretary and Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Abdul Qadir Baloch.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with Dr. Ismail Baledi, Senator (JUI-F), Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Zafarullah Khan.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> "Pushed to the Wall: A fact-finding mission report on Balochistan," (Lahore: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2009).
- <sup>15</sup> Interview with Brigadier (R) Abdul Razzaq Baloch, Chief Executive SOS Village and Eminent Citizen Forum Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with Safiya Aftab, Chief Executive Strategic and Economic Policy Research (SEPR), Islamabad, Safdar Sial, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>17</sup> Marco Mezzera, Safiya Aftab, "Pakistan State-Society Analysis", p. 33.
- <sup>18</sup> Former Senator Sanaullah Baloch quoted a study by Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) in his article "Balochistan: myth of development," published in Dawn on 2 November 2008.
- <sup>19</sup> Out of the 10 most deprived districts in Pakistan, nine are in Balochistan and it emerges as the most deprived province. (Source: Abdul Wahab, "A province in peril," monthly *Newsline*, June 2009).
- <sup>20</sup> Economic Survey of Pakistan 2009-10, p. 146.
- <sup>21</sup> Abdul Wahab, "A province in peril," monthly *Newsline*, June 2009, p. 50-51.

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- <sup>22</sup> "The Forgotten Conflict in Balochistan," International Crisis Group Report, *Asia Briefing No 69*, October 22, 2007. p. 10.
- <sup>23</sup> Sanaullah Baloch, "The Baloch Intifada," *Dawn*, November 23, 2009.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Abdul Wadood, Executive Director of *Khair*, an NGO, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>25</sup> Interview with Dostain Khan Jamalini, Secretary Finance Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>26</sup> Interview with Professor Dr. Abdul Nabi, Vice Chancellor Balochistan University, Quetta, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>27</sup> Interview with Rais Gul Zaman, president Stone and Mines Owners Association Balochistan, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>28</sup> Marco Mezzera, Safiya Aftab, "Pakistan State-Society Analysis", p. 20.
- <sup>29</sup> *Balochistan: Conflicts and Players*, (Islamabad: Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), 2008), p. 29-30.
- <sup>30</sup> The revenue sharing formula is determined by the National Finance Commission (NFC). According to the mechanism, a divisible pool of resources is created at the federal level through the contribution of the four provinces. The proportion of each tax that flows into the pool is supposed to be determined every five years. The resources collected in the divisible pool are then redistributed among the provinces in accordance with the awards assigned by the same NFC. The divisible pool consists of wealth tax, capital value tax, sales tax, export duties, custom duties, excise duties and any other tax collected by the federal government.
- <sup>31</sup> The package was adopted by parliament on November 23, 2009.
- <sup>32</sup> The 1973 Constitution provides for a Federal Legislative List (67 subjects) where parliament has the exclusive power to make laws with respect to any or all subjects enumerated in the federal legislative list, and a Concurrent Legislative List (47 subjects) where parliament and provincial assemblies can make laws with respect to any matter on the concurrent list.
- <sup>33</sup> *Promise, Policy, Performance: Two Years of People's Government 2008-2010*, (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, 2010), p. 73, 75.
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Dr. Abdul Maalick, senator and president National Party, Abdul Basit and Ali Abbas, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>35</sup> Selig Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981), p. 11.
- <sup>36</sup> Carina Jahani, "Poetry and Politics: Nationalism and Language Standardization in the Balochi Literary Movement," in: Titus, Paul (ed.), *Marginality and Modernity: Ethnicity and Change in Post-Colonial Balochistan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 114.
- <sup>37</sup> "Pushed to the Wall: A fact-finding mission report on Balochistan," p. 5.
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with Abdul Basit Mujahid, member Balochistan Intellectual Forum, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010.
- <sup>39</sup> The last census of Pakistan was held in March 1998 but its results have yet to be published. The census figures which are available are those of 1981. In that census the question asked was about the language 'commonly spoken in the household. 3.02 percent said they spoke Balochi. (Source: Tariq Rahman, "Language, Power and Ideology in Pakistan," available at

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<http://www.tariqrahman.net/language/Language%20Power%20and%20Ideology%20in%20Pakistan.htm>, last accessed on 8 September 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Muhammad Abdul Qadeer, *Pakistan: Social and cultural transformations in a Muslim nations*, (Routledge, 2006), p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> Marco Mezzera, Safiya Aftab, "Pakistan State-Society Analysis".

<sup>42</sup> "Pushed to the Wall: A fact-finding mission report on Balochistan," p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Usman Kakar, provincial president Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Balochistan, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Dr. Abdul Hakeem Lehri, central member Baloch Republican Party (BRP), Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Interview in Quetta, Shahzada Zulfiqar, September 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Abdul Basit Mujahid.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Syed Fasih Iqbal, Editor-in-Chief daily *Balochistan Times*, former senator and expert on Balochistan conflicts, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Moosa Kaleem, "No Place to Call Home," *Herald*, Karachi, October 2008, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> "Baloch Militants killed 252 settlers in 2010," *ARY News*, July 27, 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Abdul Basit Mujahid.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Nawabzada Jameel Akbar Bugti, son of late Akbar Bugti, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Bismillah Khan, General Secretary of PPP Balochistan Chapter, former MPA and former provincial minister, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Shazada Zulfiqar, a Quetta-based journalist, Abdul Basit, Quetta, August 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Ahmed Ali Kohzar, Central Information Secretary Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Muhammad Musa Koshani, executive member Hazara Students Federation and member Hazara Democratic Party, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Taj Muhammad Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development*, (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2004), p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 73-75.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Syed Fasih Iqbal.

<sup>60</sup> An Interview with Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Secretary-General of the Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Qurat ul ain Siddiqui, *Dawn*, March 7, 2009. Available at <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/Balochistans-Hazaras-speak-out--qs>, accessed on October 6, 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Qurat ul ain Siddiqui, "We are not separatists," *Dawn*, May 7, 2009.

<sup>62</sup> "Pakistan Security Report 2009," Pak Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad, p. 11.

<sup>63</sup> Statistics are based on Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) monthly and annual security reports.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "Gunmen torch 30 NATO fuel tankers in Balochistan," *Dawn*, October 9, 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Daily *Ummat* (Urdu), Karachi, October 5, 2010.

- <sup>67</sup> "Probe launched into 500 missing NATO vehicles," *Dawn*, October 11, 2010.
- <sup>68</sup> Munawar Azeem, "Lucrative Business—stealing, selling NATO good," *Dawn*, October 11, 2010.
- <sup>69</sup> Previously the countrywide trend, with the exception of FATA, in attacks on NATO supplies was to burn/dynamite the vehicle or steal the goods while not causing loss of life. However, recently a transformation has occurred in which drivers and their helpers have also been targeted across the country including Balochistan, which is basically a tactic employed by the Taliban. See PIPS's Pakistan Security Report 2009, (Islamabad: Pak Institute for Peace Studies) p. 9.
- <sup>70</sup> "Target Killings Claim more than 500 lives in last 26 months," *Urdu Daily Azadi, Quetta*, March 27, 2010.
- <sup>71</sup> Asad Khan Betini, "TTP activated in Balochistan," *Frontier Post*, Peshawar, May 6, 2010.
- <sup>72</sup> Overall number of attacks includes terrorist attacks, attacks on NATO supplies, educational institutions and sectarian-related terrorist attacks.
- <sup>73</sup> Statistics are based on Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) monthly and annual security reports.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup> Saleem Shahid, "5 Baloch militant outfits banned," *Dawn*, September 9, 2010.
- <sup>76</sup> Interview with Malik Muhammad Iqbal, IG Police Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>77</sup> Amir Nasir Mengal's son founded the BLF.
- <sup>78</sup> Cyril Almeida, "All Baloch should not be tarred with same brush," *Dawn*, July 25, 2010.
- <sup>79</sup> Interview with Abdul Qadir Baloch.
- <sup>80</sup> Interview with Malik Muhammad Iqbal.
- <sup>81</sup> Interview with Brigadier (R) Abdul Razzaq Baloch.
- <sup>82</sup> Interview with Anwar Sajidi, Senior Journalist, with Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>83</sup> Amir Mateen, "Is it more anarchy, than an insurgency," *The News*, July 26, 2010.
- <sup>84</sup> Interview with Dr Abdul Maalick.
- <sup>85</sup> Interview with Faiza Mir, lecturer IR Department Balochistan University, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> Interview with Siddiq Baloch, Editor in Chief, *Balochistan Times*, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>88</sup> Interview with Dr. Inayatullah Khan, senior leader Awami National Party, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>89</sup> Interview with Muhammad Musa Koshani.
- <sup>90</sup> Amir Mateen, "Too many things going wrong simultaneously," *The News*, July 27, 2010.
- <sup>91</sup> Ilyas Khan, "On the trail of Taliban in Quetta," *BBC Report*, January 25, 2010, accessed at <http://thebalochhal.com/2010/01/on-the-trail-of-the-taliban-in-quetta/> on October 18, 2010.
- <sup>92</sup> "Taliban Commander Nabbed in Quetta was former governor," *The News*, July 24, 2010.
- <sup>93</sup> "Spokesman for Taliban held in Balochistan," *Dawn*, October 5, 2010.

- <sup>94</sup> Daily *Intekhab* (Urdu), Quetta, January 8, 2009.
- <sup>95</sup> Daily *Bakhbar* (Urdu), Quetta, January 5, 2009.
- <sup>96</sup> Daily *Intekhab*, July 16, 2009.
- <sup>97</sup> *Balochistan: Conflicts and Players*, p. 148.
- <sup>98</sup> Zahid Hussain, "Taliban Balochistan Link," *Newsline*, November 2009. p. 32.
- <sup>99</sup> Rahimullah Yousafzai, "And now there is Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan," *The News*, March 4, 2009.
- <sup>100</sup> *Daily Times*, Lahore, quoted American channel report on April 5, 2007.
- <sup>101</sup> Interview with Malik Muhammad Iqbal.
- <sup>102</sup> Interview with Haji Muhammad Rafiq, Joint Secretary Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamat Quetta, Mufti Sanaullah, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>103</sup> Interview with Maulana Ramzan, member banned Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Mufti Sanaullah, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>104</sup> Interview with Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, former information minister Balochistan and administrator Jamia Rasheedia, Quetta, a religious seminary associated with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman group), Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, August-September 2010.
- <sup>105</sup> Late Maulana Azam Tariq, an SSP leader, joined the government in November 2002. It was a time when pro-Musharraf Pakistan Muslim League needed the vote of confidence in parliament for the prime minister. Maulana Tariq exploited his position and in return not only secured the release of hundreds of his party workers, involved in the sectarian killing, but also got freedom of movement across the country. (Source: *Balochistan: Conflicts and Players*).
- <sup>106</sup> *Daily Times*, Interview, November 24, 2004.
- <sup>107</sup> Interview with Musa Koshani.
- <sup>108</sup> Interview with Usman Kakar.
- <sup>109</sup> Interview with Haji Muhammad Rafiq.
- <sup>110</sup> Interview with Abid Notkani, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Quetta, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>111</sup> Interview with Bashir Ahmed Sheikh, former CCPO Quetta, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>112</sup> Muhammad Asghar, "150 gangs of drugs, human smugglers unearthed," *Dawn*, October 5, 2009.
- <sup>113</sup> Mansoor Akbar Kundi, "Borderland Interaction: The Case of Pak-Iranian Baloch," *IPRI Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2, (Islamabad: Summer 2009), pp. 90-105.
- <sup>114</sup> Interview with Ahmed Bux Lehri.
- <sup>115</sup> Maqbool Ahmed, "Cargo of Death," *Herald*, March 2007, p. 66.
- <sup>116</sup> Ghani Kakar, "IED Smuggling on the rise in Pakistan," *Central Asia Online.com*, August 8, 2010.
- <sup>117</sup> Ghani Kakar, "Gun Smuggling on the Rise in Balochistan," *Central Asia Online*, April 4, 2010.
- <sup>118</sup> Interview with Quetta CCPO Abid Notkani.
- <sup>119</sup> Interview with Dr Abdul Maalick.
- <sup>120</sup> Interview with Sardar Yaqoob Khan Nasir, Provincial President PML-N, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>121</sup> Interview with Dr Inayatullah Khan.

- <sup>122</sup> They argue that the real decision-making power lies with federal government and the security establishment.
- <sup>123</sup> Interview with Lashkari Raisani, Chief PPP Balochistan Chapter, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010; Interview with Dr. Ismail Baledi, Senator JUI-F, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>124</sup> Interview with Asa Zafar, former president Balochistan Nationalist Movement (BNM), Shahzada Zulfiqar, Khuzdar, September 2010.
- <sup>125</sup> The Senate is indirectly elected and follows the principal of proportional representation from all provinces. The National Assembly is directly elected and is more powerful than the Senate, seat allocation is on the basis of population.
- <sup>126</sup> Interview with Abdul Qadir Baloch.
- <sup>127</sup> Interview with Abdul Mateen Akhuzada, provincial chief Jamaat-e-Islami, Mufti Sanaullah, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>128</sup> Interview with Dr. Jehanzeb Jamalini, acting President Balochistan National Party, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>129</sup> *Balochistan: Conflicts and Players*, pp. 109-110.
- <sup>130</sup> A Baloch term for people with grievances who did not necessarily subscribe to peaceful negotiations.
- <sup>131</sup> Taj Muhammad Breseeg, p. 340.
- <sup>132</sup> BSO Azad is the largest and most militant of the three BSO factions.
- <sup>133</sup> Malik Siraj Akbar, "Infighting in Baloch Student Organization," January 8, 2009 accessed at <http://www.nowpublic.com/world/infighting-baloch-students-organization-bso>
- <sup>134</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>135</sup> Interview with Maulana Asmatullah, Chief Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Ideological, Mufti Sanaullah, Quetta, August 2010.
- <sup>136</sup> Interview with Professor Qari Arhsad Yameen, Administrator Jamia Ashraful Madaris, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.
- <sup>137</sup> Interview with Maulana Asmatullah.
- <sup>138</sup> Interview with Dr Ishaq Baloch, Secretary Information Balochistan National Party, Ali Abbas, Islamabad, August 2010.
- <sup>139</sup> Syed Shahid Hussain, former chief secretary Balochistan, quoted in a report of the National Dialogue "Balochistan: Anatomy of the Current Crisis" held in Islamabad on December 11, 2006, (Islamabad: Actionaid and Sungi, 2007), p. 22.
- <sup>140</sup> Deputy Commissioner has the authority to call in the Frontier Corps.
- <sup>141</sup> Interview with *Dawn* reporter Cyril Almeida, by Ali Abbas, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>142</sup> *Dawn*, April 15, 2010.
- <sup>143</sup> Interview with Talib Hussain, PA to Home Secretary Balochistan, Nida Naz, Islamabad, October 18, 2010.
- <sup>144</sup> Telephonic interview with Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta-based journalist, Abdul Basit, October 2010.
- <sup>145</sup> <http://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/awpreview/textcontent.aspx?pid=144#Introduction>.
- <sup>146</sup> He was replaced by Major General Ubaidullah in first week of October 2010.
- <sup>147</sup> Interview with Malik Muhammad Iqbal.

