

Pakistan: Axing the Roots. Political and Economic Marginalization and Rise of Militancy in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas

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Abstract: Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, a region lying on the boundary between Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and southern Afghanistan, controlled by the Federal Government of Pakistan, has been in the public eye following the event of the United States invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The spate of the rise of militancy and insurgencies in FATA currently poses a serious threat to the political stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively. Relying on the documentary methods of data collection and analysis, therefore, this study argues that the major factor underlying the prevailing militancy in FATA is the deep-seated political and socio-economic marginalization of the region. The study thus recommends, among other measures, that the Government of Pakistan needs to expedite actions to initiate and implement deliberate and well-articulated holistic reforms to bring the region into the mainstream of Pakistan's socio-economic and political developmental agenda. The study concludes that the intentional and proper adoption and application of these measures would be a realistic way of ending the militancy and insurgency in FATA and achieving lasting peace in the region and Pakistan as a whole.

Keywords: Governance/Politics, Economy, Marginalization, FATA, Militancy, Religion.

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Introduction

Since the incident of September 11, 2001, involving the heinous attack on the United States of America by the dreaded and notorious Islamic terrorist group, Al Qaeda, there has been consistent upsurge in the rise and spread of insurgent activities by Islamic extremists globally. Indeed, the incident has spurred the emergence of a

plethora of Islamic religious fundamentalist organizations whose rising spate of violence and insurgencies have come to constitute the most security concern of states, regions and the international community at the current time. Amidst the daunting task of finding lasting solutions to the numerous problems of humanity, inclusive of the issues of steady outbreaks of different types of deadly diseases, ozone layer's depletion, global economic downturn and rising poverty, the phenomenon of terrorism has come to present the most serious challenge to the global community. The internal security, peace and stability of most countries, especially in Asia, Middle-East and Africa have come under consistent threats due to the inhumane and violent activities of local Islamic insurgency groups, most of which are externally linked to more notable terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab. The operational capacities and tactics of these radicalized entities pose serious security threats not only to the national governments of the countries of their origins; in most instances their closest neighboring countries and entire regions also share the brunt, thereby spreading the devastating effects of terrorism across national borders. As such, terrorism has emerged as the greatest challenge confronting the international community at the present time.

The majority of Muslims decry the increasing insurgencies by the radical extremist groups in different parts of the world, and thus appear somewhat in support of the fight against terrorism and insurgency by the global community. Nevertheless, the U.S. intensification of efforts and demonstrable capacities in fighting terrorism in the affected zones in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is perceived by many Muslims as a deliberate retaliatory measure against the Islamic world. Hence, enmity between the U.S. and its Western allies and the Muslim communities globally has speedily continued to heighten and deepen. Besides launching attacks against home governments and strategic points to cause mass casualties among unarmed publics, Western elements also form the prime targets of the extremist insurgency groups, particularly those with global influence and networks, for example, Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda. Apparently, "the global terrorist threat is largely stemming from conflict zones such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Algeria, India (Kashmir), Russia (Chechnya) and China (Xingjiang) where Muslims are suffering" (Guranatna, 2009, p. 70). As the focal object of this study, the trend in the rise of violence and pattern of militancy and insurgency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan has seriously submerged the political stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan respectively. The situation in the FATA region seems to be a potential source of another form of 9/11 attack on the Western world or its surrogates in the regions (Nawaz, 2009).

The violence and insecurity in FATA, if not quickly and adequately addressed, has the tendency to spread to the Afghan and Pakistani mainland. FATA has quickly turned into a 'honeycomb' and a training ground for a multiple of radicalized extremists and terrorist groups that adopt Al Qaeda's ideology and operational tactics. Most possibly,

“the Afghanistan-Pakistan border will remain the epicenter of global terrorism, where Al Qaeda led and driven multiple threat groups will plan, prepare and mount attacks globally. At this point of time, mounting attacks in the West is within Al Qaeda remit in tribal Pakistan” (Guranatna, 2009, p. 69). Moreover, the ISIS also refers to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border as “Khorasan” (Khattak *et al.*, 2015). As it stands, the Islamic State has developed a ten-member Strategic Planning Wing to facilitate recruitment, planning, funding, and training of the militants under the banner of IS in Pakistan. A report by the provincial government of Balochistan shows that the IS militants have so far succeeded in recruiting as large as between 10,000 and 12,000 fighters from Hangu in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, and Kurram Agency and some other areas in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Zaidi, 2014). Daesh also sits on the Afghanistan border with Pakistan, and quite a majority of the Daesh militants hails from Pakistan and they possess Pakistani identity cards (Mora, 2016).

The principal actors – the U.S., Afghan Government, Pakistani Government and Pakistan Militaries are now to renew plan and working strategies for tactically breaking-down terrorists’ strongholds in FATA, or risk an imminent outburst of terror attacks by the varying global terrorist groups in the troubled zone. Previous measures adopted by the concerned actors to dismantle the terrorist infrastructures laid-down by Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban in a bid to restore peace and stability in FATA have not yielded fruitful returns. This is mainly because those measures do not address the root causes of the uprising among the inhabitants of the Afghan-Pakistan border territory. This paper investigates and unveils the real causes of militancy and violent extremism in FATA, and suggests the most curative strategies for ameliorating them in the interest of peace and stability of, most especially, the Pakistani state and the world. The paper is collapsed into eight sections. The first section is the introduction. The second offers a brief explanation of the FATA. The third section is made up of the theoretical framework of analysis for the study. The fourth section is an overview of some of the major issues related to the militancy and insurgency in FATA. The fifth section highlights key developments pertaining to the 2016 FATA reforms. The sixth section explains the nexus between political and economic marginalization and militancy in the FATA region. The seventh section consists of the recommended measures for addressing the situation, while the eighth section is the conclusion.