- <sup>148</sup> Interview with Ahmed Baksh Lehri.
- <sup>149</sup> Interview with Brigadier (R) Abdul Razzaq Baloch.
- <sup>150</sup> Interview with Syed Ziaul Noor, Country Manager Muslim Hands, Ali Abbas and Mujtaba Rathore, Islamabad, September 2010.
- <sup>151</sup> Interview with Zafarullah Khan.
- <sup>152</sup> Interview with Safiya Aftab.
- <sup>153</sup> Interview with Syed Ziaul Noor.
- <sup>154</sup> Interview with Abdul Wadood, Executive Director Kahir, an NGO.
- <sup>155</sup> Interview with I.A. Rehman, Secretary General HRCP, Zahid Hassan, Lahore, September 2010.
- <sup>156</sup> Malik Siraj Akbar, "Balochistan's unattended IDP Crisis," *Daily Times*, January 31, 2010.
- <sup>157</sup> "Pushed to the Wall: A fact-finding mission report on Balochistan," p. 7.
- <sup>158</sup> Interview with Safiya Aftab.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>160</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org.pk/news/PR/UNHCR%20rushes%20more%20aid%20to%20balochistan%20a%20snumber%20o%20flood%20victims%20soar.pdf>, accessed on 19 October 2010.
- <sup>161</sup> <http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/pakistan-video-240910>, accessed on 19 October 2010.
- <sup>162</sup> White Paper on Budget 2010-11.
- <sup>163</sup> Taj Muhammad Breseeg, p. 252.
- <sup>164</sup> During the deliberations for the partition of India, Balochistan, a princely state, opted to be an independent state. The matter was not resolved by the British, and the day after Pakistan emerged on the map, the Khan of Kalat declared the independence of Balochistan, rejecting the national boundary of Pakistan. On April 1, 1948, Pakistan Army moved into Kalat and forced the Khan to sign an instrument of accession. (Source: Muhammad Asghar Khan, *Generals in Politics: Pakistan 1958-82*, (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 177). The directly administered "British Balochistan" had taken a different course. One month before the Khan of Kalat's declaration of independence, the British-nominated council of tribal elders, the *Shahi Jirga* or royal council, and the Quetta municipal council had voted to join Pakistan; that decision was not changed. (Taj Muhammad Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development*, (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2004), p. 231.)
- <sup>165</sup> Selig Harrison, "Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan: The Baluch Case," in: Hutchinson, John and Smith, Anthony D., (ed.), *Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 229.
- <sup>166</sup> Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan*, (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1988), p. 57.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid, p. 224.
- <sup>168</sup> Ibid, p. 227.
- <sup>169</sup> Ibid, p. 225.
- <sup>170</sup> Taj Muhammad Breseeg, p. 95-96.
- <sup>171</sup> Shamsah Ahmad, *Dreams Unfulfilled*, (Lahore: Jahangir Book Depot), p. 21.
- <sup>172</sup> Interview with Faiza Mir.
- <sup>173</sup> Much of the political opposition to this administrative-political structure from Baloch and other ethnic communities such as Pakhtun and Sindhi was due to their

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concern that the ethnically homogenous unit of West Pakistan was meant to reduce their political autonomy. (Source: Sylvia Matheson, *The Tigers of Balochistan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1975), see Introduction.) The dissolution of the One-Unit in 1969 was celebrated by nationalists as an acknowledgment that ethnicity and language were the defining realities of Pakistani society. (Source: Muhammad Abdul Qadeer, *Pakistan: Social and cultural transformations in a Muslim nations*, (Routledge, 2006), p. 69).

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Dr Ishaq Baloch.

<sup>175</sup> *Balochistan: Conflicts and Players*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>176</sup> Sylvia Matheson, *The Tigers of Balochistan*.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Abdul Basit Mujahid.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Nawabzada Jameel Akbar Bugti.

<sup>179</sup> *Balochistan: Conflict and Players*, p. 165.

<sup>180</sup> I.A. Rehman, "Secession or Reconciliation," *Newsline*, November 2009. p. 43.

<sup>181</sup> Abdul Wahab, "Missing in Custody," *Newsline*, December 2006. p. 49.

<sup>182</sup> "State of Human Rights in 2007," a report by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, p. 77.

<sup>183</sup> "Pushed to the Wall: A fact-finding mission report on Balochistan," p. 13.

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Amna Masood Janjua, Chairperson Defense of Human Rights, Ali Abbas, Rawalpindi, September 2010.

<sup>185</sup> Lawrence Lifschultz, "In Search of Zarina Marri," *Newsline*, April 2009. p. 49.

<sup>186</sup> Malik Siraj Akbar, "Balochistan's unattended IDP Crisis," *Daily Times*, January 31, 2010.

<sup>187</sup> Shafi Baloch, ".2m IDPs need urgent relief in Dera Bugti, Kohlu," *The Nation*, September 19, 2010.

<sup>188</sup> Daily *Intekhab*, Quetta, January 24, 2010.

<sup>189</sup> Latif Baloch, "Devastating Floods add to miseries of Baloch IDPs," *Dawn*, September 19, 2010.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with Lal Jan Baloch, former district nazim Khuzdar, currently team leader of Health and Rural Development, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Khuzdar, September 2010.

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<sup>192</sup> Shahzad Baloch, "Teachers in Balochistan fearful of being targeted," *Daily Tribune*, May 29, 2010.

<sup>193</sup> Ali, "Murder of teachers in Balochistan," *Dawn*, May 30, 2010; "Target killings claim more than 500 lives in last 26 months," *Urdu Daily Azadi*, Quetta, March 27, 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Abdul Wahab, "Targeting the Teachers," *Newsline*, August 2009, p. 62.

<sup>195</sup> "100,000 settlers have migrated from Balochistan," *The News International*, July 28, 2010.

<sup>196</sup> Hina Shaikh, "Status of Minorities in Pakistan in 2009: Annual Report," South Asian Human Rights (SAHR), p. 9, accessed at [www.southasianrights.org/wp.../10/Minorities-Report-2009-Pakistan.pdf](http://www.southasianrights.org/wp.../10/Minorities-Report-2009-Pakistan.pdf) on September 14, 2010.

<sup>197</sup> "UNHCR rushes aid to Balochistan as number of flood victims soar," UNHCR Report, August 16, 2010, accessed at <http://www.unhcr.org/4c6971619.html> on September 12, 2010.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Telephonic interview with Fouzia Khajjaz, Flood Relief Coordinator of Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPO) in Quetta, Nida Naz, Islamabad, October 2010.

<sup>201</sup> "US will help flood affected Balochistan," *Dawn*, August 13, 2010.

<sup>202</sup> Fredric Grare, *The Resurgence of Baloch Nationalism*, (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>203</sup> The same seminaries were used to raise Taliban forces in 1994. (Zahid Hussain, "The Taliban-Balochistan Link", *Monthly Newslines*, Karachi, November 2009).

<sup>204</sup> Zahid Hussain, "The Taliban-Balochistan Link."

<sup>205</sup> Leading journalist Zahid Hussain quotes a former Taliban militant and madrassa teacher in Chaman Hafiz Bismillah saying that escalation of war in Afghanistan has always shown a marked increase in number of young men from Chaman joining Taliban. (Zahid Hussain, "The Taliban-Balochistan Link", *Monthly Newslines*, Karachi, November 2009).

<sup>206</sup> Proponents of this argument assert that the kidnapping and killing of Iranian government officials and border security personnel began in 2002 in Seistan-Balochistan after the arrival of US troops in Afghanistan. (Abdul Wahab, "The Blame Game," *Newslines*, Karachi, November 2009.)

<sup>207</sup> *Balochistan: Conflict and Players*, Pak Institute for Peace Studies, Islamabad, 2009. p. 132.

<sup>208</sup> Parveen Swami, "Balochistan Shadow Over India-Pakistan Ties," *The Hindu*, May 9, 2006.

<sup>209</sup> Interview with Ismail Baledi.

<sup>210</sup> Weekly *Nida-e-Millat* (Urdu), March 17-25, 2005.

<sup>211</sup> Regi was arrested in March 2010 by Iranian authorities and hanged in June.

<sup>212</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana, "Arrest of Abdul Malik Regi: a step towards better Pak-Iran relations," *Monthly Tajziat* (Urdu), Islamabad, March 2010, p. 5-6.

<sup>213</sup> See "Afghanistan and India behind BLA: Malik," available at <http://news.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/afghanistan-and-india-behind-bla-malik--bi>.

<sup>214</sup> Rauf Khan Sasoli, secretary general Jamhoori Watan Party-Aali faction (JWP), was quoted as saying in Amir Mateen's report "Gwadar Port may be given to China" published in daily *The News* on September 15, 2010. He argues the Chinese are more suited to develop the Gwadar port and the network of rail and roads in Balochistan as they have experience and the muscle to work in the troublesome part of Pakistan. They are already in Saindak and have completed Gwadar despite repeated kidnappings and attacks on their employees.

<sup>215</sup> Safdar Sial, "IPI or TAP Pakistan needs Early: Materialization of a Gasline," uploaded on March 29, 2008, available at [http://www.san-pips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=epi\\_list\\_1](http://www.san-pips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=epi_list_1).

<sup>216</sup> The PkMAP espouses vision of a separate province for Pakhtuns in Pakistan, by joining Pakhtun-dominated areas i.e. Pakhtun-inhabited areas of Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, enjoying full autonomy and control over their resources. The leaders of the PkMAP have never

openly renounced the idea of Greater Pakhtunistan unlike Awami National Party (ANP) which has now distanced itself from this idea.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Nawab Zulfiqar Magsi, Governor Balochistan, Shahzada Zulfiqar, Quetta, September 2010.

<sup>218</sup> *Dawn*, March 17, 2010.

<sup>219</sup> Amir Khan Goraya, "Concurrent List: 1973 Constitution and Recent Political Developments," January 11, 2010, available at <http://www.forumfed.org/en/pubs/pakistan/Constitutions%20concurrency%20&%20current%20events%20AKhan%20finalJan2010.doc>, accessed on October 19, 2010. (The Forum of Federations project in Pakistan is funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

<sup>220</sup> Cyril Almeida, "Two extremes digging in their heels," *Dawn*, July 24, 2010.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with Siddiq Baloch.

<sup>222</sup> Interview with Zafarullah Khan.

<sup>223</sup> Interview with I.A. Rehman.

<sup>224</sup> A report by Hanif Khalid published in Daily *Jang* on July 13, 2010.

<sup>225</sup> Saleem Safi, "Balochistan at the crossroads of make or break," *The News*, July 14, 2010.

<sup>226</sup> A report by Hanif Khalid.

<sup>227</sup> *Promise, Policy, Performance: Two Years of People's Government 2008-2010*, p. 76.

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## Abstracts

### **A Progressive Understanding of Pashtun Social Structures amidst Current Conflict in FATA**

*Brian R. Kerr*

The conflict in FATA has global ramifications. Many terrorist attacks in the West have been logistically or ideologically linked to Pakistan's tribal areas. In recent years, there has been a shift in the US and Pakistani policies towards the region, with a greater emphasis on gaining the allegiances of the local population, a strategy crucial for a successful counterinsurgency. Historically, the Pashtun tribes of FATA have largely been left to their local political and administrative structures. However, the institution of jirga as well as the individual positions of power such as maliks, mullahs, and tribal elders have experienced significant consequences as a result of the ongoing wave of violence in FATA. A blend of Pashtun governance and societal structures aided by an influx of infrastructure and development could be a realistic, long-term peace-building mechanism in the region. However, before applying this model, a stable security climate is necessary and militant administrations must be eliminated at the very least.

### **Understanding FATA**

*Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi*

Islam as a religion of peace is being overshadowed by the Islam of politics. This political variant is the struggle of the small tribal clique of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) against the state, which, they feel, has marginalized them. The society is divided into tribes in FATA; the number is around 400 if all sub-clans are counted. *Pashtunwali* is the pre-Islamic Pashtun code of conduct whose effects on social dynamics in FATA have sometimes been exaggerated. FATA is an extremely poor area by any comparison. Adherence to Islamic ritualism is inbred in the lifestyle of the tribesmen, regardless of whether they really are religious or not. But before the Taliban,

Islamic extremism had never really managed to gain a foothold in the Pak-Afghan tribal belts. FATA is a complicated area to comprehend by any standards, and thus any attempt to win hearts and minds in the area needs to be augmented by intense efforts to understand the ground realities. Barring that, FATA may well continue to be branded as the 'most dangerous area in the world' for a long time to come.

### **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan: A Global Threat**

*Khuram Iqbal*

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has undergone radical transformation since its inception in December 2007. An entity that was formed to safeguard and strengthen Afghan Taliban's movement against the foreign forces in Afghanistan is gradually enhancing its global profile through its aggressive propaganda against the West in general and the US in particular. This paper seeks to measure the scale of global threat posed by TTP through a close observation and analysis of the post-9/11 shifts in the links between Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda and Pakistani Taliban. The threat assessment also incorporates the content analysis of randomly selected statements and interviews of TTP's top leadership, which provide important insights into the group's ambitions and capabilities to transform into a global entity. The paper emphasizes enhanced regional and global collaboration to counter Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which is no longer a challenge for Pakistan alone but a global threat.

# A Progressive Understanding of Pashtun Social Structures amidst Current Conflict in FATA

*Brian R. Kerr*

## 1. Introduction

The tribal areas in north-western Pakistan have been an epicenter of conflict for centuries - as many as 70 major conflicts are believed to have occurred in this region in the last 800 years.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the belligerents in these conflicts have changed over time, the ethnic Pashtun population of the region has largely remained the same. The majority of the Pashtun population occupies what is commonly referred to as the "Pashtun belt," a region straddling the British delineated Pakistan-Afghanistan border, commonly known as the Durand Line.<sup>2</sup> The Pashtuns are organized as a multi-tribal society with an estimated population of 40 million in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> Many Pakistani Pashtuns claim that they are one of the largest ethnic groups in the world without a homeland.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the Pashtuns are reputed to be the largest tribally structured society in the world.<sup>5</sup>

This paper specifically focuses on the regional Pashtun population of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the geographical centre of the Pashtun belt. More importantly, over the past decade Pakistan's tribal areas have been at the heart of the geographic and strategic efforts to combat terrorism and militancy both within Pakistan and abroad. Due to its proximity to Afghanistan - culturally and geographically - FATA has felt reverberations of the US-led war on terror.

The prevalent situation in FATA has global implications, as is evident from the ongoing row between the US and Pakistan over the Haqqani militant network based in FATA,<sup>6</sup> or the question mark over the legitimacy of US drone attacks in the region.<sup>7</sup> Multiple terrorist attacks in the West in addition to the hundreds that have jolted Pakistan have been logistically or ideologically linked to the tribal areas. The 7/7 bombings in London which was planned and orchestrated from Bajaur Agency in FATA is a clear litmus test. The foiled Barcelona bombing plot in January 2008 was also traced to FATA.<sup>8</sup> A similar example is Faisal Shahzad's recent failed attempt blow up a

car in New York's Times Square.<sup>9</sup> After his arrest, Shahzad admitted to having received training on explosives in the North Waziristan tribal region of FATA. Transnationally orchestrated attacks emanating from FATA have damaged Pakistan's strategic posturing on the global level, adding an additional political price to the cost that thousands of Pakistani civilians have paid with their lives as a result of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. In recent years, FATA has emerged as the nerve centre of global terror. As mentioned above many terrorist attacks in Pakistan and elsewhere are a direct result of the ongoing conflict in FATA.

Since the beginning of this conflict, multiple non-Pashtun actors have had a hand in influencing the political and social fabric of this strategic region. It is rather a common theme in Western literature to claim that the Taliban are an overwhelmingly Pashtun affair. While it may be true in Afghanistan, it does not apply to the Pakistani Taliban, who are loosely organized under the umbrella group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In FATA, there are a significant number of foreign militants in addition to non-Pashtun Pakistanis who are jointly responsible for the overall leadership and ideology of the insurgent campaigns.<sup>10</sup>

An unprecedented consequence of the conflict is the presence of the Pakistan Army in FATA and its continued operations and other military involvements in the area. Counterinsurgency operations in the region have often been held in populated areas and have had a severe impact on the local population, resulting in civilian deaths and mass population displacement.<sup>11</sup> Even though the region's history is rife with conflict, the influx of external agents and influences amid the current conflict has dealt unprecedented blows to the Pashtun way of life in the tribal areas.<sup>12</sup>

In recent years, there has been a shift in the US and Pakistani policies towards the region, with a greater emphasis on gaining the allegiances of the local population,<sup>13</sup> a strategy crucial for a successful counterinsurgency.<sup>14</sup> With regard to FATA, the allegiances sought by counterinsurgency forces would be exclusive to Pashtuns, hence the most important requirement is an accurate understanding of Pashtun culture. Several aspects of Pashtun culture had proven strategic utility in the past and, theoretically, could be used to counter the current militancy.

Exploration of the interplay of Pashtun social structures in the context of the ongoing militancy in FATA is the central theme of this paper. It aims to facilitate a greater understanding of the effects the current conflict has had on these characteristics of Pashtun culture, focusing on traditional governance and power structures in the region. An accurate understanding of the specific relationship between the militancy and the Pashtun social structures in FATA is crucial in gaining a comprehensive picture of the ongoing conflict that has infected the region and contributed to instability and terror felt far beyond the borders of FATA.

### **Methodology**

The pre-1970s literature addressing Pashtun culture was based on ethnographic assessments such as James W. Spain's *The Way of the Pathans*. More recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in studying Pashtun culture in the context of post-9/11 influences and conflicts. Unfortunately, these recent works often include research derived from decades-old ethnographic assessments. Reliance on these relatively old studies of Pashtun society despite the significant volatility of the society in recent decades is a testament to the difficulty involved in objectively and comprehensively conducting research in the region. The aim of this paper is to incorporate more recent information and move towards a progressive understanding of Pashtun social structures amid the ongoing militancy in FATA.