Understanding the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan

FATA is a location that covers about 27,500 square kilometers and lies on the border between Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and southern Afghanistan. It is the habitation of over 3.5 million Pashtun (otherwise called Pakhtun) tribesmen, including some 1.5 million displaced persons from Afghanistan (Nawaz, 2009). Khan (2016, p. 8) recounts that, “it is a narrow belt stretching along the PAK-Afghan border,

popularly known as the Durand Line, named after Sir Mortimer Duran, who surveyed and established this borderline between Afghanistan and British India in 1890–1894". FATA is also seen as home to a host of Al Qaeda operatives, most particularly the numerous foreigners from the Arab World, Central Asia, Muslim areas of the Far East as well as Europe, who migrate to the troubled zone for training, indoctrination, and sometimes respite from repression at home. Since the event of the United States invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, realities in FATA have drawn global attention to the region (Nawaz, 2009). FATA is a traditional and tribal society, and development in the area is at infancy (Ahmad, 2013).

FATA is made up of seven agencies namely, Bajuar, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Mohmand, and Orakzai, which are under the control of the central government of Pakistan through the governor of the North-West Frontier Province. With the exception of Orakzai, the rest constituent elements of FATA share a border with Afghanistan, and each has a dominant tribe, distinct economic base and physical features, which make it to differ from others. Towards the east side of FATA in the settled area of NWFP, there are six contiguous Frontier Regions (FR) that are also under the control of the governor but are administered daily by provincial representatives — FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Bannu, FR Lakki, and FR Dera Ismail Khan. Adjacent to FATA and the NWFP to the north and west in Afghanistan is a group of nine provinces (from North to South — Nuristan, Kunar, Nangarhar, Khost, Paktika, Kabul, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz), which are mostly inhabited by Pashtuns (Nawaz, 2009). Then number of large Pashtun tribes that occupy the lands of FATA is estimated to be approximately 60, and if all the sub-clans are counted, the number is around 400 (Norell, 2010). Other tribal groups are also present in some of these provinces, but the Pashtun is the largest. Instantly following these afore named nine provinces are the densely Pashtun provinces of Paktia and Logar (Nawaz, 2009).

The Pashtun tribes are Muslims, but "a small number of religious minorities, Hindus and Sikhs, also inhabit some of the tribal agencies" (Khan, 2016, p. 9). The Pashtuns of FATA and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were called the Northwest Frontier Province until early 2010. With their fairly large populations in Pakistan's Balochistan province and Karachi city in the Sindh province, the two agencies — Pashtuns and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa account for about 38–40 million people. In 1893, the Durand Line divided Pashtun tribes between British India and Afghanistan. This delineation has since then been viewed with great contempt and resentment by Pashtuns, which is the major ethnic group in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The demarcation line has been a major source of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the emergence of Pakistan in 1947 (Norell, 2010). FATA is generally governed by customs and traditions, and arms and weapons are considered common parts of men's dress whereas every house in some parts of it works like an ordinance factory (Ahmad, 2013). The

explanation for this lies in the fact that the Pashtuns have throughout history been subject to invasions. Ultimately, since history, the region, which includes Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of Pakistan, have witnessed perhaps a greater number of invasions than all other countries in Asia, or in even the entire world. Thus, bearing of arms by men is because of accumulated experience of war and violence and the need to be at alert always in the defence of their territory (Norell, 2010).

The Mongols, under Genghis Khan and Timur Lenk subdued these areas. Since history, the region which includes Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of Pakistan have witnessed perhaps more invasions than any other country in Asia, or in the entire world (Montagne, 1963). The pre-Islamic Pashtun code of conduct is Pashtunwali, which regulates the intra and inert tribal dynamics. The Pashtunwali is more of a set of principles than codified law. The constituent elements of this code are Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), Melmastia (hospitality), Nanawatay (forgiveness) and Hamsaya (neighbor). Absolute and undying loyalty to the tribe and fierce opposition to occupation are central to this tradition (Zaidi, 2010). The tribes in FATA are managed mainly through their Maliks, or the influentials, and the tribesmen themselves and the official Maliks, who are selected by the Political Agent (PA) of each agency, the official representative of the government who is responsible for local governance along with the Maliks, determine some of them. The Political Agent allots stipends to the Maliks according to their status as perceived by the government. The number of Maliks differs among the agencies. For example, there are about 1,600 Maliks in North Waziristan. The militants in FATA have assassinated more than 600 tribal Maliks. Militancy and insurgency is the prevailing order of the day in FATA, which serves as safe haven both for tribal terrorist cliques and for their cohort foreigners. It is believed that most of the followers of two major mujahideen commanders of the Afghan war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s are taking refuge among tribesmen in FATA (Nawaz, 2009).

Elements of Al Qaeda, the global terrorist organization have also continued to use FATA as training ground. In addition to the numerous tribal terror syndicates in FATA, the terror and militancy in the region has been aggravated by the emergence of a more sophisticated homegrown insurgency group, Terheek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP), under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud who hails from South Waziristan. The TTP aims at establishing a religious state in Pakistan based on its own interpretation of the Islamic law — *Sharia*, but more firmly tied to tribal custom (Nawaz, 2009). As Norell (2010) observes, “since 2001, the TTP has been building up a power base in the Northwest, much of it done by aiding ousted Taliban and international Jihadi groups from Afghanistan” (p. 21). The TTP has continued to engage the Pakistani state in fierce battle even unto the hinterland. It is believed that the group is behind some of the most horrific attacks inside Pakistan, including the killing of former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 in Rawalpindi and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in September

2008 in Islamabad (Nawaz, 2009). Overall, the presence and activities of the TTP has significantly changed the security landscape of Pakistan as a whole in a negative sense.

Theoretical Basis

This study depends on the “Frustration-Aggression Theory”, to drive home its argument in view of the subject matter of the research. Frustration-Aggression Theory remains one of the most prominent and useful tools often adopted by social scientists and scholars in the behavioural sciences for explaining conflict (Paki, 2011). The theory is based on a research work published in a monograph in 1939 at the Yale University Institute of Human Relations, by a group of scholars namely; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (Berkowitz, 1989). The theory offers a psychological explanation on the relationship between frustration and aggression (Paki, 2011). The progenitors of the frustration and aggression theory sought to give a condensed explanation for almost all human aggression (Berkowitz, 1989). In their 1939 book, titled *Frustration and Aggression*, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears puts forward a proposition, explaining that “frustration can create aggression inclinations even when they are not arbitrary or aimed at the subject personally” (Paki, 2011, p. 10).

The main thrust of their theory thus is that, aggression is consistently the result of frustration (Dollard *et al.*, 1939). As they argue, “the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some of aggression” (Dollard *et al.*, 1939, p. 1). The majority of research into the causes and consequences of aggression in the decades after were, to a reasonable extent, hinged on the ideas portrayed by the Yale scholars (Berkowitz, 1989). Paki (2011, p. 10) apparently concurs with the foregoing position by arguing that some of the issues raised by their book have attracted considerable attention (Berkowitz, 1958, 1962, 1989; Buss, 1961; Yates, 1962; Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970; Bandura, 1973; Baron, 1977; Zillman, 1979; Anifowose, 1982). For instance, Berkowitz (1962) and Yates (1962) suggest that the violent behavior is resulting from inability to fulfill needs; Davies (1962, p. 6) emphasizes the difference between “expected need satisfaction” and “actual need satisfaction”, and Gurr (1970) addresses the issues of relative deprivation gap between expectation and capabilities.

It is important to state, however, that, here, frustration specifically implies the thwarting of a goal response, while a goal response means the reinforcing final operation in a present behaviour sequence. Sometimes, also, the word ‘frustration’ is adapted to suggest not just the process of hindering a person from attaining a reinforcer, but the person’s reactions to such obstruction as well. Therefore, to be frustrated entails both that one is prevented access to reinforcers by another party or a given circumstance and that the person aggressively reacts to this disruption (Dennen, 2005). Frustration hence underscores all cases of aggression, and the frustration-aggression theory’s

thesis implies that frustration is precipitated by environmental interferences in the organism's goal attainment (Paki, 2011). In other words, "an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who perceives the importance of the desire is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behaviour to the perceived thwarting objects" (Paki, 2011, p. 1).

Some noteworthy criticisms are levelled against the frustration-aggression theory as a theory for explaining conflict in the human society. For instance, Bandura (1973) describes the frustration-aggression hypothesis as a drive theory, arguing that frustration merely creates a general emotional arousal and, that social learning determines how a person responds to this arousal. Zillman on his own attributes the occasional demonstration of aggressive responses to frustration, "to the involvement of supplementary factors such as personal attacks or instrumental value of aggressive reactions" (Zillman, 1979, p. 138). According to Zillman (1979, p. 139), "the blockage of a goal reaction, in and of itself...generally will not induce interpersonal hostility or aggression". Baron (1977, p. 92) is of the opinion that frustration "is not a very common or important (antecedent of aggression) and is probably far less crucial in this respect than has widely — and persistently — been assumed".

Notwithstanding, Baron (1977), as pointed out by Berkowitz (1989), believes that obstacles to the attainment of goals can produce aggressive reactions only when they were not expected. Regardless of these criticisms, the frustration-aggression theory is popularly regarded to be highly relevant and useful in understanding and explaining the causes of conflicts in the human society. Inevitably, the researcher finds the theory to be most appropriate and suitable for explaining the cause of persistent militancy and insurgencies in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Given a deep-seated feeling of resentment against constituted authorities in the state of Pakistan, owing to long experience of socio-economic and political deprivation and neglect, the tribal people of FATA resorted to acts of terrorism and militancy as a way of expressing their aggression and grievances.

Militancy in FATA: An Overview of Some Major Issues

The explosion in militancy and extremism in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas has drawn the attention of the entire world to the region. The tribal areas on the Pakistani border to Afghanistan have been in the international limelight since the U.S. ousting of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 (Norell, 2010). FATA, in the eyes of many has become the epicenter of global terrorism and insurgency, which especially became highly disturbing during 2007 and 2008. The deplorable security situation in FATA holds unprecedented implications for international terrorism, the stability of the Pakistani state as well as for the effort by the United States to stabilize Afghanistan (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). The growing rates of acts of terror and insurgencies being

perpetrated by the various tribal militant groups in the zone have overtime continued to threaten the political stability of Pakistan.

This is coupled with economic crisis being witnessed by the country at the moment, aggravated among other things by the global inflation and the rise in the prices of oil and food that could seriously threaten the Pakistani state if they result to high inflation. Moreover, FATA, in the recent years has become a cause of disagreement and controversy between the United States and Pakistan, as the incursions of the U.S. into FATA have not only resulted to a verbal war but also led to open and direct confrontations between the forces of both countries on the border (Nawaz, 2009). There were evident indications during 2008 for more violence outbursts in Afghanistan and in the border areas of Pakistan, mostly in the form of attacks orchestrated by Islamic militant movements. These attacks were aimed at Western forces in Afghanistan and civilians, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This trend has continued for the past years, with increasing attacks including suicide attacks (Norell, 2010).

The year 2008 thus saw a grown influence of Islamist militants in large parts of Pakistan beyond the FATA, and this brought insecurity even to the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [KP]) capital of Peshawar, which reportedly is in danger of being overrun by pro-Taliban militants (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). Pakistan alleges Afghanistan's involvement for the unrest in FATA, as for example, the Afghan Mullah Dadullah, popularly known as the father of suicide bombing in Pakistan, was a militant leader in South Waziristan before he was killed in a Predator attack. Qari Ziaur Rehman of the Afghan Kunar province is also the militant leader in Bajuar. The Pakistan government has seemingly lost the ability to fully control and manage FATA as it did in the past and the fight is persistently ongoing to regain the control of the region even unto parts of the NWFP, where home-grown militancy has led to the establishment of a parallel government of terror and insurgencies. Pakistan lost control of FATA and replaced its management with coercion. In spite of that, militancy has continued to spread like wildfire not only inside FATA but also into the settled district of NWFP (Nawaz, 2009).