Pashtun society in its current construct largely represents a blend of both perennial and modernist approaches to ethnic nationalism. This amalgamation of the two theories means that whilst ethno-nationalist group identity is based upon historical, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic roots, the contemporary political formulation of the group is a relatively new development. With regard to the Pashtuns this is apparent as there were no efforts to become a Westphalian modelled nation-state until after the demarcation of the Durand Line in 1893, which is when the Pashtuns to the east of the Durand Line became citizens of a different country.<sup>15</sup> It was only after the tribes were divided by an international border that efforts were made towards politically uniting all Pashtuns in an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. A consideration of the historical ties between the Pashtuns of modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan facilitates a comprehensive

understanding of the current situation in FATA. With this historical context in mind, this paper is focused on the following research questions:

1. How and to what extent has the current militancy influenced Pashtun social structures?
2. Does a re-engagement with regional Pashtun social structures represent a viable method to counter the militancy in FATA?

A largely qualitative approach incorporating a historical analysis, current literature and events, and interviews has been utilized. A range of literature on the subject has been consulted, from both Western and Pakistani authors of varying professions and perspectives. The core findings of the paper are based on over 20 interviews and discussions with Pakistani government and military officials, religious scholars, secular academics, former militants, NGO executives, politicians, journalists, and local Pashtuns.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. Pre-militancy Norms of Regional Pashtun Society**

Of initial importance is an understanding of pre-militancy characteristics of Pashtun culture in FATA in order to accurately deduce the effects of the current conflict. Formal and informal institutions of governance are addressed, including the current legal status of the region. Additionally, individual positions of power that have contributed to the social structure of Pashtuns in FATA are discussed.

### **2a. Legal Status of FATA**

Historically, the Pashtun tribes of FATA have largely been left to their local political and administrative structures, as they have been extremely reluctant to allow external meddling in their areas of influence. This trait of Pashtuns, a desire for an existence free of external influences, stems from the Pashtuns' pride of independence and individual honor. When asked, many Pashtuns do not hesitate in proclaiming that their people have been unconquered by every crusading empire that has come to the region since Alexander the Great.<sup>17</sup> While it is true that the Pashtuns have not been militarily defeated by any foreign power, such powers have exerted control over the region through significant methods which survive to this day. Most pertinent is the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) of 1901, a British colonial era set of laws, which is

instrumental in governing the region even today and limits the central government's writ to territory along a few main roads passing through FATA.<sup>18</sup> Under the FCR, FATA has a different administrative status from the rest of Pakistan<sup>19</sup> and is divided into seven tribal agencies, or districts, loosely based on tribal divides.<sup>20</sup> The FCR was devised as a means to ensure relative stability in the region by limiting the effects of marauding tribes coming to the settled areas, and sought to preserve British interests in the region.<sup>21</sup> It advocates acts such as collective punishment and arbitrary detention, and invokes a great deal of authority on the British delineated political agent—a representative of the federal government in the tribal agency—whilst undermining traditional modes of Pashtun governance.<sup>22</sup> The FCR has been called “...a bad law nobody can defend” by the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Recently, there have been increasing calls by Pakistani government officials and NGOs that the FCR should be substantially amended if not repealed altogether.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, a survey conducted in FATA indicates that the majority of the local population wishes to see a change in the legal status of the region.<sup>25</sup> However, whether the political pontificating in Islamabad will lead to a change on the ground in FATA remains to be seen.

The rest of the territory in FATA is “lawless” in the sense that the Pakistani constitutional guarantees do not apply in these areas. Despite this lack of central control, until recently there have always been regional forums of governance, some more formal than others, which have endeavored to maintain order and stability.

## **2b. Traditional Social Structures**

In FATA, a social institution as well as certain individual positions of power have been influential in the pre-militancy structure and governance of Pashtun society. The only notable governing institution within the Pashtun social fabric is that of *jirga* (assembly or council of elders), which acts as a mechanism for conflict resolution among Pashtun tribes at all levels of society. With regard to influential individuals in the pre-militancy era, political agents, *maliks*, and tribal elders all held positions of authority. They had key roles in the Pashtun society in FATA that could be governed, or at least monitored, first by the British colonizers and later by the Pakistani government.

**Jirga:** The Pashtuns claim *jirga* was originally modelled on the ancient Greek democratic forum and continues to be "...a close approach to Athenian democracy."<sup>26</sup> Irrespective of the veracity of this claim, it is certain that *jirga* is at the very core of the Pashtun social structure and has encouraged relative regional stability. In pre-militancy FATA, *jirga* did have some legal legitimacy from Islamabad, but its real strength came from its engrained social legitimacy. A Pashtun must abide by a *jirga* ruling or risk expulsion from the community.<sup>27</sup> The primary function of *jirga* has always been to resolve conflicts at all levels of society, intra-tribal and inter-tribal disputes are both within its scope.<sup>28</sup> Notably the principal goal of *jirga* is not to dispense justice in the Western sense, but rather to resolve conflict. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, director of Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre and Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Peshawar and an expert on Pashtun culture, states, "[the purpose of] *Jirga* is to resolve the situation[,] not go to the root of the problem."<sup>29</sup> *Jirga* decisions must be unanimous, and deliberations can continue for days, until every party involved has come to an agreement.<sup>30</sup> A *jirga* is authorized to raise a *lashkar* (tribal militia) to implement its decisions if disagreement emerges after the unanimous ruling.<sup>31</sup> In recent history though, *jirga's* greatest weakness has been a lack of power to implement its decisions.<sup>32</sup> *Jirga* deliberations resulting in a lack of implementation has increased as external actors in the region became more involved and controlled traditional forums of Pashtun governance in FATA.

**Political Agents:** These individuals are government-sponsored elders, federal civil bureaucrats, who serve as the official intermediaries between the government and the tribes. They impose the government's will to the best as they can in FATA and to a lesser extent represent the desires of the Pashtun tribes to the government.<sup>33</sup> One political agent is appointed in each of the seven tribal agencies of FATA, under whom are the regionally appointed *maliks*.

**Maliks and Mullahs:** *Maliks* were the traditional powerbrokers of Pashtun communities in FATA. Historically, *maliks* tended to be wealthy landowners whose power passed along hereditarily. When the British attempted to assert their control on the Pashtun population they utilized the *malik* system via political agents in order to gain some control in the region.<sup>34</sup> Since the creation of Pakistan, the federal government has largely used the same methodology to govern the tribes. In the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, close to 37,000 *maliks*

were given the authority to vote on behalf of the entire population of FATA.<sup>35</sup> It is important to note that *maliks* have never enjoyed popular support among the population of FATA. Widespread corruption, human rights abuses and resulting international pressure forced the Pakistani government to begin modifying the *malik*-government relationship.<sup>36</sup> In 1997 the Pakistani government gave universal adult franchise to the residents of FATA and dealt the "first major blow to the political hegemony of the hereditary institution of *maliks*."<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, a shift of regional power and authority from *maliks* to *mullahs* (clerics or religious leaders in general) was already under way in the last quarter of the 20th century. It is now well documented that a policy of Islamization was adopted by the regime of military ruler General Ziaul Haq towards FATA in the 1970s and 1980s to counter the former Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, *mullahs* saw their political power and influence increase to an unprecedented level.<sup>39</sup> Previously, *mullahs* had very little political significance in FATA. They were only invited to *jirgas* to offer advice on religious matters, and were not allowed to vote in *jirga* rulings.<sup>40</sup> By the time Taliban influences started emerging in FATA, regional governance was already in an unstable position, as the shift of authority from *maliks* to *mullahs* was challenging established methods of regional Pashtun governance.

**Tribal Elders:** Before the current conflict unfolded in FATA, there were thousands of elders across the region who were members of *jirgas* and could be counted as part of the social power structure of FATA. These elders, exclusively male, were elected from their villages to represent their communities. A village of 10 to 15 homes would generally elect one elder to represent them.<sup>41</sup> This process has prevailed across FATA for centuries, and is the principle reason some considered tribal governance within FATA to be widely representative.<sup>42</sup>

### **3. Ramifications of Militancy for Pashtun Social Structures in FATA**

The current conflict in FATA has had severe consequences for traditional Pashtun social structures in the region. Pashtun society has been systematically targeted as part of militants' strategy with aims to weaken the local populations and to create an environment that is more susceptible to militants' ideology and control. Additionally, non-Pashtun influences on the

region, from the other side of the war on terror, have substantially led to the crumbling of already weakened traditional power structures. The institution of *jirga* as well as the individual positions of power such as *maliks*, *mullahs*, and tribal elders have experienced significant consequences as a result of the ongoing wave of violence in FATA.

*Jirga*: In recent years, the regional construct of *jirga* has undergone significant changes as a consequence of the current conflict. These changes have had an impact on other facets of Pashtun culture as *jirga* is the fundamental social institution of traditional Pashtun life in FATA.<sup>43</sup> The overarching integrity of Pashtun society in FATA has been challenged by the militants' systematic targeting *jirgas* in the region, as attacks on *jirgas* have proven to have a significant strategic utility for the militant insurgency.

*Jirga* has been an intrinsic feature of this region for centuries, and the intentional targeting of *jirgas* is definitively non-Pashtun in nature.<sup>44</sup> This tactic is indicative of the foreign militant ideology that has risen to prominence in recent years. There have been a number of attacks against *jirgas*, most recently a suicide attack on a peace *jirga* in Mohmand Agency that killed over 100 people and injured many more.<sup>45</sup> Another instance is the October 2008 attack in upper Orakzai Agency when a bomber drove an explosives-laden truck into a *jirga* meeting that had just voted to raise a *lashkar* in order to secure their region and counter the spreading militancy.<sup>46</sup>

The attacks on *jirgas* have had multiple effects beyond the immediate carnage. First, the attacks are responsible for the lack of *jirga* meetings in general and large *jirga* meetings in particular. Out of fear of assault, *jirgas* are held in private with a much smaller number of elders in attendance than earlier practice, undermining its representative nature and legitimacy. Second, these attacks have had psychological effects on the population with regard to *jirga* and traditional norms of Pashtun culture. The local populations have begun to question the ability of *jirga* to serve as an effective conflict resolution mechanism, wondering what it would be able to achieve for the population when it cannot protect itself.<sup>47</sup> This has forced the locals to seek justice from other avenues, which has directly benefited the insurgent 'administration'.

Another conflict-induced blow to the institution of *jirga* has been the rise of Taliban *shura* in certain areas of FATA. In Taliban-administered areas of

FATA, *jirgas* have all but been replaced by *shura*, a religious council that serves many of the same purposes of the traditional *jirga*, albeit by means of a different process and ideology.<sup>48</sup> A *shura* in its regional construct is not representative; members are chosen by the local militant commander with an aim to uphold the militant interpretation of *Sharia* law.<sup>49</sup> The *shura* serves to give a forum of justice to the Pashtun society in FATA at a time when no other capable social institution exists. Pashtuns who have been unable to get justice through any other means and appealed to the local *shura* credit the Taliban with providing justice at the doorstep.<sup>50</sup> At a moment of such unprecedented anarchy in FATA, any form of justice is seen as better than none at all. Notably, the interpretation of *Sharia* law invoked by these *shuras* is not compatible with many of the facets of *Pashtunwali*, literally translated as "the way of the Pashtuns", the regional ideology and the framework in which *jirga* operated.<sup>51</sup> Thus the establishment of *shuras* in some parts of the region has served to further undermine traditional Pashtun norms and ingrained a militant ideology among communities of FATA.

In the long term, a principal concern is the detrimental effect the conflict has had on the social legitimacy of the institution of *jirga* which will be felt long after the violence has ended. With the weakening of social structures in FATA the Pakistan Army has assumed a much more involved and influential role in the traditional forms of governance in FATA, especially *jirga*. The few *jirgas* that do convene in FATA are widely seen as government sponsored, and *jirga* ruling are implemented only if they are in line with the regional army doctrine.<sup>52</sup> This means that the traditionally representative and independent institution of *jirga* is now seen as being under the government's thumb. Most *jirgas* in FATA cannot currently take place without at least tacit army approval, as armed protection is often needed. This leads to a *jirga's* ability to implement its decisions being hijacked by the government agenda. That cloud hanging over the legitimacy of *jirgas* would lift only when *jirgas* are once again able to convene publicly and independently, without the involvement of government officials, and are attended by members in sufficient numbers so as to be adequately representative.

**Maliks and Mullahs:** Even before the current conflict the *malik* system was in a volatile state with pressure for amendment of the *malik*-government relationship coming from both from within Pakistan and abroad.<sup>53</sup> In the last few decades of the 20th century, *maliks* saw their influence and authority

decline as *mullahs* became more powerful in the region.<sup>54</sup> Militants in FATA were able to exploit the population's dislike for the *malik* system and its ingrained inequalities, such as the *Nikkat* system of taxation and resource allocation, whilst appealing to religious predispositions of the locals. This further accelerated the shift of regional power and authority from *maliks* to *mullahs*. *Mullahs* are now viewed by many as the real powerbrokers of the region as many *maliks* have fled to Peshawar or to Islamabad, and most of the few who remain in FATA have very little power or influence.<sup>55</sup>

*Mullahs* on the other hand have seen a great increase in their authority and influence. For instance, NGOs conducting development projects in FATA have been known to contribute financially to regional *mullahs'* coffers in order to gain initial permission as well as continued support for their work.<sup>56</sup> Further evidence of *mullahs'* authority and support among the people was witnessed in a survey conducted in 2009 which found *mullahs* to be the most trusted figures in FATA.<sup>57</sup> This rise of *mullahs* as the predominant regional individual powerbroker is unprecedented for Pashtun society, and is indicative of the extent to which the ongoing militancy is affecting regional cultural norms that have existed for centuries.

***Tribal elders:*** The Tribal elders have been intentionally targeted by militants in all agencies of FATA. The exact number of those who have been killed is not known, although estimates fluctuate between 600 and 1,000.<sup>58</sup> As the elders have been local leaders with the widest popular support base and maintained close ties between the locals and the regional governing structures, their deaths have had a significant effect on Pashtun society.<sup>59</sup> The identity of those responsible for the murders is not known in many cases, as rarely does an organisation take responsibility for targeted killings of FATA-based tribal elders.<sup>60</sup> However, it is apparent that regardless of the perpetrators, the killings serve the purposes of the militant insurgency.<sup>61</sup>

The targeting of tribal elders has given a two-pronged strategic advantage to the militants. Firstly, eliminating tribal elders created a physical power vacuum which the militant commanders were able to fill in the early days of the insurgency, managing to get a foothold in some communities in the region. According to an Afghan Pashtun elder's comments, which are equally applicable to the Pashtun in FATA, "The aim of these murders is to finish off everybody in this society who has the potential to lead the society in the

future, and who can lead them toward peace and stability. Anybody who is identified as such has been eliminated."<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the targeted killings of elders had a significant psychological impact on the populations of FATA. The lack of trusted and experienced regional leaders has done much to quell dissent for the militants in certain communities, as well as challenge interrelated Pashtun structures such as *jirga*.<sup>63</sup>

The conflict has taken Pashtun social structures in FATA to a stage where traditional forums of authority and governance have been substantially eroded. The traditional structures have been replaced by *mullahs* and militants who largely do not view the local population as a people to govern and live amongst but as a necessary accessory to the insurgency. The militants are only answerable to their *amir* (militant commander) and have no regard for *Pashtunwali*.<sup>64</sup> As Naveed Shinwari states, "Taliban culture and Pashtun culture are not compatible."<sup>65</sup> If the militancy continues, however, it is possible that what we once knew to be Pashtun society will be marginalized to such an extent that it will be fully enveloped by the ongoing militancy.

#### **4. Utility of Traditional Pashtun Social Structures in the Counter Militancy Effort**

Re-engaging with traditional Pashtun social structures for regional peace and stability might initially sounds like an effective option to counter militancy in FATA, as doing so would appeal to the local population and could be instrumental in gaining their allegiance; a central aim of the counterinsurgency effort.<sup>66</sup> However, advocating a blanket return to the pre-militancy norms of the Pashtun society in FATA is neither a reliable nor currently realistic method to counter the militancy. Political and social progress must be the central theme to the counterinsurgency in order to ensure that the principal motivations of the population for aligning with militants do not return. Moreover, the Pashtun society in FATA has been decimated to such an extent that social governance mechanisms currently are too weak to be appealed to in the current security climate. The area in question must first be militarily held and cleared of militants before progressive social structures can be utilized in the peace-building process.