The State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2007 noted that 2007 witnessed a sudden growth in the trend and sophistication of suicide bombings in Pakistan, as there was more than twice of many of such attacks (at least 45) as in the previous five years combined, and in 2008, the rates of such bombings increased tremendously (Kronstadt & Katzman, 2008). On account of this, in March 2008, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director, Hayden, said that the situation on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border poses a clear and continuing danger to Afghanistan, Pakistan, the West as a whole, and particularly to the United States. He and other top U.S. officials believe that possible future terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland would likely originate from that region (The Associated Press, 2008). As it is, "the Afghan Taliban and the TTP have concentrated

actions against the U.S. forces in Afghanistan or the Pakistan Army and civilian targets respectively" (Nawaz, 2009, p. 10).

One of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the history of Pakistan that provoked profound condemnation locally and internationally was the incident of December 16, 2014, involving the brutal massacre of 132 schoolchildren and nine staff of the Army Public School in Peshawar, by members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban, the Pakistan Taliban. While claiming responsibility for the attack, Terhrk-e-Taliban Pakistan argued that the group's murder of such a large number of innocent schoolchildren and their teachers was in revenge for the heavy military offensive against terrorist outfits in FATA called Zarbe-e-Azb (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). Launched on June 15, 2014 by the Pakistani Government, Zarb-e-Azb means the 'strike of the sword of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)' used in Badr and Uhud, and it was full-scale military operation on North Waziristan Agency, one of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. The Operation Zarbe-e-Azb was initiated in response to the attack on Jinnah International Airport Karachi. By it, the Pakistan Army aims to wipe-out all terrorist syndicates, both local and foreign, hiding in safe haven in NWA and to regain control of FATA and its adjacent areas (Javaid, 2015).

As it were, "the terrorist outfits used NWA as a base to fight a war against Pakistan that disrupted the national life; impeding her economic development and caused huge humanitarian and other losses" (Javaid, 2015, p. 44). The TTP claimed that the operation Zarbe-e-Azb had been underway in the tribal areas since summer and had caused the deaths of an estimated 1,000 militants and displaced tens of thousands of people. Mohammed Umar Khurasani, the Terhrk-e-Taliban Pakistan spokesperson stated that the group selected the army's school for the attack because the government was targeting their families and females, and thus they wanted them to feel the pain (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The mass killing at Peshawar's Army School and College represents the most barbarous aspect of the Taliban insurgency that has continued to plague the country for over a decade (Ali, 2014).

Whereas Pakistan had experienced several terrorist incidents since the last decade, the mass murder of faultless children clearly elicited momentous outcry at home and international fronts (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The people of Pakistan regard December 16, 2014, as their own 9/11. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, described the awful incident as a "decisive moment" (Ali, 2014). World leaders unanimously condemned the violence on innocent children and showed solidarity with Pakistan over the horrible and despicable incident. The US President, Barack Obama said the attack was a heinous one, while his Secretary of State, John Kerry said it was "gut-wrenching" and "an unspeakable horror". Reiterating the comment of the Pakistan government and military, Kerry declared that the culprits must face justice (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014).

In his own words, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron described the odious phenomenon as "a dark day for humanity", stating that no belief system in the world

as a whole can actually justify the appalling act (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014). The gravity of the horror and agony that followed the massacre brought regional rivals together to express sympathy and support for the victims, as the Indian Prime Minister, described the inhumane act against schoolchildren as cowardly. The Minister added that it was an irrational act of horrendous brutality that had claimed the lives of the innocent young children in their school. Moreover, Afghanistan's President, Ashraf Ghani, who himself had engaged in a struggle with the Afghan Taliban, faulted the awful act, and asserted that the slaughtering of the innocent school children contravened Islamic doctrines (Bonne & MacAskill, 2014).

The December 16, 2014 Peshawar schoolchildren massacre sparked off the National Action Plan initiative launched by the Pakistani Government in January 2015. The National Action Plan on its own is a strategy aimed at cracking down on terrorist groups in Pakistan, in response to the Peshawar killing. The National Action Plan received unprecedented support from every segment of the Pakistani society, including the major political parties and the military, and it is believed that the twenty-point plan will eradicate terrorism in the country (Souciant, 2016). Whatever may be the case, the violence in the Pakistani tribal belt holds a potential danger not only for the political stability of the Afghan and Pakistani states and for the stabilization of the Afghanistan; it means much for global stability and security. The concern for these principal actors remains how to devise more effective and comprehensive strategies for bringing the situation in the Pakistan's tribal region under close check and control.

Political and Economic Marginalization as Driver of Militancy in FATA

There is no doubt about the fact that FATA has swiftly grown into a fertile ground for militancy that has brought the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively, under severe threats, but the reasons for this development has to be equally substantiated. There is growing body of literature on the immediate cause(s) of the militancy by the tribesmen of the Pakistani FATA as well as possible solutions to the problem, but this study, like so many others, traces the origins of the unrest in the area to long term political/administrative, economic and developmental realities. These factors provide an ample basis for explaining and understanding the current odious state of affairs in FATA. Politically and administratively speaking, FATA has been largely sidelined and neglected, and this has resulted in popular discontent that has built-up for many years among the aggrieved tribesmen that inhabit the region. Nawaz (2009, p. 8) corroborates that, "FATA has suffered from lack of proactive and participatory governance mechanisms and has been subject to anachronistic, top-down administrative system that served the colonial British power but not suitable for a modern society".