Progress in FATA necessarily entails further changes to key structures of Pashtun culture as well as external support of those traditional governing

mechanisms which prove to be capable of progressive evolution. Dr. Idrees Khan argues that without social and developmental progress in FATA the militancy will never be countered, and although progress will necessarily further change Pashtun traditional norms, certain progress is mandatory for the successful countering of the militancy.<sup>67</sup> Importantly, neither Taliban administrations, *mullahs*, *maliks*, nor the FCR are the progressive methods for the governing of FATA. Social and political progress will not come easily to the region; there are a myriad of obstacles that must be overcome. For instance, even if the FCR were to be repealed, many argue that it would quickly be replaced by *Sharia* law, which under a militant administration would be equally, if not more, counter-productive and counter-productive for regional peacemaking efforts. However, it is possible that empowering certain social structures such as representative *jirgas* and elected tribal elders rather than hereditary *maliks* could lead to significant headway in the counterinsurgency.

*Jirga* has shown itself to be a potentially progressive means of bringing a level of stability to FATA via conflict mediation, and has been advocated as a 'local solution' to militancy.<sup>68</sup> The evolving role of *jirga* in regional conflict resolution has already been seen in other areas of Pakistan. For instance in Swat, a Pashtun-dominated district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a *jirga* expelled the families of militants who refused to stop fighting, thereby eliminating their local support base. However, the *jirga* had only ruled that the families must be expelled from the area. The ruling was implemented by Pakistan Army personnel, indicating once again the current weakness of *jirga* and the increased role of the army in Pashtun governance.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, experience has shown that the institution of *jirga* does bring a potential utility to the counterinsurgency effort, albeit with little success in FATA as yet.

However, utilizing *jirga* as a regional conflict resolution mechanism is in itself problematic for now. The institution of *jirga* in FATA cannot survive without overt support from the government due to the threat of attacks from militants, but if there is explicit government support, as is necessary to counter potential militant threats, *jirga* will lose its credibility as a socially legitimate institution of conflict resolution. This quandary is the first hurdle that must be overcome, inevitably through military means, before *jirga* can begin to be re-engaged in the restoration of stability to FATA.

Unfortunately, many other social structures in FATA from the pre-militancy era cannot be counted upon to provide a progressive means of conflict resolution. For instance, *maliks* and political agents have their livelihoods invested into their positions and therefore have very strong incentives for returning to a situation resembling the pre-militancy era as this would facilitate reclamation of the authority and influence they once commanded.<sup>70</sup> A government-backed resurgence of this system of governance could prove counter-productive to the counterinsurgency effort as it would further alienate the local population which could encourage at least tacit support of militant outfits operating in FATA.

There needs to be a greater amount of stability in the region before Pashtun social structures such as *jirga* can play a role in the peace-building process. There is currently very little capacity of traditional Pashtun governance to counter the militancy, its real strength and utility will come once a measure of peace is attained by military operations. Only then can traditional Pashtun society begin to play a substantial role in rebuilding and governing the local population.

## **5. Conclusion**

The conflict in FATA has serious global ramifications. Thus, an understanding of the roles and influences of regional Pashtun culture within the context of the ongoing insurgency is of the utmost importance. The myriad complexities of regional Pashtun society must be taken into account when formulating a comprehensive picture of the ongoing conflict in FATA. A blend of Pashtun governance and societal structures aided by an influx of infrastructure and development could be a realistic, long-term peace-building mechanism in the region. However, before applying this model, a stable security climate is necessary and militant administrations must be eliminated at the very least.

As the above research argues the militancy in FATA has had devastating effects on traditional norms of regional Pashtun society. As a result of the conflict, antagonists from both sides of the war on terror have compromised traditional social structures in pursuit of their respective objectives. The conflict has degraded regional social structures to such an extent that militant administrations have seized control of many areas of FATA.

*Understanding of Pashtun Social Structures in FATA*

While the assaults on Pashtun social constructions have left regional Pashtun society severely weakened, the Pashtun social structures still have a potential utility in the peace process. Although the real usefulness of progressive Pashtun social structures such as *jirga* will not materialize until a relatively secure situation is created in FATA. The necessary security climate conducive to a nascent growth of Pashtun society can only be brought about by military means, once this is achieved Pashtun culture and progressive social structures can play a principal role in the peace-building process. Until such a time, Pashtun society in FATA will remain decimated, and its potential utility in the counterinsurgency unrealized.

Notes

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- 1 Naveed Ahmed Shinwari, director of Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP), an NGO working with underprivileged communities in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Interview with the author, Islamabad, June 2010.
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- 15 Bijan Omrani, "The Durand Line: History and Problems of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border," *Asian Affairs*, 40: 2, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 188-189.

- 16 Names of some of the people interviewed have been changed on account of the current security situation. Where applicable, the positions of those interviewed have been stated.
- 17 Ali Mehsud, Peshawar-based journalist, interview with the author, Peshawar, June 2010.
- 18 Thomas H. Johnson, "On the Edge of the Big Muddy," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No.2, (Washington: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2007), p.110. The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, Article 246, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part12.ch3.html>, accessed on July 5, 2010.
- 19 The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, Article 246, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part12.ch3.html>, accessed on July 5, 2010.
- 20 The seven agencies of FATA (from north to south) are Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan. Additionally, there are six Frontier Regions (FRs) which are geographically adjoined to the agencies of FATA. However these FRs are legally provincially administered, giving them the title of PATA or Provincially Administered Tribal Areas.
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- 43 Dr. Qibla Ayaz, interview with the author, Peshawar, July 2010.
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# Understanding FATA

*Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi*

The Afghan Islamists' political failure to produce realistic agendas for change<sup>1</sup> is cited by some analysts as an example of the failure of political Islam. Some others however argue that Muslim societies seem to have been characterized in the 20th century by two contradictory structures. The clan, tribe and ethnic group does not seem to exist in a peaceful equilibrium with the state and religion.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is usually the small group versus the larger faith, or the tribe versus the Ummah, or the religious clique against the state which has been the main focus of commitment, as opposed to tension against the state. This 'dualism', if you will, also manifests itself in the paradigms of Islam as opposed to Islamism, or the more commonly (but inappropriately) used term 'fundamentalism'. It is important to differentiate between the two; either all connections between them are cleanly severed, or they remain interconnected, in which case Islam gets paradigmatically linked to the latter. Of course, identifying Islam with fundamentalism, which in itself is an inadequate term for expressing this phenomenon, only adds to the intensity of the furor of Islamophobia.<sup>3</sup> Islam as a religion of peace is being overshadowed by the Islam of politics, which vies against the state for expression of its grievances. This political variant is the struggle of the small tribal clique of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) against the state, which, they feel, has marginalized them. It is then a conjunction of traditional grievances, which have joined hands with the rebound phenomenon of radicalism 'coming home to roost' as it were, from neighboring Afghanistan. Thus, an insight into the tribal socio-economic and socio-political dynamics is just as important as understanding the religious indoctrination, which has prompted the tribal *lashkars* (raiding parties) to take on the form of a formidable army.

The Pashtuns of FATA and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (called the North West Frontier Province until early 2010), along with their sizeable populations in Pakistan's Balochistan province and Karachi city in the Sindh province, account for 38-40 million people. FATA forms a 1,200-kilometer wedge between Afghanistan and the settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the 1998 national census, close to 3.2 million people (the current

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estimate is 3.5 million) live in FATA, which covers an area of 27,220 square kilometers. The Durand Line divided Pashtun tribes between British India and Afghanistan in 1893, and since then this delineation has been viewed with great contempt and resentment by Pashtuns, the principal ethnic group of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After Pakistan's emergence in 1947, this line became a major source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Pashtuns have been subject to invasions throughout history. The invaders have left their marks on the area in the form of genealogy. Many Pathans have the admixture of blood of various warriors who passed through this area, for instance, the Afridis have "an admixture of Greek blood."<sup>4</sup> The Mongols under Genghis Khan and Timur Lane managed to subdue these areas; the region which includes "Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of Pakistan ...(which) have seen perhaps more invasions in the course of history than any other country in Asia, or indeed in the world."<sup>5</sup> Even in the face of great armies, the Pashtuns retained their independence and fierce tribal loyalties, a source of great pride to them.

The British colonial administrators of India tried to control them by various methods; proxy wars, installation of 'friendly' governments and direct intervention. Failed attempts at direct rule encouraged the British to introduce the Sandeman system, whose effect was the raising of tribal levies, or Khasadars, which institution survives even today. It consisted of ruling this unruly area by building roads and infrastructure with the help of local Maliks, who could control the loyalties of the tribes. In return, Maliks got large grants and subsidies. The British issued a new Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) in 1901, replacing the earlier generation of laws. A typical colonial device of vesting the executive with judicial powers was introduced to enable the former to be an absolutist source of power in the area. The FCR is a set of draconian laws more in tune with medieval times than the 21st century. "The most notorious sections of the regulations are 21-24 that deal with the issue of collective territorial responsibility. These are particularly problematic clauses which have empowered the political agent—the principal representative of the federal government in a tribal district—to punish an entire tribe or clan for crimes committed on its territory by imposing fines, arresting individuals, seizing and even demolishing property anywhere in the country."<sup>6</sup>

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In 2008, with the coming into power of the new government in Pakistan, the issue of repeal of FCR was raised. The FATA tribesmen are still confused over whether the FCR should be reformed and/or repealed or not. One thing, however, is clear: they want an end to the unlimited powers of the political agents and support the institution of the tribal Jirga to become all powerful.<sup>7</sup> Another tribal point of view is that the Islamic system of Shariah should be introduced, phasing out the FCR. Some assert that the Jirga should be democratically elected.<sup>8</sup> As a substitute to democracy, unelected Jirga leaders from the region were invited to become full members of successive elected National Assemblies of Pakistan to represent FATA until 1997. In 1996, the federal government decided to introduce adult franchise for the first time in FATA for the elections held in 1997.

The society is divided into tribes in FATA. An approximate system of enumerating the tribes puts the number at around 60; the number is around 400 if all sub-clans are counted. Pashtunwali is the pre-Islamic Pashtun code of conduct which has regulated the intra and inter tribal dynamics. It is more a set of principles than codified law. Honor and chivalry occupy a central theme in this tradition, along with undying loyalty to the tribe, and fierce opposition to occupation. This code consists of core elements of Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), Melmastia (hospitality), Nanawatay (forgiveness) and Hamsaya (neighbor).

However, the effects of Pashtunwali on social dynamics in FATA have sometimes been exaggerated. It may be more fruitful to try to understand the FATA society through the lens of social solidarity which exists in group structures like tribes and clans. For this, it may be relevant to refer back to an early Muslim social scientist Ibn-e-Khaldun, whose treatise the *Muqqadimah* has been celebrated as one of the most profound works in social dynamics.

Khaldunian logic gives social solidarity an enabling and inhibiting<sup>9</sup> effect which essentially creates a public benefit in people coming together by enhancing the capacity of a group. When a tribal society like FATA adheres to its group values at the levels of the tribe, clan, family, nation etc., there is a conscious effort at the level of the members of the particular group to try and approximate their value to an ideal set of behavior, which has been transmitted intact by preceding generations. Khaldun called this group solidarity *Assabiyya*.

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There is a dark side to Assabiyya. When it remains inflexible and rigid, it breaks down into tyranny. Excessive Assabiyya also leads to rigidity and can be counterproductive to secular notions of democracy, as demonstrated by the monarchy of Saudi Arabia, which has built up from a tribal-based structure into a nation state. Social capital which is nurtured by Assabiyya has been criticized by theorists as being elitist and exclusive, for example, social capital that is created by “buddy” relationships on the golf course is limited in its membership, and therefore is inaccessible to the majority of people, especially women. Though it seems poles apart, the same relationships work in a patriarchal society like FATA, where males exert dominance in public life to the exclusion of women. When a conservative tribal-based society like FATA tries to counter the onslaught of globalization by closing ranks, it sometimes tends to fossilize its tribal paradigms to the exclusion of enlightenment.

FATA is an extremely poor area by any comparison. “There are few livelihood opportunities available to the people. The local economy is chiefly pastoral, with agriculture practised in a few fertile valleys. Most households are engaged in primary-level activities such as subsistence agriculture and livestock rearing, or small-scale business conducted locally.”<sup>10</sup> A telling statistic for FATA is that the population of around 3.5 million has so little arable land that each acre of cultivable land has to be utilized for supporting at least 40 people. In the absence of viable options to earn a living, the lure of illicit activities such as smuggling (of consumer goods and weapons) and drug trafficking is as difficult to resist as the call of extremist Islamist elements.<sup>11</sup>

“No systematic quantitative data is available on poverty. What is known, however, is that poverty in the tribal areas is high compared to the rest of Pakistan. The results of a recent participatory assessment, meanwhile, reveal the existence of a nuanced system of determining social status, involving more than a dozen classifications for poverty including miskeen (meek), aajiz (needy), ghareeb (poor), faqeer (beggar), bechara (pitiable), spera (hungry or unfortunate), tabah-o-barbad (destroyed), khwaar (frustrated) and bebakht (unlucky).”<sup>12</sup> It is indeed an ironic state of affairs, since the preceding information is an official version of the socio-economic indicators, provided on the Government of Pakistan’s FATA website. The literacy rate in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas is 17.42 percent, which is below the

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43.92 percent average in Pakistan. Only 29.51 percent of the males and a mere 3 percent of females receive education.<sup>13</sup> Electricity is free and no taxes are collected. Only about 7 percent land is cultivable. There is one hospital bed for every 2,179 people in FATA, and one doctor for every 7,670 people. Only 43 percent of FATA citizens have access to clean drinking water.<sup>14</sup>

It does seem that the inherent structural imbalances in distributive social justice in FATA have left gaping wounds, which the extremist project is quick to exploit. One of the reasons for militancy in the tribal areas may very well be the legitimacy deficit both on the political and economic fronts; for instance the unemployment rate for the 15-25 years age group in Waziristan is above 80 percent.<sup>15</sup> With such abysmal statistics, it hardly needs a huge stretch of imagination to conceptualize that the unemployed youths may be attracted towards militancy as a way of venting their grievances. It is pertinent to mention here that many of the vigilante acts of the Taliban in FATA have been endorsed by the local populace, since these are seen as non-discriminatory acts aimed at punishing criminals. In an area where the locals have traditionally complained of ineffective governance, a heightened local sense of security may be a driving factor swelling the ranks of Taliban followers.<sup>16</sup>

Now the question arises as to how and why FATA remained in complete isolation from the rest of the Pakistani society, to the extent that the permeation of extremism has started affecting the settled areas of the country. The roots of this variance can easily be traced back to the period of British occupation, when a tacit agreement was arrived at between the British rulers and the tribals, for a power-sharing formula involving the representation of tribals through a congregation of their elders known as the Jirga. The British government was represented through their state functionaries, forming a part of their well-organized and well-trained Indian Political Service, a department of the Indian Civil Service during the British Raj. This system was evolved in consequence of the realization that it was more or less impossible to maintain law and order in the settled districts like Peshawar, unless the tribals were paid a fixed sum for keeping the roads open and safe for travelers, with the British seldom interfering in their local customs and traditions. These arrangements were found functionally satisfactory for the maintenance of law and order through Frontier Constabulary and Khasadars, the informal paramilitary force recruited from the tribes, and formed an

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integral part of the civilian security forces. Rebellion against the British and violation of law was further encouraged due to scarce agriculture and other resources for employment; hence the Government looked the other way to smuggling and large-scale establishment of weapons factories as cottage industry for want of an alternative.

The Durand frontier line between Pakistan and Afghanistan was also a nominal demarcation, as the tribes were spread across the region on both sides of the border. The tribes were given a safe conduct for movement across the border, and *powindahs*, or nomadic tribals, moved freely across the border in search of food and shelter against the onslaughts of weather. Afghan designs on this territory are also germane to this problem.

Geographical contiguity and porous borders with Afghanistan, along with shared tribal and religious affiliations make these areas more akin to Afghanistan, rather than Pakistan. The present Pak-US joint intervention in South Waziristan is an extension of the past, where criminals (and now terrorists) could easily find safe havens and recruiting grounds in these geographically sequestered areas of the country. Whereas the reasons for this new development could possibly be socio-political, or ethnic, extremism catches on fastest if given a religious tinge. Amid the absence of education and economic opportunity, the masses are susceptible to manipulation by indoctrinators for revenge, who exploit their religious sentiments. The most viable educational institutions are the madrassas since they are backed by religious sanction. These generally free board and lodging seminaries prepare militants and Jihadis for exploiting the popular disillusionment in the existing socio-political scenario.

There has been a physical and cognitive divide between the FATA areas and the settled ones ever since Pakistan gained independence in 1947. The world changes almost unrecognizably beyond a flimsy barrier separating an urban centre like Peshawar from a FATA area like Darra Adam Khel. The open display of weapons is perhaps the most striking change, accompanied by stark socio-economic deprivation. Women almost completely disappear from public view, and the area is conspicuous by a near complete lack of women's educational institutions. The few institutions for women's education are often poorly attended. The state's writ is represented not by the regular police but by tribal levies. In many parts of FATA it had often been impossible even

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before 9/11 to enter without the permission of the political agent or sans a military/paramilitary escort, especially for foreigners. These areas have remained relatively isolated from the rest of the society due to a strong cultural identity. This is a classic example of what social anthropologists analyzing cultural relativism interpret as a case of a culture closing ranks for fear of being wiped out,<sup>17</sup> but in the process, fossilizing itself to the exclusion of enlightenment. Thus, the FATA areas would seem a most logical choice for radical movements like militant extremism to take root. Is it incredible to grasp that the children born and bred in extreme poverty and difficult circumstances are attracted towards the religious seminaries that not only guarantee them a square meal but also eternal life in paradise for sacrificing their life, which has been extremely mundane in this material world? Is there not a possibility that a person inculcated with this extreme ideology finds all others not adherent to it as *Wajibul Qatl*,<sup>18</sup> especially when he perceives a huge class divide and inequity around him? These are questions which are beginning to demand urgent answers in the Pakistani society, with the ideology represented above presenting a clear cognitive divide between the urban and the tribal society.

It is thus important to comprehend the ideological base for the Taliban movement so as to clearly demarcate the neo-theological discourse it bases its rationale upon. The answer lies in transmigration of extremism from a neighboring country. In Afghanistan, Afghan communists and Taliban as the pinnacle of Islamic extremism were the two dominant ideologies of the past decades. Both tried to impose radical change on a traditional social structure by a revolution from the top, which only resulted in an exponential increase in chaos. Their failure to account for the strong bonds of tribalism and ethnicity in the complex equation of social change, which they wanted to produce instantaneously, was a major reason for their failure.

The Taliban in Pakistan attempted the same in an even more circumscribed area, where tribalism had been the main source of inspiration for centuries. It is doubtful from the very onset that they would succeed; once the army operations started in the area with commitment and resolve, the troops have made significant headway on all fronts. The Taliban had initially set out as an Islamic reform movement and, before they had started indulging in cruelties, had succeeded in gaining some popularity as well. The Taliban

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were acting in the spirit of jihad when they attacked the rapacious warlords around them in Afghanistan. This degenerated into autocracy and ethnic killing in the name of the Taliban interpretation of jihad. This alienated the non-Pashtuns in Afghanistan, since the ethnic minorities saw them as using Islam as a cover to exterminate non-Pashtuns.

While examining the religious lineage of FATA, it is worthwhile to trace the influence of Sufism on the Pak-Afghan tribal areas. Comprehension of the religious milieu of FATA demands a close look at the politico-religious evolution of Islam in Afghanistan, since both are now inextricably linked. Many commentators, particularly western ones, err in assuming that the Taliban's religious ideology in the Pak-Afghan border region was a distillation of a radicalized Islamist thought process in Afghanistan which had always been there. But history shows otherwise. Sufism was a moderating factor for Islam in Afghanistan in particular; this being the trend of mystical Islam, which originated in Central Asia and Persia. There were two main Sufi orders in Afghanistan; Naqshbandiyah and Qadiriya. These provided a separate track of resistance to the Soviets by their network of associations and alliances outside the mujahideen parties and ethnic groups. These were quite influential; the Mujaddadi families were leaders of the Naqshbandiyah, their most prominent member being Sibghatullah Mujaddadi,<sup>19</sup> the head of Jabha-i Najat Milli Afghanistan (National Liberation Front of Afghanistan) set up in Peshawar. Later, he was a president of Afghanistan in 1992, as chairman of the Jihad Council. The other important Sufi order was epitomized by Pir Sayed Ahmad Gilani.<sup>20</sup> He set up the Mahaz-e-Milli in Peshawar. Even though Mujaddadi and Pir Gilani were leaders of mujahideen groups, their views were too moderate to 'suit' the jihad. This was also due to the fact that they were relatively moderate Muslims (as opposed to other warlords), and had their own conceptions about the conduct of warfare.

Adherence to Islamic ritualism is inbred in the lifestyle of the Afghan and Pakistani tribals, regardless of whether they really are religious or not. The panoply of adherents includes former Afghan king Zahir Shah, communist pro-Russian ministers, and Mujahideen warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Islam in the Pak-Afghan tribal belts has historically been ritualistic but at the same time laissez faire, and not at all the 'push it down your throat' type it has now become.<sup>21</sup> Religious minorities such as Sikhs,

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Hindus and Jews had enjoyed minimal persecution in Afghanistan; in fact they were quite wealthy and controlled the money markets. Similarly, there were large Sikh communities living in Orakzai Agency in Pakistan, which virtually controlled the money markets in the area. Even the Afghan and FATA mullah was a laissez faire variety of preacher who would admonish people for not coming to prayers regularly, but would rarely preach sectarianism or politics. The year 1992 saw a watershed; this year, not coincidentally, corresponds to the Taliban gaining strength in Afghanistan.

After 1992, the brutal civil war created irreconcilable schisms within Islamic sects and ethnic groups, setting the stage for the contemporary intolerant Afghanistan. Ahmad Shah Masud's massacre of the Hazaras in Kabul in 1995, the Hazaras' massacre of the Taliban in Mazar in 1997, and the Taliban massacres of Hazaras and Uzbeks in 1998 mark brutal 'Islamocide' perpetrated by Muslims in the name of their indigenous breed of ideology.<sup>22</sup> This was a novel phenomenon in Afghanistan's history, creating the present religious divides. Minority groups all but fled the country after the ethnocide cited above and the Taliban's anti-Shia program, and transformed the fiercely independent tribalism of the Afghans into militant fundamentalism.

Eighty percent of people in Afghanistan belong to the Sunni Hanafi sect, which is generally considered to be the most liberal of the four Sunni schools of thought.<sup>23</sup> The minority strains were the Shia Islam of the Hazaras in the Hazarajat, the beliefs of scattered Pashtun tribes, Tajiks and Heratis, and the Ismaelis, followers of the Aga Khan. Even though there is no separation of politics from religion, the Sunni Hanafi creed prevalent in Afghanistan for ages admirably suited the loose Afghan confederation politics, since it was quite flexible; tribalism being the preferred state of government, and state interference was kept to a minimum. Since many commentators assume the present state of heightened religiosity in FATA to the Afghan jihad, it is important to contextualize the current radicalization of FATA as a transmigration of these tendencies from neighboring Afghanistan. Similarly, Deobandi Islam never really had a foothold in FATA until the Afghan jihad started. The Pashtun village mullahs were the centre of village and social life, and Jirga the preferred adjudicative body.

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Formal education was largely provided in small madrassas where students or Talibs studied the basic tenets of religious education. Herat was a central nucleus of learning in Afghanistan, which attracted students from FATA as well. From the seventeenth century onwards, Talibs aspiring to a higher level of religious learning traveled to Central Asia, Egypt and India to study at more renowned madrassas. Islam was also embedded in the political structure in Afghanistan because Shariah law governed the legal processes as late as 1925; a civil legal code was introduced to enable the two systems to co-exist. Shariah Faculty was set up at Kabul University in 1946.<sup>24</sup> A protégé of this eclectic mix was Muhammad Musa Shafiq, the populist last prime minister under the monarchy, who was later executed by the communists. Shafiq combined all these strands of education, having been educated at a madrassa, followed by studies at the Kabul University Shariah Faculty, and a degree from Columbia University in New York.

As the emphasis was more on tribalism than religious inclinations, the more traditional tribal-based parties as opposed to radical one were preferred by the Afghan Ulema. In the beginning of the Afghan jihad, most joined Harakat Inqilabi-Islami, headed by Maulana Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, and Hizb-e-Islami, led by Maulvi Younis Khalis.<sup>25</sup> Both men were Maulvis (religious leaders) who had studied for a time at the Haqqani madrassa in Pakistan, and then established their own madrassas in Afghanistan. After the Soviet invasion, they set up organizations which were decentralized, non-ideological and non-hierarchical, but they rapidly lost out as the weapons suppliers supported the more radical Islamic parties.

Before the Taliban, Islamic extremism had never really managed to gain a foothold in the Pak-Afghan tribal belts. The Wahabi sect, for example, spread from Central Asia and India, but was a movement of inconsequential importance before the ascendancy of the Taliban. However, the Saudis preferred to fund the Wahabi warlords; an early export was Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who set up a Wahabi party, the Ittehad-e-Islami, in Peshawar. He can be characterized as the archetypical conservative, "anti-West," "anti-American" and hard line Islamic fundamentalist. He was a scion of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, and a member of the Afghan group Akhwan-ul-Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) founded in 1969 by Gulbeddin Hikmetyar and Dr. Syed Burhanuddin Rabbani. This was defined by some as just a

chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Sayyaf cultivated a close relationship with Osama bin Laden, establishing a network of training camps, bunkers and emplacements in the Jalalabad area with mutual collaboration, which were later utilized by Al Qaeda militants.<sup>26</sup> The Wahabi strain of puritanical thought was further distilled in the Salafi thought process of Afghans. Ordinary Afghans however viewed this movement with disdain, because of their traditional and deep-seated suspicion of anything foreign. Even Bin Laden, when he joined the Afghan jihad, was considered an 'outsider'; however, in war, finances tend to get depleted at an alarming rate and freely available money is welcome, which eventually enabled him to win a small Pashtun following. However, Arab 'Mujahideen' continued to be treated as outsiders by Afghans, who were not above murdering them at times out of disdain for their 'arrogance' and what the Afghans perceived as their 'holier than thou' attitudes.

Pakistan had provided sanctuary to Hikmetyar and Masud even before the Soviet invasion, since 1975 to be precise, when both had been forced to flee Afghanistan after failed uprisings against President Muhammad Daud. Pakistani President Ziaul Haq was thus the supporter of both these groups. Masud however was a commander with a mind of his own, leaving Hikmetyar as the sole recipient of the cash flowing in. Not coincidentally, Hikmetyar was also the most radical minded of all mujahideen. The continued Pakistani support for him sometimes flew in the face of facts on ground; he was not very well accepted in Kabul, Masud having greater credibility in the eyes of ordinary Afghans.

It can thus be seen that the ideological sanction for the Taliban was basically imposed by external sources, the most militant ideologies competing for the cash and ammunition. Pakistan was the main indoctrination base for the Taliban ideology; it follows naturally that the Pakistani Taliban have imbibed the philosophy from the infrastructure of madrassas remaining largely intact, despite ineffectual efforts by the Pakistani authorities to regulate their curriculum.

It would also be relevant to have a closer look at the inhabitants of the tribal agencies in FATA and their mutual relations to gain insight into the tribal worldview. North Waziristan is home to about 375,000 people, mainly belonging to the Wazir and Dawar tribes. Many militant tribal leaders have

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become legendary figures in the area. This has remained a largely reactionary area even after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, even though many tribesmen are enrolled in the Pakistan Army. The strong Pashtun identity of these people has meant that they relate more with Afghanistan than Pakistan. South Waziristan is the largest of the seven tribal agencies in FATA in size, having a population of about 425,000 people, mainly from Mehsud and Wazir tribes. Both tribes are renowned as formidable warriors and frequent blood feuds erupt between the two even today. According to historian Sir Olaf Caroe, the Mehsud tribe would never consider submitting to a foreign power that has entered their land. Nek Muhammad was a legendary militant leader from this agency, who was succeeded by Baitullah Mehsud. Bajaur's prominent tribes are Tarkani and Utmankhel. Over the years, there have been some unconfirmed media reports about Osama bin Laden hiding in the area. In Khyber Agency, the main inhabitants are the Afridis and the Shinwaris. Afridis have been known in history as good fighters and respectful to Sufis (mystics) and their shrines, which intellectually aligns them with Bareilvi Sunnis, the antidote to conservative and pro-Taliban Deobandi groups. The Shinwaris, who are mostly businessmen, reside mainly in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.

The relative high educational ratio in Orakzai Agency has not stopped its tribes from falling under the thralls of Talibanization. They are amongst the most conservative of the tribals, being amongst the first to ban NGOs from operating in the area, declaring them anti-Islamic. The possession of televisions was declared a punishable crime under the influence of the local Taliban. Most of the state-run educational institutions have been shut down by the local Taliban. Mohmands, residing in Mohmand Agency, are renowned guerrilla fighters. A characteristic hallmark of these people is that they are particularly reverent to their religious leaders, to the extent of fighting their wars under leadership of local clerics.

Kurram Agency is mostly inhabited mainly by the Shia Bangash tribe, which makes it anti-Taliban by default. The other tribe, Turi (Turkic origin), has also constantly been at loggerheads with pro-Taliban, Deobandi elements in the neighboring areas.

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Tribal affiliations dictate even the trajectories of militancy in these areas to a large extent. Mulla Nazir in North Waziristan, for example, turned vehemently against his ally Baitullah Mehsud when it seemed to him that Uzbeks were infiltrating into his areas at the behest of Mehsud. Tribal tradition then dictated that these foreigners could not be tolerated, and this led Nazir to have a disagreement with Mehsud.<sup>27</sup> Also, the Mehsud tribe and Nazirs have had a longstanding history of tribal rivalry, which is a potent driving factor in the areas of FATA.

Similarly, even though Mehsud had collected many of the splinter Jihadi groups under the banner of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), he did not entirely succeed in keeping some regional and ethnic militant groups united under him.<sup>28</sup> One of the aims of the Tehreek-e-Taliban was to coordinate and take joint decisions on talks with the government. Some militants were in favor of halting attacks against Pakistan Army, in order to conserve tribal military energy for the fight against American and NATO forces across the border. Militants from the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe in South Waziristan in fact became pro-government to the extent of pushing back TTP fighters to fall back into their area.<sup>29</sup> In North Waziristan, one of the important militant leaders, Hafiz Gul Bahadar<sup>30</sup> also kept to a ceasefire. This may be explicable in terms of tribal affiliations, which tend to direct the ideological viewpoints of the warlords. Even though Gul Bahadar was named as the TTP head in North Waziristan he clashed with Mehsud over the decision to engage Pakistan Army. As journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai explained: "Association with the TTP and being its deputy leader did not mean much when it came to the territorial and tribal limits of each Taliban group and commander. Hafiz Gul Bahadar was particularly furious when Mehsud's men started firing rockets into the army's camp at Razmak, a town in North Waziristan, during the recent fighting between the military and the Mehsud-commanded militants. It was also evident that Hafiz Gul Bahadar and his Taliban fighters failed to abide by one of the major decisions of the TTP by refusing to coordinate attacks on the security forces in North Waziristan to help ease pressure on the Taliban fighting under Mehsud's command in South Waziristan. This failure defied a Taliban decision that every Taliban group was required to come to the assistance of others in its area of operation that were under attack from the Pakistan Army."<sup>31</sup> Yusufzai postulates that the variance of strategic approaches between Mehsud and Gul Bahadar and his allied commanders arose due to their tribal differences, which shape their ideological approaches.

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Gul Bahadar and his allies belong to the Torikhel and Daur Wazir tribes, which have tended to lead an uneasy existence with the Mehsud tribe.<sup>32</sup>

Tribal affiliation and traditional animosities in FATA are much too entrenched to disappear even in the presence of the cementing bond of Talibanization. Mehsud, for example, could not freely operate in the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe dominated Wana area.<sup>33</sup> Even though the Mehsud and Ahmadzai Wazir tribes have long co-existed in South Waziristan, a history of feuds and uneasy co-existence has tended to dictate the organizational structures, even though both tribes are equally radical. The Taliban among the Ahmadzai Wazir thus tended to function rather independently of Baitullah Mehsud, though temporary alliances tended to spring up.<sup>34</sup> It may be more than a coincident that the above-mentioned commanders became pro-government since they presumably needed support against TTP in an area where they shared an uneasy co-existence with the latter. Thus, it is obvious that the particular tribal paradigm does shape the strategy of the Taliban, regardless of the fact that they are purportedly claiming to support universal jihad. A point in fact would be the Wana Taliban's denial of assistance in their area to Uzbek militants aligned with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.<sup>35</sup> In this context, it is discernible that factors other than trade-offs were responsible for driving some ostensibly pro-Pakistan warlords into the arms of the state, and trade-offs were not the only material benefits pushing them towards it. In fact, it can be argued that the pro-state warlords aligned with the state primarily for factors other than material benefits, which had historical or tribal contexts. Thus, these tribal trajectories maybe one of the overarching umbrellas under which militancy thrives in these areas. Summing up, FATA is a complicated area to comprehend by any standards, and thus any attempt to win hearts and minds in the area needs to be augmented by intense efforts to understand the ground realities; barring that, it may very well continue to be branded as the 'most dangerous area in the world' for a long time to come.

Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), ix-xxiii.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid., ix.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>4</sup> Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans*, (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1965).
  - <sup>5</sup> George L. Montagno, *The Pak-Afghan Detente*, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 3, No. 12 (Dec., 1963), pp. 616-624
  - <sup>6</sup> Special Report, *The News on Sunday*, April 13, 2008, <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/apr2008-weekly/nos-13-04-2008/spr.htm>.
  - <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>9</sup> Sughra Ahmed, 'Bridging' Social Capital Seminar Series, Seminar 2: Social capital and dimensions of equality, July 31, 2008, at Carnegie UK Trust. (London) [http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What\\_we\\_do/Research/Social\\_Capital/Social\\_capital\\_and\\_equality.pdf](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What_we_do/Research/Social_Capital/Social_capital_and_equality.pdf)
  - <sup>10</sup> The Government of Pakistan's official website on FATA. <http://www.fata.gov.pk/index.php>.
  - <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>15</sup> Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, *The New Taliban*, (New York: Nova Publishers, 2009).
  - <sup>16</sup> Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, "The New Taliban Warlords and Organization," *Defence against Terrorism review* (a NATO COE DAT Journal), Vol.1 Issue 2, Fall 2008. <http://www.coedat.nato.int/>
  - <sup>17</sup> Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston, *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 376-8.
  - <sup>18</sup> Liable to be killed without evoking any religiously generated legal sanction; a term commonly used by extremists to justify terrorism.
  - <sup>19</sup> Ahmed Rasheed, *Taliban*, (New York: Pan Macmillan, 2001), p. 84.
  - <sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 85.
  - <sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 82.
  - <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 83
  - <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 84.
  - <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>26</sup> "Former bin Laden mentor warns the West," *The Telegraph*, December 3, 2001.
  - <sup>27</sup> Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, *Taliban in Pakistan: a chronicle of resurgence*, (New York: Nova Publishers, 2010).
  - <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>29</sup> Ibid.
  - <sup>30</sup> Sameer Lalwani, *Pakistani Capabilities for a Counterinsurgency Campaign: A Net Assessment*, a publication of the Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative, New America Foundation, September 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Rahimullah Yusufzai, "The Impact of Pashtun Tribal Differences on the Pakistani Taliban," *Terrorism Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation, Volume VI, Issue 3, February 7, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, *Taliban in Pakistan: a chronicle of resurgence*.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> *The News*, January 26, 2008.

# **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan: A Global Threat**

*Khuram Iqbal*

## **Introduction**

With terrorist groups extending their reach and incorporating local, regional and international allies, the global threat of terrorism appears far from over. Although the US-led war on terror has significantly dented the physical infrastructure of various interlinked terrorist groups operating in different parts of world, a final victory seems unattainable without addressing the root causes of violent radicalization. Inadequate attention has been paid to launching an ideological battle against Al Qaeda and its global allies and the problem is further aggravated by a “fire-fighting” approach of counter-terrorism forces around the world. Ultimately, Al Qaeda’s message of global jihad is appealing to more individuals—as is evident from the rise of homegrown terror in the West—and groups such as Al-Shabab in Somalia, Al Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula and most importantly Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The TTP, which could be best described as an outcome of unintended spillover effects of the international intervention in Afghanistan, has undergone radical transformation since its inception in December 2007. An entity that was formed to safeguard and strengthen the Afghan Taliban’s movement against foreign forces in Afghanistan is gradually enhancing its global profile through aggressive propaganda against the West in general and the United States in particular. Critical evaluation of the global threat posed by the Pakistani Taliban is imperative to help design informed counter strategies. This paper seeks to assess the scale of threat posed by the TTP through close observation and analysis of the post-9/11 shifts in the links between the Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban. The threat assessment also incorporates the content analysis of randomly selected statements and interviews of TTP’s top leadership, which offer crucial insights into the group’s ambitions and capabilities to transform into a global entity.

## **Post-9/11 Shift in Al Qaeda’s Links with TTP and Afghan Taliban**

At a time when the Afghan Taliban are increasingly trying to portray their movement as a local struggle against “foreign occupation” while denouncing

their links with a global 'jihad movement' led by Al Qaeda,<sup>1</sup> the TTP's transformation into an entity with global ambitions and reach offers an interesting case study. In order to comprehend the global scale of threat posed by the TTP, it is essential to analyze the post-9/11 shifts in the links between Al Qaeda, and the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban.

Prior to the launch of the war on terror, Afghanistan served as the base for numerous terrorist outfits operating elsewhere in the world and the Afghan Taliban, then controlling some 90 percent of the country's territory, patronized these militias as part of their aggressive defense policy. These links survived the international campaign against Al Qaeda and their local hosts in Afghanistan. In the immediate aftermath of the Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan in 2004, media reports mentioned 'Al Qaeda fighters', 'Al Qaeda rebels' and 'Al Qaeda militants' clashing with coalition forces. However, it appears that the Afghan Taliban have realized that any association with Al Qaeda could hinder their efforts to win local and international support and goodwill, which they consider essential for legitimizing their cause. Perhaps, having realized the evolving ground realities, the Afghan Taliban are increasingly trying to project the "nationalist" character of their movement and the previous partnership between the two entities seems all but fractured now.

In his article "Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban: 'Diametrically Opposed'?" Vahid Brown, an FBI instructor at the Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point, also highlights the widening rift between Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. The author narrates that Mullah Omar's message for "Eid al-Fitr, issued on September 19 [2009], in which he calls the Taliban a 'robust Islamic and nationalist movement,' which 'wants to maintain good and positive relations with all neighbors based on mutual respect" triggered a heated debate among global jihad circles.<sup>2</sup>

"A week later, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, one of the most influential living Salafi Jihadi ideologues, released an angry rebuke to these 'dangerous utterances' of the Taliban amir, pointing out that they were of the same order as Hamas leader Khaled Mashal's statement that the Chechen struggle is a Russian 'internal matter.'"<sup>3</sup> The Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda have long differed over ideology and ambitions. In 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Al Qaeda number two, wrote a letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the deceased

chief of Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda. Criticizing Taliban's local approach, Zawahiri wrote: "We don't want to repeat the mistake of the Taliban, who restricted participation in governance to the students and the people of Qandahar alone."<sup>4</sup> He also lamented that Taliban had a stronger affiliation with their tribes and villages than with the global Islamic struggle. Therefore, after the US-led invasion, the Taliban retreated to their tribes and villages.<sup>5</sup> Al Qaeda's idea of pan-Islamism, which also denounces the modern system of nation-states, has never been endorsed by the Afghan Taliban, who have always been focused on Afghanistan. Moreover, the theological differences between the two have also served as a basis for separation. Wahabism, the school of thought followed by Al Qaeda, and the Afghan version of Islam, which is influenced by Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and the generally more open disposition of Hanafi Islam on the Indian subcontinent stand in contrast with each other.<sup>6</sup> The Afghan people are highly unlikely to accept an ideology that is not in sync with their traditional social structure. In view of such ideological, strategic and political differences, the Afghan Taliban can ill-afford to continue their association with Al Qaeda. That there is increased realization of that among the Afghan Taliban is also evident from their activities and public statements. Interestingly, after 9/11, there has been no evidence of the Afghan Taliban's involvement in a single act of international terrorism.<sup>7</sup> The Afghan Taliban justify their attacks inside Afghanistan against coalition forces, other Western targets and Afghan authorities as guerilla operations against an enemy in an asymmetrical warfare. Similarly, the propaganda material prepared and disseminated by the Afghan Taliban does not endorse Al Qaeda's rhetoric of global jihad. For instance, a review and analysis of 10 official videos and policy statement of the Afghan Taliban issued from 2005 to 2009 demonstrate that, unlike Al Qaeda, the group has never mentioned or vowed to establish Islamic rule throughout the world. The leadership of the Afghan Taliban hardly mentions major conflicts across the world involving Muslims, for instance, there is rarely mention of Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya or Iraq. Rather they look inwards and lay more emphasize on driving out "the invaders" from their homeland. Such a focus demonstrates that the two organizations differ on policy matters, ideology and strategic objectives, which could have become a major reason for the Afghan Taliban to part ways with Al Qaeda.

Having established the nature of relationship between the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda, it is important to analyze the TTP's leaning towards Al Qaeda

vis-à-vis its relationship with the Afghan Taliban. It appears that the TTP has opted to collaborate with Al Qaeda at the expense of its ties with the Afghan Taliban.

### **Links between TTP and Afghan Taliban**

The TTP is often confused as the Pakistan chapter of the Afghan Taliban and pursuing similar objectives. However, that is not the case as the TTP and the Afghan Taliban are two distinct entities with different goals. The Pakistani Taliban, currently led by Hakeemullah Mehsud, have been joined by members of various Afghan Jihadi militias including the Haqqani Network. However, the leadership of the Afghan Taliban has never endorsed the formation or activities of the TTP. The Afghan Taliban, led by Mullah Omar, have always openly disassociated themselves from the TTP because of their different goals and objectives.

Since its inception, the TTP leadership has always pledged allegiance to Mullah Omar who is also recognized as the spiritual leader of the Taliban on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border.<sup>8</sup> This move by late Baitullah Mehsud, the founder of the TTP, was probably intended to capitalize on the significant support and sympathies for the Afghan Taliban among a large segment of Pakistani population. The TTP also propagated that Mullah Omar had personally appointed Baitullah as chief of the Pakistani Taliban. However, despite such claims, there is little evidence that the Afghan Taliban ever approved of the activities of Baitullah or his outfit. Persistent confusion over links between the two groups forced the Afghan Taliban to publicly deny any association with the TTP in January 2008 when Taliban's principal spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated: "We have no concern with anybody joining or leaving the Taliban movement in Pakistan. Ours is an Afghan movement and we as a matter of policy do not support militant activity in Pakistan... Baitullah is a Pakistani and we as the Afghan Taliban have nothing to do with his appointment or his expulsion. We did not appoint him and we have not expelled him."<sup>9</sup>

The timing of the statement was crucial. The Afghan Taliban publicly disowned the TTP when the latter unleashed a wave of terror attacks across Pakistan, killing thousands of Pakistani security personnel, government officials and civilians in indiscriminate attacks. The Pakhtuns inhabiting the

province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Afghanistan have become the prime victims of the atrocities perpetrated by the TTP. There must have been an immense apprehension among the Afghan Taliban of losing popular support of the Pakhtuns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA on account of the TTP's anti-Pakistan activities. Therefore, the Afghan Taliban deemed it necessary to distance themselves from the TTP in order to secure their support base in the Pakhtun-dominated areas of Pakistan.

The Afghan Taliban have always reiterated their detachment from the TTP whenever the latter has launched high profile terrorist attacks in Pakistan. For instance, in the aftermath of a double suicide bombing at Pakistan Ordnance Factories at Wah in August 2008, the Afghan Taliban sent a stern message to Baitullah Mehsud to stop attacks inside Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> The suicide blasts at the ordnance factory were among the deadliest terrorist attacks in Pakistan, killing 70 civilians and wounded another 60.<sup>11</sup> The TTP was quick to claim responsibility for the twin bombings.<sup>12</sup> By carrying out such attacks the TTP not only fulfilled one of Al Qaeda's foremost objectives of spreading chaos in Pakistan, it also attempted to undermine backing for the Afghan Taliban's guerilla movement in Afghanistan, which is in obvious need of popular support and safe hideouts on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border.

Another factor defining the rifts between the TTP and the Afghan Taliban is the former's policy towards the 'soft' Taliban of FATA; militant factions that are more focused on Afghanistan and do not necessarily support the TTP's terrorist activities in Pakistan. The TTP has always tried to persuade these groups to support its bid to enforce its version of Sharia in Pakistan and such failed efforts have led to violent clashes between the TTP and various factions of tribal militias of FATA that have an Afghanistan-specific focus. For instance, the TTP killed two veteran Jihadis in Mohmand Agency, one of the seven tribal districts that FATA consists of, who maintained close links with the Afghan Taliban movement. The chief of Shah Khalid Group, Muslim Khan alias Shah Khalid, and his deputy Maulvi Obaidullah were killed by the TTP's Mohmand commander Umar Khalid on July 19, 2008.<sup>13</sup> Dozens of militants from Shah Khalid Group and the TTP were also killed in the clashes between the two groups in July 2008. Shah Khalid Group was also linked to Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Khalid's killing exposed the stark differences

between the TTP and the Afghan Taliban on one hand, and between the TTP and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba on the other.

Similarly, in August 2008, the TTP killed Haji Namdar, head of the defunct militant organization Amr Bilmaroof Wa Nahi Anilmunkar, (literally, promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice).<sup>14</sup> Namdar opposed the TTP strategy of waging war against Pakistani security forces. The outfit led by Namdar was more focused on eliminating social evils in the area under his influence because of his religious beliefs. Namdar also had close links with the Afghan Taliban and was a significant source of human resource for them.

The tribal areas of Pakistan are considered an important support base for the Afghan Taliban fighting against foreign troops in Afghanistan. The loss of key commanders like Khalid and Namdar would certainly have upset the Afghan Taliban, hence the public statement emphasizing their detachment from the TTP.

### **The Al Qaeda-TTP Nexus**

Today Al Qaeda exerts more influence on the Pakistani Taliban than on the Afghan Taliban. At a time when the Afghan Taliban are increasingly trying to project the nationalist character of their movement, the TTP has vociferously endorsed Al Qaeda's agenda of global jihad and closely collaborated with the global terrorist outfit in various acts of international terrorism. The TTP not only harbors intentions to operate globally but has also demonstrated its capabilities to carry out attacks beyond the territorial borders of Pakistan. In fact, the TTP was accurately described by Pakistan's interior minister "as an extension of Al Qaeda."<sup>15</sup> According to his statement, "We have certain evidence that there is a close connection [between the two outfits], and that there are similarities between Al Qaeda and the TTP... If Al Qaeda is to move in a tribal area, they have to look to the TTP to get a refuge... The TTP is a host to Al Qaeda and is their mouthpiece."<sup>16</sup>

Several pieces of evidence suggest organizational connections and operational partnership between Al Qaeda and the TTP. For example, Abu Kasha, a key link between Al Qaeda's Shura Majlis, or executive council, and the Pakistani Taliban, is believed to hold a senior position in the TTP.<sup>17</sup> Inclusion of a top Al

Qaeda member in the TTP's decision-making body speaks volumes about close affiliation between the two groups.

Baitullah Mehsud, the deceased TTP chief, strongly endorsed Al Qaeda's ideology of global jihad including threatening attacks on the White House, New York and London. In his first-ever television interview, aired on January 28, 2008, Baitullah told Al Jazeera television network: "Our main aim is to finish Britain, the US and to crush the pride of the non-Muslims. We pray to God to give us the ability to destroy the White House, New York and London. And we have trust in God. Very soon, we shall be witnessing jihad's miracles".<sup>18</sup>

In October 2008, TTP deputy chief Faqir Muhammad insisted in a video interview that the TTP closely supports Al Qaeda activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan because these Jihadi operations represent the "will of all Muslims."<sup>19</sup> When asked about Taliban's interest in launching 9/11-style attacks on US soil, Faqir assured his audience that Al Qaeda "can plan another such attack. Al Qaeda and the Taliban can do anything they want... and we certainly have the desire to launch one."<sup>20</sup> Al Qaeda and the Taliban are also believed to have jointly carried out various terrorist operations in Pakistan. The suicide attack on Marriott Hotel in Islamabad on September 20, 2008 is a glaring example of operational collaboration between the two outfits. Although, Fidayeen-e-Islam, a previously unknown group, claimed responsibility for the bombing, the Al Qaeda-TTP nexus was thought to be behind the attack. It was believed that the TTP and Al Qaeda issued a claim of responsibility in the name of a non-existent to escape public censure because of the high number of civilian casualties in that attack.