FATA was accorded an autonomous status due to its unique features at the inception of the state of Pakistan, which it (FATA) assented to. Promise was made to the people of

FATA that the Pakistani state would not interfere with their ways of doing things and that they would continue to enjoy their freedom as they had always done in the past. To this extent, the people of FATA held on to their traditions and customs without much government intrusion. Their life affairs were rather regulated by age-long traditions and customs than the general law of Pakistan (Ahmad, 2013). FATA therefore retained the same status as it had under Britain. Even with the first constitution of Pakistan, being the 1956 constitution under which parliamentary system was introduced to Pakistan, FATA's political and administrative structures remained the same. Article 223 of the 1962 Constitution kept the tribal areas outside the jurisdiction of the central and provincial laws mainly because of the peculiar conditions and problems of the tribal areas. The governor of the province in which the tribal areas were situated was given special powers for legislation. The governor had powers to make, repeal, and amend any regulation or any central and provincial law for the whole or any part of the area based on the president's approval. Under Article 247 of the 1973 Constitution, the same arrangement was maintained for the tribal areas (Bangash, 1996).

Also, the Basic Democracy System was extended to FATA wherein representation was authorized in the Pakistani national and provincial assemblies. The system allowed only one member to be elected to the national and provincial assemblies from each Electoral College (Khan, 2016). Article 247 of the Constitution, puts the Federally Administered Tribal Areas under the executive authority of the federation. The Article extends the executive authority of a province to the provincially administered tribal area therein. The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), which is answerable to the elected prime minister has both administrative and political control of FATA. Yet, at the level of policy implementation, this control is insignificant and less important as the president has the actual executive authority and control over FATA, which he exercises through the provincial governor. This is evident under Article 247 clause (2) of the Constitution where it is provided that the president may occasionally issue directives to the governor of the province regarding the entire or any parts of the tribal area under the province as he deems important, and accordingly, the governor would duly adhere to such directive (Wazir, 2017).

The administration of each agency is performed by the Political Agent assisted by an Assistant Political Agent (APA), who serves as the head of a sub-division (Wazir, 2017). Under the President's Order No.1 of 1975 which is called the "Preparation of Electoral Rolls (FATA) Order, 1975", the right to vote for every adult male and female over the age of 21 is denied to the tribes. In view of this order, only the Maliks and the Lungi holders are recognized as registered voters by the political agent and not the people, and with the consent of the commissioner, the political agent could transfer the status to his favorites (Bangash, 1996). The Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) provides for the referral of civil and criminal cases to Jirgas by the Political Agents. After hearing the

parties involved in any disputes, the Jirgas are to ascertain guilt or innocence and then pass verdict based on *rewaj* (International Crisis Group, 2006). Nevertheless, the verdict of the Jirga is not final; the ultimate authority to decide rests with the Political Agent. Moreover, the FCR makes no provision for appeal against the decision of the Political Agent both to the Supreme Court of Pakistan and to the High Court (Wazir, 2017).

The FCR is too rigid and deficient in such a manner that it does not provide justice in its modern sense to the people of FATA (Ahmad, 2013). It is draconian in nature.

Till very recently, political activities were not allowed in FATA and there was no effective political system at any level. Even the principle of direct election and universal adult franchise was introduced about a decade ago. Lack of political activities and related process has created a political vacuum in the area (Ahmad, 2013, p. 13).

FATA has suffered so much due to its exclusion from the governance process of the Pakistani state. Not until recently, precisely in 1997, FATA's representatives in Pakistan's National Assembly were selected only by the tribal Maliks. Despite the extension, in 1997 of universal franchise to FATA, it could only send representatives to the federal legislature. Currently, FATA has 12 members in the National Assembly of Pakistan and 8 senators, but it lacks representation in the Provincial Assembly of the NWFP. This is because FATA is not under the government of the province like the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) (Nawaz, 2009). Hence, the introduction of Adult Franchise is almost of no use to the people of FATA. The local government system in FATA is merely nominal and is steadily under undue manipulation by the Political Agents of the agencies. The Local Government Ordinance of 2001 is yet to be introduced in FATA despite the yearnings and outcries of various civil society groups in the region (Wazir, 2017).

FATA is excluded from the application and operation of the Pakistan's Political Act. No political parties can operate within FATA officially despite the presence of many of their flags in many houses and strategic spots in the area. This has enabled religious groups that are associated with various political parties in Pakistan to use Friday prayers as a medium for appealing and sensitizing the people in their favor, that is, in order to broaden their support-base (Nawaz, 2009). As Ahmad (2013, p. 14) observes, "the existing political, administrative and legal vacuum provided a fertile ground for nourishment of insurgents on different pretexts". There is no political, administrative, and legal structure to effectively challenge and curb their activities once they rise. Existing political and administrative frameworks in FATA is not robust and adequate to pre-empt or prevent such threats at the local levels as they are manned by tribal Maliks, who are not properly recognized or respected by the people. In the event of coming-up with their insurgent and terror activities, the administrative set-up would collapse (Ahmad, 2013).

FATA relies on the poorly trained and inadequately equipped personnel of *Khasadar* Force for security. The force is incapable of facing the challenge from better trained and well-equipped insurgents. The absence of sound legal structure further gives room to Talibanization of FATA, as the various militant groups establish their own courts, which they claim provides the inhabitants with free and speedy justice in line with the teachings and principles of Islam or *Sharia* Law and the people embrace the idea (Amin, 2008). This, largely, is due to the widespread annoyance and weariness among the common people regarding the cruelties and oppressive tendencies of the tribal Maliks and the absence of well-structured legal, judicial and remedial system to help address their grievances. The people needed a system that would guarantee prompt delivery of justice, which is absolutely missing under the FCR. The insurgents often snatch people from the custody of the tribal Maliks and marshal-out justice to them based on *Sharia* Law. This way, the insurgents win the sympathy of the common people, which serves as a support base to the insurgents in challenging the authority of the Pakistani state in FATA (Ahmad, 2013).

Also, various governments of Pakistan used FATA as a buffer zone during the war between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The tribesmen were employed as a reserve force and were deployed for insurgency operations in Indian-held Kashmir (Nawaz, 2009). The tribesmen were made to believe that they were fighting in the interest and defense of Islam and enforcement of *Sharia* Law in Afghanistan after its independence from the occupation by Soviet powers. The Pakistani authorities did not only mobilize the local people under the purview of religion; foreign *Jihadists* were also mobilized and brought into the region, and afterwards, they were allowed to settle as permanent residents in the area. The Pakistani governments and authorities hardly envisaged the possibility of these elements rising against the state in future to demand the introduction and implementation of *Sharia* Law in their land. The government did not also make any efforts to integrate the already trained militants into the mainstream of society as a way of ensuring that they did not use their training or be galvanized by anyone against the very society they fought for (Ahmad, 2013). The political representatives of FATA have always shown solidarity and support for, and aligned with successive regimes and governments in Pakistan.

The exclusion of the area from the mainstream political process has created a sense of deprivation and alienation from the Pakistani state in the real sense. The people of FATA are not involved in the planning and decision-making process for their own affairs and development. Most decisions regarding the area are made afar and imposed on the people even against their wish. The state can no longer rely on the support given by FATA political representatives as the overbearing effects of the notion of religious-based politics has overtime transformed the society. The various militant groups among the tribes in FATA offer their own different interpretations of the Islamic religion, and that

serves as a uniting and legitimizing ground for their inhumane activities against the state (Nawaz, 2009). Considering the foregoing, therefore, past legacies, government short-sightedness and policies, as well as inadequate legal systems and disintegrative political and administrative frameworks, are certainly a key factor in understanding the prevailing situation in FATA.

On the other hand, hardly can the socio-economic situation of FATA be overemphasized as a critical factor for explaining the rising militancy and the spread of terror in the area. FATA's economic potentials have remained unharnessed. There are deposits of some natural resources including minerals and coal, but these have remained untapped. Due to little industrial development and a few job opportunities, most of the locals depend on subsistence agricultural to make ends meet (Wazir, 2017). In view of these degrading conditions and share neglect by the successive central governments in Pakistan to develop the economy and polity of the region, FATA has continued to serve as a breeding ground for militancy and insurgency, threatening the stability of the state of Pakistan (Nawaz, 2009). FATA is known to be one of the most backward and underdeveloped regions of Pakistan due to subsisting government negligence; illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment are commonly identified as the major features of the area (Ahmad, 2013).

With respect to literacy, FATA has a very low literacy rate (Norell, 2010). The overall rate of literacy in FATA is 33.3 per cent, which is far below the Pakistani national average of 58.92 percent (Firdous, 2015). Women in FATA are the most badly affected when it comes to the issue of literacy. Indeed, "the patriarchal fabric of society and chronic illiteracy has left women seriously disadvantaged. Women are the most part restricted to household chores, and are excluded from decision-making role on any front" (Ahmad & Junaid, 2010, p. 57). Male literacy rate is 29 percent, while literacy rate for female is put at 3 percent, compared to 32.6 percent for female nationally (Wazir, 2017). The prevailing high rate of illiteracy would always make the common people of FATA to be susceptible to lures by the insurgents to support or even join them actively in their militant activities.

In FATA, poverty is rife and embedded (Norell, 2010). It is generally known and agreed that the level of poverty in FATA is comparatively higher than the rest of Pakistan (Zaidi, 2010). Although report has it that four out of ten Pakistan's citizens live in excruciating poverty, FATA is the region in the country with the greatest poverty level, where three out of four people (73.7%) are battling with acute poverty (Rana, 2016). According to Ahmad and Junaid (2010, p. 57), "poverty has, to a greater extent, made the population vulnerable to extremist tendencies".

Employment opportunities are very scarce, and the local economy is pastoralism, coupled with agriculture conducted in a few fertile valleys. Subsistence farming practice

and livestock dealings, or holding of small-size businesses, are the major economic activities of most families. However, it is only as small as about 7 percent of the total area of FATA that can actually be cultivated (Zaidi, 2010; Government of Pakistan, 2006). Hence, the population of about 3.5 million people has so little arable land that each acre of cultivable land has to be utilized for supporting at least 40 people (Zaidi, 2010).

In the absence of economically viable options to earn a living, therefore, the lure of engaging in illicit activities, such as smuggling of consumer goods and weapons and trafficking in drug, has become as difficult to resist as the call of extremist Islamist elements (Ahmad & Junaid, 2010). According to Aftab (2008), one relatively more comprehensive study on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan is the one by Shinwari in 2008. Shinwari amplifies the view that FATA is the most backward region in Pakistan, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line. Based on the revelations of the study, per capita public expenditure in FATA is one-third of the average for Pakistan (Aftab, 2008). Shinwari further observed unequivocally that, "employment opportunities are limited, and the main sectors of employment are agriculture, transport, (generally illegal) cross-border trade, small businesses, and arms and drug trafficking" (Aftab, 2008, p. 3). In submission, Shinwari sees poverty and lack of opportunity as a contributing factor towards growing militancy in FATA (Aftab, 2008). Evidence that FATA is the most backward and disenfranchised region of Pakistan has been captured thus:

The remoteness from the developed centers of the country, difficult topography, harsh local traditions, and imprudent government policies provided unfriendly conditions for investment in commerce and industry. Lack of appropriate public sector attention and investment in related infrastructure contributed to massive illiteracy, unemployment and underdevelopment, which provided a suitable environment for the rise of extremism and militancy in the area (Ahmad, 2013, p. 15).

As it stands, electricity supply reaches just 62% of the entire FATA population, and on the average, the road density is 0.17 compared to the national average of 0.26 (Government of Pakistan, 2006). Health care providers and facilities in FATA have been, and are still inadequate. A study shows that there are 577 doctors available for a population of 4.285 million people and 280 Lady Health Visitors (LHV) (Khan & Kanwal, 2015), available for 1.8 million populations of women in FATA (Burki, 2014). It is reported also that the total number of hospitals in FATA is 33 with 302 dispensaries and 56 mother and child healthcare center for the 4 million population of FATA (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics [KPKBS], 2011). Another study shows that, for every 2,179 people in FATA, there is only one hospital bed and one doctor for every 7,670 people (Zaidi, 2010). Talibanization and military operations in the FATA region have also worsened the situation of things with regard to health care provision due to exit of many residents of

the tribal areas to urban areas of KPK in search of refuge (Internally Displaced Person Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling [IVAP], 2013).