Al Qaeda has also helped out the Pakistani Taliban when the latter really needed help. In October 2007, when Pakistani security forces had launched a military offensive against the Swat Taliban led by Fazlullah, the TTP secretary general, Al Qaeda was reported to be giving them crucial support. A situational report by Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) about the October 2007 military operation in Swat stated that "some recent news reports suggest that Al Qaeda may also be supporting the TNSM [Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi, which is part of the TTP] militants in Swat."<sup>21</sup> This support mainly came in two forms: finances and fresh recruits from the tribal region. According to Abdul Samad, a militant from Afghanistan, "I can tell you there

is money coming from Al Qaeda and if Al Qaeda did not lead [on] those things we could not fight. It is not just in Swat or in Waziristan or in Bajaur. We are getting stronger everywhere in the area.”<sup>22</sup> Samad also said that he traveled in recent weeks to North Waziristan and recruited a score of militants to reinforce Fazlullah’s followers in Swat. Squeezed, stretched and on the run in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s tribal areas, it is quite conceivable that Al Qaeda militants may have infiltrated the ranks of Fazlullah’s fighters. They want a territory from where they can orchestrate their worldwide operations and a troubled Swat may just be the place for them.<sup>23</sup>

The TTP has facilitated Al Qaeda’s global operations and demonstrated its capabilities to launch attacks in the West and the failed bombing attempt in New York’s Time Square by Faisal Shahzad—a US citizen of Pakistani descent—and his alleged links with the TTP came as a stark reminder of the global threat posed by this group based in FATA. It was not for the first time that the TTP or its constituent organizations were found involved in an act of international terrorism. The 7/7 bombings in London, one of the most devastating terrorist attacks since 9/11, were planned from Bajaur Agency in FATA, as acknowledged by top TTP spokesman Maulvi Umer.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the foiled terrorist attacks in Barcelona, Spain in January 2008 were also attributed to the Al Qaeda-TTP nexus in FATA. Some members of a terrorist cell in Spain are thought to have traveled to Pakistan to attend an intensive Al Qaeda training camp.<sup>25</sup> It is believed that senior Al Qaeda leaders sent a points man to activate this cell to prompt it to launch terrorist attacks in Spain. The TTP was quick to claim responsibility for the thwarted attacks on Barcelona when around a dozen terrorists were arrested on January 19, 2008. In a video interview recorded in August 2008, Maulvi Umer, the TTP spokesman, claimed that the organization was responsible for the foiled suicide bombing plot. When asked whether the TTP could ever carry out an attack against the West, Umer replied: “The one in Barcelona was conducted by twelve of our men. They were under pledge to Baitullah Mehsud and the TTP has already claimed responsibility, because [of] Spain’s military presence in Afghanistan.”<sup>26</sup>

However, these do not seem to be the only examples of the TTP's capability to strike internationally. Evidence suggests that FATA has become an epicenter of international terrorism where terrorist outfits from all over the world operate under the protection of the TTP. The umbrella organization consists

of some of the world's most determined, experienced and deadly groups, including Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, a militant group from China, Islamic Jihad Union, an outfit made up largely of German nationals of Turkish origin, and Egyptian Islamic Jihad. In 2008, the presence of 8,000 foreign fighters was reported in FATA. They were mainly from the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and Europe.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, many homegrown terrorists from the United States, Europe and other parts of world frequently travel to FATA via Afghanistan and other Central Asian states for training to wage violent attacks either against the foreign forces in Afghanistan or their own governments back home. Homegrown Jihadis provide the TTP easy access to otherwise relatively inaccessible targets in the West.

Apart from the TTP's explicit aim to wage 'international jihad' in accordance with Al Qaeda's global strategy, an analysis of the video interviews and statements issued by the group's leadership also reveals invaluable insight into the TTP's global agenda. In order to assess the scale of the threat from a wholly different perspective, 10 video statements and interviews of the TTP leadership released from 2007 to 2009 were randomly selected for content analysis.<sup>28</sup> A minute scrutiny of the videos and interviews to identify the specific characteristics of the TTP's message noted that increased attention to the West and global conflicts had replaced earlier talk of supporting the Afghan Taliban's cause, which was one of the group's main concerns in the initial phase of its formation. Compared to the Afghan Taliban's messages, the statements by the Pakistani Taliban are more emotional, angry and concerned with other groups and governments, the same as Al Qaeda's messages. Words and phrases such as 'apostate' – a term the TTP uses to refer to Pakistani soldiers and anyone supporting the government's actions against the Pakistani Taliban – 'global', 'international', 'glory of Islam' and 'crusades', and claims of extending help to Muslims in Iraq, Palestine and India occur frequently in verbal and written communication of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. Under Hakeemullah Mehsud, the group has also vowed to replace the 'prevailing imperial system' with an 'Islamic caliphate' and expressed the ambition to expand it to the whole world. The Pakistan Army is repeatedly described as a US puppet. The TTP also intends to fight a 'decisive battle' in India before proceeding towards the Middle East, presumably to evict Israel from that region.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, a number of video statements by the TTP have been produced by Al Qaeda's media wing, Al-Sahab, which is another

indication of the close ideological and operational collaboration between the two groups.

## **Conclusion**

The international war against terrorism has radically transformed the global threat environment; fractured alliances and heralded the emergence of the world's deadliest terrorist groups. Whereas the Afghan Taliban appear to have realized the risks involved in associating with a global 'jihad movement', Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan has step forward to embrace Al Qaeda and its global agenda. The TTP, as Al Qaeda's front organization, not only intends to take its fight to the West, it is also gradually acquiring the capability to fulfill its global designs. Understanding the history of the TTP's involvement in acts of international terrorism is vital for comprehending the global threat posed by the outfit. The recently emerged alliances and the post-9/11 shifts in links among various Jihadi outfits active in the region demand an urgent review of regional counter-terrorism strategies. Since the core objective of the war on terror was to eliminate Al Qaeda and its support structure, more resources and efforts need to be dedicated to secure FATA where Al Qaeda is hiding, regrouping and reorganizing. Given the complicity of the problem in FATA, it could only be best handled and managed by the Pakistani government itself. Intervention by an outside force, that lacks sufficient knowledge of the people, culture, militant groups and the terrain, would only deteriorate the situation. Any direct Western involvement on the operational level is bound to be highly counter-productive. There is a need for enhanced regional and global collaboration to counter Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which is no longer a challenge for Pakistan alone, but a global threat.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> In an official statement by the Afghan Taliban on 28 January 2010 regarding the London Conference, Mullah Omar was quoted as saying, "We do not intend to harm neighboring countries as well as other countries of the world, nor do we want them to harm us. We will not allow our soil to be used against any other country." The statement came as a clear indication that the Afghan Taliban did not endorse Al Qaeda's agenda of pan-Islamism that does not recognize the borders that separate Muslim countries. The statement can be accessed at [www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefa\\_talibanlondon0110.pdf](http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefa_talibanlondon0110.pdf) and the official website of Afghan Taliban: [www.alemarah.info/English](http://www.alemarah.info/English).
- <sup>2</sup> Vahid Brown, "Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban: "Diametrically Opposed?," October 22, 2009, [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/22/al\\_qa\\_ida\\_and\\_the\\_afghan\\_taliban\\_diametrically\\_opposed](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/10/22/al_qa_ida_and_the_afghan_taliban_diametrically_opposed), last accessed on July 15, 2010.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> Letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, dated 9 July 2005. The letter was intercepted by the US military. Translated version can be accessed at [www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/report/2005/zawahiri-zarqawi-letter\\_9jul2005.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/report/2005/zawahiri-zarqawi-letter_9jul2005.htm).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Donovan, "Are Theological Tensions Distancing Taliban From Al Qaeda?," Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, October 26, 2008, [www.rferl.org/content/Are\\_Theological\\_Tensions\\_Distancing\\_Taliban\\_From\\_Al\\_Qaeda/1332904.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Are_Theological_Tensions_Distancing_Taliban_From_Al_Qaeda/1332904.html), last accessed July 15, 2010.
- <sup>7</sup> It is worth mentioning that late Mullah Mansur Dadullah, an important Afghan Taliban commander who threatened to extend the war beyond Afghanistan, was sacked by Mullah Omar in December 2007 over his 'irresponsible attitude'.
- <sup>8</sup> Video interview of Maulana Faqir Mohammed, October 2008, The NEFA Foundation, [www.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html](http://www.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html), last accessed November 10, 2008.
- <sup>9</sup> Asia Times Online claimed in a report in January 2008 that Taliban supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar had sacked Baitullah as the chief the Taliban movement for launching attacks in Pakistan at the expense of 'jihad' in Afghanistan.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> "Deadliest attack on a military installation, at least 70 killed," *Daily Times*, Lahore, August 22, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> Urdu daily *Express*, Lahore, August 22, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> "Taliban kill rival group leaders," *Daily Times*, Lahore, July 20, 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> Javed Afridi, "Anti-Taliban militant outfit's head shot dead," *The News*, Karachi, August 14, 2008.
- <sup>15</sup> "TTP is an extension of Al Qaeda: Rehman," *Daily Times*, Lahore, September 2, 2008. [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C09%5C02%5Cstory\\_2-9-2008\\_pg1\\_10](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C09%5C02%5Cstory_2-9-2008_pg1_10)
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>17</sup> Bill Roggio, "Pakistani Taliban unites under Baitullah Mehsud," *The Long War Journal*, [www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/pakistani\\_taliban\\_un.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/pakistani_taliban_un.php), last accessed on November 7, 2008.
- <sup>18</sup> "Rising Terror Chief Worries US Officials," March 17, 2008, [www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/17/eveningnews/main3946322.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/17/eveningnews/main3946322.shtml), last accessed on November 8, 2008.
- <sup>19</sup> "Exclusive New Interview with Maulana Faquir Mohammed," The NEFA Foundation, October 2008, [www1.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html#faqirmuhammad1022](http://www1.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html#faqirmuhammad1022), last accessed on November 05, 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Safdar Sial and Aqeel Yusafzai, "Swat: A Symptom of a Deeper, Older Malady," Pak Institute for Peace Studies, November 24, 2007, [www.san-pips.com](http://www.san-pips.com), last accessed on January 12, 2008.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> "Video Interview with Top Pakistani Taliban spokesman Maulvi Umer," August 29, 2008, [www.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html](http://www.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-intvu.html), last accessed on June 8, 2010.
- <sup>25</sup> Steve Martin, "Terrorist Plot on Barcelona Spain Foiled by Law Enforcement," <http://ezinearticles.com/?Terrorist-Plot-on-Barcelona-Spain-Foiled-by-Law-Enforcement&id=951803>, last accessed on June 09, 2010.
- <sup>26</sup> "Baitullah Masood, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan," [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ttp.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ttp.htm), last accessed on June 10, 2010.
- <sup>27</sup> Hamid Mir, "8,000 foreign fighters in Fata ring alarm bells in Islamabad," *The News*, Lahore, July 21, 2008.
- <sup>28</sup> See Annexure 1 for details of the statements and interviews used for content analysis.
- <sup>29</sup> "3,000 terrorists for India battle: Pak Taliban, Rediff News," <http://news.rediff.com/special/2010/jul/26/three-thousand-terrorists-for-india-battle-pak-taliban.htm>, last visited on November 2, 2010

**Annexure 1**

Following is the list of randomly selected videos, statements and interviews of the TTP's leadership used for content analysis.

No	Title	Publisher	Description	Source
1	" <i>Hamari Jid-o-Jehad: Dawat waMaqasid</i> " (Our Struggle: Aims and Objectives)	Al-Sahab, media wing of Al Qaeda	TTP's first video after the death of Baitullah Mehsud in which the group defended itself against allegations that it was working to destabilize Pakistan on the behest of India and Israel	Acquired through personal contact in Peshawar
2	A Message to Muslim Ummah and a Warning to USA and NATO Allies	Omar Studio, media wing of the TTP	The video was released to rebut claims that Hakeemullah Mehsud was murdered in a US drone strike	Posted by "Tehrik-e-Taliban" on YouTube
3	"On the Tragic and Criminal Incidents of Bomb Blasts at Islamic University (Islamabad) and Markets of Peshawar by the ISI and Blackwater"	Al-Sahab	The bombings mentioned in the title claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and were blamed on the TTP. The group released the video to deny the charge and attributed these attacks on Blackwater and other foreign agencies active in Pakistan	SITE Intelligence
4	" <i>Operation Rah-e-Nijat Aur Asl Haqiq</i> " (Operation <i>Rah-e-Nijat</i> and the actual facts)	Omar Studio	The video, released in three parts, blamed the Pakistan Army for bringing death and destruction to the tribal areas during military offensive named Operation <i>Rah-e-Nijat</i> (path of deliverance)	SITE Intelligence
5	"The reality of Pakistan's Imperial	Omar Studio	Video address by Maulana Abdul Hannan, TTP	Posted on Jamiah Hafsa Forum, an online jihad

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	System"		commander of Orakzai Agency in FATA	forum reportedly operated by former students of Lal Masjid, Islamabad
6	Video interview with TTP's former spokesman Maulvi Umer	NEFA Foundation	The interview was released on August 29, 2008	NEFA Foundation
7	Video interview with Maulana Faqir Mohammed	NEFA Foundation	The interview was released in 2008	NEFA Foundation
8	"A Meeting with Maulana Waliur Rehman"	Al-Sahab	The interview was recorded in 2009 in which Waliur Rehman, the TTP number two, spoke about the TTP's emergence and objectives	Posted on Jamiah Hafsa Forum, an online jihad forum reportedly operated by former students of Lal Masjid, Islamabad
9	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan-Swat	Fateh Studio, media front of Jundullah	The video projects and glorify the individuals who took part in suicide attacks	Ansar al-Jihad Network
10	The Truth of Pakistani Tyrants	Sangar Studio	A video address by Maulana Abdul Hannan, the Commander of the Orakzai chapter of the TTP. The video was released on 3 April 2010	Acquired through personal contact in Peshawar

## Analysis

# Analyzing Suicide Attacks in Pakistan

*Akbar Nasir Khan*

### Introduction

Suicide attacks<sup>1</sup> are a terrorist tactic aimed at achieving broader political objectives.<sup>2</sup> On September 11, 2001, there was a series of coordinated suicide attacks by terrorists in the United States which killed more than 3,000 civilians. The 9/11 attacks led to the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. This focused the attention of many eminent scholars, prominent among them noted American political scientist Professor Robert A. Pape,<sup>3</sup> on understanding the strategic logic of suicide terrorism. In this paper, I will argue that Professor Pape's thesis about the genesis of suicide terrorism, which he developed through analysis of an extensive database of suicide attacks in many countries, is not valid in the case of Pakistan and there is a need to look for other explanations for suicide attacks in the country.

The US and Pakistan are facing incessant successful and attempted terrorist attacks. However, suicide terrorism is a formidable challenge for Pakistan because of three factors. First, the country has been the prime target of suicide terrorism in the world in recent years. In 2009, 3,021 Pakistanis were killed in terrorist attacks, many of them suicide attacks. The figure was 33 percent higher than 2008.<sup>4</sup> From 2002 to July 1, 2010, 3,719 people had been killed in 257 suicide attacks in Pakistan, while another 9,464 had been injured.<sup>5</sup> Second, Pakistan has a predominantly Muslim population and religious narratives are overwhelmingly used in everyday life. Departure from the religious narratives is not easy for any government in Pakistan. Third, the state has been instrumental in exploiting the religious narrative for national security paradigms in the past, mainly during the Soviet-Afghan war. All three factors are closely linked. It is important to analyze suicide attacks in Pakistan, not only because the country has been a victim of suicide attacks, but also because many of the failed terrorist attempts in the US and elsewhere in the West have been linked to Pakistan in one way or another.<sup>6</sup>

### **Robert Pape's Thesis and Pakistan**

In his seminal study explaining the appeal of suicide attacks to groups, Pape argued that organized groups use suicide attacks strategically in order to execute a larger campaign waged to achieve specific political objectives.<sup>7</sup> One of his most important observations is that the genesis of most suicide attack campaigns in his database can be accounted for by three developments: a real or perceived occupation, an armed rebellion against that occupation, and a difference in the religion of the occupier and the occupied. As such, the religious nature of the groups who use suicide attacks offers little explanation for its use other than the difference in the religions of the occupier and occupied.<sup>8</sup> In Pakistan's case, this premise is not applicable due to different variables.