Disturbingly, the Pakistani Government reveals that, due to the security situation, the country already has a huge 60,000 internally displaced (IDPs) families from FATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2014). A Rapid Protection Cluster Assessment discloses that, “the vast majority (76%) of IDPs are currently living in rented accommodation, 7% with relatives and 5% with host community, while 12% are living in spontaneous settlements — mostly school buildings” (UNHCR, 2014, p. 4). Another study demonstrates that 75% of the IDPs lack access to clean drinking water (IVAP, 2013). In another report, it is disclosed that only 43 percent of residents of FATA enjoy access to clean drinking water (Zaidi, 2010). About 40% IDP families do not have access to a formal latrine at home, while 23% of the IDPs cover nearly 5 km to access health care facilities (IVAP, 2013). It suffices to assert, in the whole, that, “the underdevelopment [in FATA] also helps rising militancy in the region, as the insurgents are able to exploit the deprivations of the common people and promote their agenda without much interference or fear of state authorities” (Ahmad, 2013, p. 15). Indisputably, the socio-economic realities in FATA is obviously an important factor in explaining the remote causes of the phenomenon of militancy in the region.

FATA Reforms 2016 in Focus

In an effort to affect the destiny of the tribal people of FATA positively and guarantee them basic and fundamental civic rights (Times of Islamabad, 2016), the Pakistan’s Government, on November 8, 2015, constituted a five-man committee headed by Pakistan’s Foreign Affairs Adviser, Satarj Aziz, to undertake reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Hassan, 2015; Butt, 2016). Other members of the committee include the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Sardar Mehtab, the Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Abdul Qadir Baloch, Prime Minister’s Advisor on National Security, Nasir Janjua, and Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Zahid Amid (Hassan, 2015). The committee was mandated to come up with a set of comprehensive proposals towards ameliorating FATA’s political, administrative, judicial and security ambivalences and the plights of the tribal people. Along with the rehabilitation and resettlement exercise, the FATA reforms aimed at giving the citizens of the tribal areas a worthy future (Dawn, 2016). The thrust of the committee’s responsibility was among other things, to determine whether FATA should be merged into Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as a part of the Provincially Administered Tribals Areas or be restructured as a distinct province of the state of Pakistan (Butt, 2016).

Prior to the announcement of the proposals of the reform committee, the hope of the generality of the people, however, was that the reforms would not only produce an equitable and effective social justice system for FATA, but would also lead to the abolition of

the Frontier Crime Regulation in the region. The Nizam-e-Adal system earlier proposed by the FATA Reforms Committee was generally considered as the best way of ensuring the provision of easy and rapid justice to people of the tribal areas. Majority of people in FATA, including members of political and religious parties were in support of the introduction of the Nizam-e-Adal system, as that has been the long-standing demand of the people of the region. It is considered that the imposition of Nizam-e-Adal in tribal areas would both lessen sufferings and difficulties among the people as well as guarantee the protection of their culture and traditions (Times of Islamabad, 2016). In carrying out its responsibility, the FATA Reform Committee was expected to hold consultations with all stakeholders before preparing and presenting the report of its recommendations (Hassan, 2015). The essence of this was to ensure that the reform's implementation process was sensitive to the legitimate needs and concerns of every community and quarters in the tribal region.

While the recommendations of the committee were yet unrevealed, however, accusations of non-inclusion of the tribal people in the consultation process had already risen from some quarters. To lend credence, notable personalities, such as Aftab Ahmed — the Qaumi Watan Party Chief, Khan Sherpao and Ajmal Khan Wazir — a prominent tribal politician, had alleged the Pakistan's Government of neglecting the tribal people during the consultation exercise. They poignantly alleged that when the committee visited the seven tribal districts, it had deliberations with just a few tribal elders it selected who are mostly called 'Maliks' as against the popular expectations of the tribal people (Butt, 2016). Although this allegation was not investigated to find out the true state of affairs, it tended to create wrong impression in the mind of the tribal people about the reform process. The implication was that, even though the Government of Pakistan meant well for FATA by initiating reforms to respond to the long-standing wishes and yearnings of the residents, any feeling of any sort of deprivation, say for instance, the accusation of not carrying the directly concerned people along could have undoubtedly marred the whole reform effort.

FATA needs to be normalized so that it can subdue the accumulated experiences and legacies of the British Raj and the post-independent Pakistan. Thus, FATA in particular and the Pakistani state in general, could not have been able to bear the careless handling of the processes of the reform exercise (Dawn, 2016). As it were, FATA reforms had been proposed in the past, but the wheels of the state failed to turn when it came to implementation. In the recent phase, the political and military leadership worked together, giving hope that change was imminent. Notwithstanding that, the political leadership followed the overall direction of change sought by the military rather than the other way round, the fear remains that despite how good-intentioned the military leadership may be about change in FATA, political and social changes shepherded by a security-oriented institution can lead to lopsided outcomes (Dawn, 2016). Be it as it

may, on August 20, 2016, the FATA Reforms Committee announced its final proposals to the Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif (Tribal News Network, 2016).

The highlights of the proposals as captured in the report of the FATA Reform Committee recommended as follows:

1. That the tribal areas be merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;
2. That the Article 247 of the Constitution be amended and that the people of FATA should be given access to the higher judiciary;
3. That the "cruel" clauses of the Frontier Crimes Regulation including the collective responsibility clause be amended;
4. That the governor should launch a 10-year development programme in FATA and complete the process of repatriation of internally displaced persons by the end of the year 2016;
5. That there should be local government polls in FATA in 2017 and appointment of 20,000 more Levies and Khassadar personnel to improve law and order; and
6. That all the property of FATA be brought under the land record (Tribal News Network, 2016).

These key recommendations, to a large extent, represent the long-standing desire of the Pakistan's tribal people of FATA. Nevertheless, the onus now falls on the political leadership of Pakistan to both fully adopt and adequately implement the reform's recommendations. Largely, the reforms present an ample opportunity for the Pakistan's Government to improve the situation of the tribal region to an appreciable measure. Failure on the part of the Pakistan's political leadership will not only increase their distrust and confidence in the Government, it will produce unprecedented consequences for the tribal region in particular and the Pakistani state in general. This is true, especially with regard to the on-going effort at addressing the problem of terrorism and militancy in FATA. In short, the already traumatized tribal belt of the Pakistani state will remain at square-one in the event of failure of the recent reforms to better its lots. The people of FATA may likely regard any other reforms canvassed for the tribal region as share mockery of their fate, if the current reforms fail to address their plight through embracing and executing the recommendations of the reforms committee.

Suggested Solutions to the Problem

Although numerous studies conducted on FATA have proffered diverse possible solutions to the problem in that region of Pakistan, yet the position of this study is that more curative and effective measures are needed urgently to salvage the undesirable situation. In view of this, the contribution of this study to tackling the challenge of terrorism and militancy in the FATA of Pakistan is of utmost importance. In broad sense, therefore, this study holds that, besides the need for full adoption and adequate implementation of the recommendations of the FATA Reform 2016, there is the expedience of deliberate,

well-articulated and holistic reforms to end the widely perceived marginalization of FATA and bring the region into the mainstream of Pakistan's socio-economic and political developmental agenda. In addition to this broad view, the specific workable recommendations of the study are as followed:

1. The Pakistani and Afghan governments and the U.S. need to re-appraise their approach and method for engaging the insurgents and militants in FATA. Seeking dialogue with FATA tribesmen through their trusted religious heads and an "Amnesty Programme" can be better alternatives to the conventional military option.
2. The U.S. and the Pakistani governments need to evolve means of dismantling the existing Taliban and Al Qaeda infrastructures and hide-outs in FATA and systematically flush-out all foreign terrorist and extremist elements in the region to fast-track the achievement of the ultimate goal of riding FATA of the menace of terrorism and militancy among the tribal people.
3. The government of Pakistan needs to ensure adequate security and control of its borders in order to close all avenues for illegal trans-border dealings, particularly the inflow of arms and ammunitions as well as illicit drugs into the FATA region through the borders.
4. An "education for all" programme and intensive and extensive mass literacy campaign would help to redeem FATA people, especially the youths from the psychological effects of religious dogmatism and adequately equip them to resist pressures to indulge in militancy and insurgent acts. Vocational education should also be integrated into, and be made an essential part of the education programme.
5. The Pakistani government needs to develop the local economy of FATA and seek to maximize the employment potentials of the region. This is very important, as that would assist in directing the energies and strength of the youths towards more meaningful and economically worthwhile activities other than taking arms against the state and its authorities.
6. The Pakistani government should undertake the rehabilitation of the collapsed infrastructures in FATA, including hospitals, schools, among others, and the building of new ones, as a matter of urgency. This would substantially instill a sense of belonging in the inhabitants of the region, thereby increasing their loyalty to the government of NWFP and the Pakistani central government.

Conclusion

The unrest and militancy in the Pakistan's FATA, which became heightened and intensified after the U.S. "de-Talibanization" of Afghanistan in 2001, has made the region in particular and the state of Pakistan in general the world's biggest cinema of terrorism. Indeed, the attention of the world with respect to the fight against terrorism has properly been shifted to the Afghan-Pakistan tribal border area in the recent years. The trend has

especially brought Pakistan into international limelight, howbeit, in a negative sense, as “incubator” and “safe haven” for both local and international terrorists and extremists, including the most notorious Taliban and Al Qaeda elements. FATA also harbours extremists from Western and neighbouring South Asian countries who have considered the region a conducive environment for planning and executing their terrorist agenda against the West and the rest of the world. Most worrisomely, the uprising in FATA has seriously shaken and continues to threaten the political stability of the Pakistani state. This is in spite of the combined and sophisticated military approach by Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S. to apprehend the precarious situation.

The joint efforts of these principal actors have not made substantial positive impact as the trend of militancy has continued unabated and even tending towards consuming the Pakistani state in particular. The persistent rise in the spate and dimension of terrorist activities perpetrated jointly by the foreign terrorists and extremists and the locals in FATA apparently does not suggest unprecedented consequences for Pakistan alone; it is also a potential source of danger for Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.S. forces’ effort to stabilize Afghanistan and the world in its entirety. Obviously, from all indications, FATA might likely be the source of another type of 9/11 attack on the United States and the world as a whole. Pakistani authorities have virtually lost control of FATA to the insurgent tribal men and their foreign counterparts. Pakistan now serves as a typical example of a state that has almost failed or collapsed due to its inability to contain or bring the militant activities of the tribesmen in FATA under control.

Insurgents have continued to carry-out their campaigns of terror against civilians and state authorities almost uninterruptedly even in Pakistan’s mainland, and this has been a source of severe threats to the peace and stability of the country. The prevailing circumstance presents a daunting challenge to the government of Pakistan and addressing the problem is important for the future of the country. This study has demonstrated that the rising militancy and insurgency in Pakistan’s tribal areas can be attributed to certain remote causes. Key among these causative factors are political disintegration and economic deprivation of the tribal people of FATA by successive central governments in Pakistan. In light of this, the study submits that any meaningful efforts intended to be successful at curbing the menace of terrorism in FATA must be tailored, primarily, towards addressing the discontent among the tribal people on the political and socio-economic situations in the region. This can be adequately achieved if relevant stakeholders could fully adopt and implement the recommendations of this current study.

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