#### **1. Role of Religion in Suicide Terrorism in Pakistan**

Many experts have differed from Pape's thesis. Mia Bloom points to the case of communist Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and Turkey in opposition to Pape's point of view. Bloom opines, "While it is a mistake to assume that only religious groups use suicide terror, it is equally faulty to view suicide terror as devoid of any religious content."<sup>9</sup> I will argue that Pape's argument of religious difference between the perpetrator of suicide attack and the victims is not applicable in case of Pakistan. The Pakistani Taliban and Al Qaeda conduct suicide attacks against the Pakistani people and law enforcement personnel. The targets and the attackers share the same faith, often the same nationality, and occasionally the same ethnicity and neighborhood. It is the same in Iraq and Afghanistan, where law enforcement agents or people at public places are targeted, both the victims and the perpetrators are Muslim.

There is evidence that religion may be extremely useful to group efforts to select, recruit and train individuals for suicide missions. The religious narrative provides recruiters with powerful imagery of spiritual rewards that will always exceed mundane opportunities. Religion also offers a solid basis for the formation of group identity.<sup>10</sup> In order to diversify the recruitment base, it is important for Al Qaeda and the Taliban to appeal from a religious platform. That is the most logical option for recruiting a Pakistani (Punjabi, Balochi, Kashmiri, Sindhi or Pashtun), Somali, Yemeni, or an American or British Muslim, because the religious narrative transcends all ethnic, linguistic

and geographical boundaries. This rationale applies to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq and even to the 7/7 London bombings and the failed terrorist plots in the US.<sup>11</sup>

Religion acts as a catalyst to many other factors including frustration, helplessness or personal grievances (such as loss of a close relative or friend) as a result of state policy.<sup>12</sup> Interviews with failed suicide attackers reveal that some of them were highly educated in religious teaching and others were barely aware of the message of Islam and of the logic of and essentials for jihad. One boy, on his first day of interviewing, gave an elaborate lecture with references from the Quran about the logic and necessity of suicide attacks but he was also able to quote verses of the Quran in opposition to suicide attacks with authentic references of scholarly works.<sup>13</sup> Two teenaged boys from Karachi, who were fond of cricket and Indian movies, were ready to launch suicide attacks because of grievances against the military operation in South Waziristan in January 2008.<sup>14</sup> A young man of Kashmiri origin had never been a practicing Muslim but he wanted to take revenge from the government for the killing of girls and women in the July 2007 Lal Masjid operation by the security forces in Islamabad.<sup>15</sup> Aitzaz Shah, the first person arrested in murder case of Benazir Bhutto in District Dera Ismail Khan on January 19, 2008, also claimed that Benazir was working against Islam and was a partner of non-Muslim Western Alliance and America and it was justified to kill her.<sup>16</sup> In all these cases, religion was the main motivation tool available to the recruiters or to the self-motivated individuals.

## **2. Democracy and Suicide Attacks**

Pape has also suggested that democracies are more vulnerable to suicide campaigns.<sup>17</sup> In another study, Wade and Reiter found that autocratic Muslim states in particular are much more likely to be so targeted than free or partly free Muslim states.<sup>18</sup> It seems that regime type may not matter when it comes to suicide attacks in a country. Libya and Saudi Arabia do not have democratic governments whereas France and the United Kingdom have been democracies for hundreds of years, but all these countries are able to prevent suicide attacks on their soil regardless of regime types.

In Pakistan, there has been little difference in the frequency or intensity of suicide attacks during the regime of military ruler Pervez Musharraf or that of

democratically elected President Asif Ali Zardari. Though support for US policies in Afghanistan is a common factor for the two regimes, but tactically the Taliban have cited different reasons for their actions. In the Musharraf era, they blamed him for the killings at Lal Masjid, whereas in the case of President Zardari they cited the military operations and US drone attacks targeting the militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) as reasons for their suicide attacks.<sup>19</sup>

In my opinion, it is not the regime type that makes some states more prone to such attacks. The states in which public policy is influenced by public opinion are more vulnerable to extremist tactics used by the opponents of those states. If there is a direct correlation between loss of life of citizens of a state and public sentiments, like in the US and other western countries, then suicide attacks may be a very effective strategy for terrorists or guerillas to dictate their terms, as is evident from what happened in Lebanon in 1982. Presently, pressure on the US government by the US electorate to pull out of Afghanistan supports this proposition. On the other hand, in Pakistan, a change in the public opinion against the Taliban after suicide attacks in Islamabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi has encouraged the military to take decisive action in Swat and South Waziristan Agency in FATA.

### **3. Occupation and Suicide Attacks**

The third observation by Pape that real or perceived occupation of a country triggers suicide attacks also does not sufficiently explain the suicide attacks in Pakistan. American influence on Pakistani politics is not a new phenomenon but it has never reached the level of occupation, real or perceived. It may be said that presence of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan is tantamount to occupation and Pakistan is directly affected by that. But the US and NATO forces had been present in Afghanistan since 2002 but suicide attacks in Pakistan increased after Islamabad started taking action against the militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas neighboring Afghanistan in 2004.<sup>20</sup>

A detailed analysis of suicide attacks in Pakistan reveals a phenomenal increase in such attacks after the Lal Masjid operation by the security forces in July 2007.<sup>21</sup> Before the Lal Masjid operation there had been only 42 suicide attacks in Pakistan, but after the operation, in the remaining six months of

2007, there were 47 suicide attacks in major cities of the country. Since then, 234 suicide attacks have been recorded in Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, 100 percent more suicide attacks were employed in Pakistan by anti-state elements as a reaction to the policies of the military government of Pervez Musharraf in 2007. He was under pressure from the international community to prevent use of Pakistani territory as a sanctuary for Al Qaeda and Taliban to wage war in Afghanistan against the US and NATO forces. Since the launch of Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path to Salvation) by the military in FATA in 2009, there has been a visible increase in suicide attacks in Pakistan compared to previous years. In 2009, there were 77 suicide attacks in Pakistan, more than in any previous year.<sup>23</sup> Pakistan has been a target of suicide attacks not because of occupation but for being an ally of the US and NATO. This applies to other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, which has experienced numerous suicide attacks by Al Qaeda operatives in response to Riyadh's policy of siding with the US in the war against terrorism.<sup>24</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The above analysis demonstrates that all three of Pape's observations are not valid in Pakistan's case. Political issues of Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq are fomenting radicalization in Pakistan. It is not the type of regime but the decisions of the state to take action against terrorist organization in the country that have elicited extreme violent responses such as suicide attacks from the militants. Religion is a powerful instrument to motivate, recruit and deploy suicide attackers for terrorist activities in Pakistan. Unregulated activities in the religious sector need attention of the state to ensure that religious premises and religious narratives are not used for fomenting anti-state activities. It will be vital to expose the fallacy of the aims and objectives of terrorist organizations in order to prevent suicide terrorism and mass radicalization in Pakistan.

Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> A suicide attack is one in which execution and success of the mission is contingent upon death of the attacker. Similar definitions are used by many scholars like Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Mohammad M. Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*, (USIP: Washington D.C., forthcoming 2007); Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House, 2005); Assaf Moghadam, "Defining Suicide Terrorism," in Ami Pedahzur, ed., *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 13-24.
- <sup>2</sup> Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Robert A. Pape is professor of political science at the University of Chicago specializing in international security affairs. His publications include *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (Random House 2005); *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, (Cornell 1996), "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work," *International Security* (1997), "The Determinants of International Moral Action," *International Organization* (1999); "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* (2003); and "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security* (2005). <http://political-science.uchicago.edu/faculty/pape.shtml>.
- <sup>4</sup> Khuram Iqbal says in his report on evolution of suicide terrorism that in 2009 Pakistan was target of 86 suicide attacks compared to 63 in 2008 (See *Conflict and Peace Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Islamabad: PIPS, 2010), whereas [www.pakistanbodycount.com](http://www.pakistanbodycount.com) by Dr. Zeeshan Ul Hassan Usmani has slightly different figures of suicide attacks; 77 and 64 in the two years, respectively.
- <sup>5</sup> Dr. Zeeshan Ul Hassan Usmani, <http://www.pakistanbodycount.org/bla.php>.
- <sup>6</sup> Anne E. Kornblut, Jerry Markon and Spencer S. Hsu, "Pakistan native arrested in Time Square Bomb case," *The Washington Post*, May 4, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/03/AR2010050300847.html>.
- <sup>7</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
- <sup>10</sup> Ibn-e-Khaldun (1332-1406), *Muqaddma*, Assabia, group identity is based upon belonging to common set of values and objectives rather than ethnicity, race, caste or creed. <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ik/klf.htm>.
- <sup>11</sup> Anne E. Kornblut, Jerry Markon and Spencer S. Hsu, "Pakistan native arrested in Time Square Bomb case."
- <sup>12</sup> Maiese, Michelle, 'Suicide Bombers', The Conflict Resolution Information Source, June 2005 [www.crinfo.com](http://www.crinfo.com).
- <sup>13</sup> Author's interview with a suspected terrorist, Dera Ismail Khan, February 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> Author's interview with two boys who were questioned in Dera Ismail Khan, February 2008.

- <sup>15</sup> Author's interview with failed suicide attacker Shahbaz Ali Khalid who was arrested from Mianwali with a strapped on suicide jacket as he wore an all-enveloping *burqa*, June 2009.
- <sup>16</sup> Author's interview with the accused Aitzaz Shah, January 20, 2008.
- <sup>17</sup> Pape mentions this word but Christine Fair also raises the point in her work that "campaign" is not defined in Pape's thesis.
- <sup>18</sup> Wade, Sara Jackson and Dan Reiter, "Does Democracy Matter: Regime Type and Suicide Terrorism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 2, April 2007.
- <sup>19</sup> Wade and Reiter found that type of government per se has little (statistically significant) correlation with the occurrence of suicide attacks when the country in question has no religiously distinct minorities at risk.
- <sup>20</sup> Dr. Zeeshan Ul Hassan Usmani.
- <sup>21</sup> Qudsia Akhlaque, "Its Operation Sunrise, not Silence," *Dawn*, July 11, 2007, <http://www.dawn.com/2007/07/12/top7.htm>.
- <sup>22</sup> Dr. Zeeshan Ul Hassan, year-wise distribution is 2002 (2 attacks), 2003 (2), 2004 (7), 2005 (4), 2006 (12), 2007 (60), 2008 (64), 2009 (77) and until November 26, 2010, (45).
- <sup>23</sup> Khuram Iqbal, "Strategic measures to counter suicide terrorism in Pakistan," Pak Institute for Peace Studies Report, February 15, 2010, [http://sanpips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=pvt\\_list\\_1](http://sanpips.com/index.php?action=ra&id=pvt_list_1).
- <sup>24</sup> Mia Bloom, "Dying to Win: Motivations for Suicide Terrorism," in Ami Pedahzur ed., *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), quoted by C. Christine Fair.

*Analyzing Suicide Attacks in Pakistan*

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**LAST ISSUE**

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NUMBER 2

**Radicalization  
in Pakistan**

*A Comprehensive Study - I*



Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

## **LAST ISSUE**

### **Abstracts**

#### **A Link between Poverty and Radicalization in Pakistan**

*Manzar Zaidi*

The phenomenon of radicalization has played a major part in the ongoing militancy in Pakistan's restive tribal regions along the Pak-Afghan border. This paper traces a possible link between radicalization and poverty in the country by surveying 1,147 respondents, consisting of a sample universe of the poor compared with more affluent control groups. All the provinces of Pakistan were included in the sample universe, with the findings centered on an analytical discourse of poverty in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, and a possible link to escalating militancy there. The analysis engages with relevant literature to argue for the development of sub-nationally researched, fresh perspectives on linkages between poverty and radicalization in Pakistan.

#### **Religious Behaviors in Pakistan: Impact on Social Development**

*Muhammad Azam*

Based on findings of a country-wide survey and personal observations of the author, this paper analyzes how and in what ways the religious behaviors of Pakistanis impact upon the process of social development in the country. In this context, social conditions in Pakistan, religious influences, aggravation of social institutions, exploitation in the name of religion, religio-political behavior, religious behavior of the ruling elite, religious divides, sectarianism, militancy, and terrorism have also been discussed.

#### **Pakistan's Responses to Terrorism: A Broad Overview**

*Wajahat Ali*

Pakistan has been facing the menace of religious militancy for many years. Yet, it has failed to formulate a coherent and comprehensive strategy to defeat radical outfits and neutralize their extremist ideology. This paper not

only takes a broad overview of the country's responses to the twin challenges of radicalization and Islamist violence but also recommends steps that must be taken to win this war. Giving a concise account of Pakistan's involvement in the pre-9/11 Afghanistan, it argues that the country could not have distanced itself from the US-led "war on terror" in the region. It also contends that militant groups are posing a grave threat to the state not only because they find its alliance with the United States unpalatable but also because they despise its constitution and democratic system.



### **VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3**

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*Muhammad Amir Rana*

Taliban on the March: Threat Assessment and Security Implications for the Region

*Safdar Sial*

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*Ishtiaq Ahmed*

#### Report

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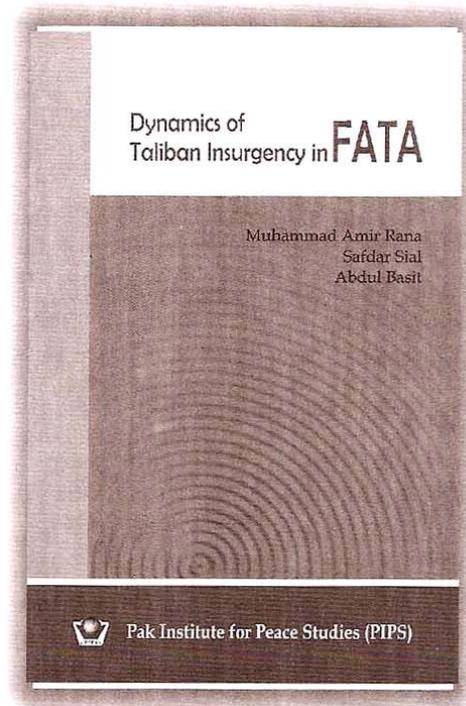
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Tablighi Jamaat: Discourse and Challenges

*Muhammad Amir Rana*

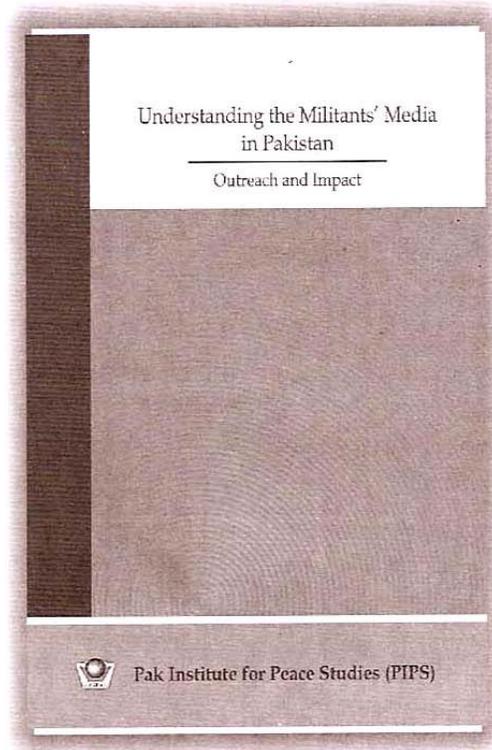


## Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA



The book is an effort to comprehend the transformation of Taliban movement into a full-fledged insurgency in FATA in a well worked-out research framework. It discusses the role of Arab militants and charities during Afghan-Soviet war, post-9/11 developments and current militant and security landscape. Besides providing group profiles of different Taliban groups, assessing their threat, and analyzing security implications of Taliban insurgency, the book has a comprehensive chapter on state's counter-insurgency perspective and its outcome.

# Understanding the Militants' Media in Pakistan: Outreach and Impact



The book aims to map militant media, its genesis and evolution in Pakistan. Content analysis of militants' print media reveals that the use of diction, terminologies style and tone of militant media is totally different from the mainstream media. The book also discusses the impact of militants' media on the society at large. It concludes that the militant media is gradually expanding its influence and outreach. The book outlines a series of recommendations that can support efforts to contain militants' media in Pakistan.

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- Conflict and Insecurity in Balochistan: Assessing Strategic Policy Options for Peace and Security
  - A Progressive Understanding of Pashtun Social Structures amidst Current Conflict in FATA
  - Understanding FATA
  - Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan: A Global Threat
  - Analyzing Suicide Attacks in Pakistan