



Militancy in the Pakistani Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Afghanistan

MAGNUS NORELL (ED.)

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Sammanfattning

Det primära syftet med denna rapport är att identifiera några av de militanta organisationer, samt ledande personer inom dessa, som är aktiva i de s.k. ”Tribal Areas” (Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA) i Pakistan samt dessas kopplingar till Afghanistan.

Rapporten pekar på och diskuterar det stöd som dessa militanta organisationer – på båda sidor om gränsen mellan Pakistan och Afghanistan – får från olika håll i Pakistan. Vidare visar rapporten på hur sammankopplade säkerhetsproblemen i Pakistan och Afghanistan är. Rapporten argumenterar för att säkerhetssituationen i båda dessa länder, för att lösas, måste diskuteras och hanteras samtidigt.

Rapporten visar också på de olika strategier som den pakistanska regeringen har använt sig av för att försöka separera problemen i FATA från de i Afghanistan, hittills med ringa framgång.

Nyckelord: Pakistan, Afghanistan, FATA, terrorism, Tribal areas, gränser, Durand-linjen, militarism, militanter, lågnivåkonflikter, TTP, Nato, uppror, gränsöverskridande, Jihad

Summary

In conclusion, the primary objective of this report has been the identification of militant organisations operating within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and some more detailed profiling and identification of their supporters in the rest of Pakistan.

This report also shows the scope of the support that the militants – on both sides of the Durand Line – receive from Pakistan. In addition, the report shows how interconnected the security situation in Pakistan is with the low-intensity war in Afghanistan. It is obvious that in order to come to terms with the situation in the FATA (and increasingly in Baluchistan and the rest of the North West Frontier Province), Afghanistan and Pakistan need to be discussed simultaneously.

In addition, the report map describes the support for the militants look like as well as whom some of the key players in Afghanistan are, both individuals and groups.

In the report we have also outlined the various initiatives taken by the new Pakistani government to open up a “new approach” (as the term goes) in negotiations between, on one hand the Islamabad government, and on the other, the tribes and militants in the North West. The emphasis on negotiations and a possible “down-shifting” when it comes to the use of the military, have still to render any clear breakthroughs between the government and the militants and the tribes. But the will to change is there.

Keywords: Pakistan, Afghanistan, FATA, Terrorism, Tribal areas, Tribes, Border, Durand Line, Militancy, Militants, Low-intensity war, TTP, NATO, Insurgency, Cross-border, Jihad.

Programme manager's remarks

The Asia Security Studies programme at the *Swedish Defence Research Agency's Department of Defence Analysis* conducts research and policy relevant analysis on defence and security related issues. Its primary focus is on East and South Asia as well as the Persian Gulf region. The programme strikes a balance between studying issues directly affecting Swedish foreign and defence policy as well as research on topics with wider regional and global implications. The Asia Security Studies programme is mainly financed by the Swedish Ministry of Defence but research is also conducted for other ministries and agencies in Sweden and abroad.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on the Pakistani border to Afghanistan have been in the international limelight since the U.S. ousting of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan 2001. As a safe haven for al-Qaeda fugitives and staging area for Taliban forces, it has been a contentious issue both in and outside of Pakistan. Not only have developments in FATA come to influence domestic Pakistani policy. It is also inseparable from the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. But despite international attention little has been written about the local power structures and how militancy in FATA is driven and sustained. Outside of Pakistan, the political, constitutional and legal issues and disputes, key to making FATA what it is today, are not widely known.

The Swedish Defence Research Agency and the Pakistan-based Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) have undertaken to make a detailed study of FATA. We extend a special thanks to the CRSS fellows for making this study possible. We also extend our thanks to Mr. Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore for his detailed comments on the report.

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Source: STRATFOR, Copyright 2009

Abbreviations

AI	Ansarul Islam
AIA	Amaraate Islami Afghanistan
ANP	Awami National Party
APA	Assistant Political Agents
DCO	District Coordination Officers
FANA	Federally Administered Northern Areas
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FC	Frontier Corps
FR	Frontier Region
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HI	Hezbe Islami
HM	Harkat-ul-Mujahideen
IMU	Islamic Movement of Afghanistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence agency
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami
JM	Jaish-e-Mohammad (Army of Mohammad)
JUI	Jamiat Ulemae Islam, Jamiat Ulmai Islam
LeT	Lashkar-e Taiba (Army/Militia of the Pure)
LI	Lashkare Islami
LJ	Lashkare Jhangvi (Army of Jang)
MMA	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
MNA	Members of the National Assembly
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PA	Political Agent
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (N)

PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
PVPV	Promotion of virtue and prevention of vice
SSP	Sepahe Sahaba Pakistan
TNSM	Tehreeke Nifaze Shariate Mohammedi
TTM	Tehrik-e-Taliban Mohmand Agency
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
WoT	War on Terror

1 Purpose of study and notes on method

1.1 Purpose of study

The main purpose of the study is to give an overview of the situation in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), both in regard to the simmering conflict inside Pakistan between the so-called Pakistani Taliban and the federal and state governments as well as in regard to the war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

An additional purpose is to give a brief introduction to some of the main actors in this region.

1.2 Notes on method and outline of the report

This report and the accompanying conclusions are primarily based on research conducted by CRSS through a survey of FATA residents. Historical background and other related information is based on research by Dr. Magnus Norell at the FOI (who is also the editor of the report) and CRSS staff reports. It should be underlined that and even though chapters 1, 2 and 7 are mainly the responsibility of Dr. Norell, and chapters 3-6 – as well as the appendix – are mainly the result of CRSS staff reports, this report is the result of a collective effort. The reports concerned have partly or wholly been published in The Friday Times papers, in the book 'A to Z of Jihadi Organizations in Pakistan' (authored by Mr Muhammad Amir Rana), the book 'The True Face of Jihadis' (authored by Mr Amir Mir) and the book 'The Unholy Nexus' (authored by Mr Imtiaz Gul).

It should also be noted that on occasion, certain details pertaining to names, dates and specific places, have been withheld due to security concerns. All such information can be obtained after contacting the CRSS and/or the FOI.

Also, please note that the transcription may vary, due to the use of several languages.

In Chapter 2 a short background to the study is given.

Chapter 3 (with sub-chapters) contains an overview of FATA from a legal, social and policy point of view. The chapter also profiles the various agencies in more detail and also includes maps of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and FATA. This chapter also includes some statistics on terrorism-related attacks and casualties.

Chapter 4 (with sub-chapters) discusses reasons for the rise of militancy in FATA, some of the main groups active in this process as well as how this militancy looks in more detail in the various regions of FATA.

Chapter 5 points to the role of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), the primary Intelligence Agency in Pakistan, and its role in FATA.

Chapter 6 (with sub-chapter) discusses briefly the foreign (non-Pakistani) aspects of the militancy. This includes both Arabs affiliated with al-Qaeda (AQ) and other Central Asian militants such as the rather large group of Uzbeks in the region.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter.

Apart from the editor (Dr. Magnus Norell at the FOI), three authors have contributed to the study: Dr. Farrukh Saleem, Mr. Mubashij Akram and Mr. Imtiaz Gul. All are from the CRSS.

In addition, the study contains two appendices:

Appendix 1: Profiles of Militants.

Appendix 2: CRSS Survey on FATA. (Including tables).

2 Background

"Islam comes first and then Pakistan"
(Maulvi Faqir, quoted in the *Daily Times*. April 19, 2008)¹

"My ultimate objective is to attack New York and London."
(Baitullah Mehsud: In his first TV interview conducted by al-Jazeera, December 2007)²

It is statements such as these that make FATA stand out as the principal source of instability for Pakistan. FATA is also viewed as the hatchery of terror plots that unfold in Afghanistan, Europe and elsewhere. America also looks at FATA as a 'clear and present danger'. To be certain, FATA wasn't always what it has become today. Historically, the region that now comprises FATA has seen more "invasions in the course of history than any other country in Asia, or indeed in the world".³ Before 500 BC, the Aryans had swallowed FATA into their empire, and then came the Persians followed by Graeco – Scythian invaders, Maurians, Sakas, Kushans, Sassanians, White Huns and Turks.

In 960 AD, Islam spread like wild fire all through the area that now comprises FATA. In the 1800s when 'The Great Game' was being played out between the British and the Russian empires, FATA played the role of a buffer zone. In 1901, the British government brought the entire region that now comprises the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) under the direct rule of the Governor General of India whereby the Governor General was represented by the Chief Commissioner of the Province of Punjab. Later that year, NWFP was divided up into 'settled areas' and 'tribal areas'.

In 1947, the government of Pakistan retained the British division along with two distinct legal statuses; one for the 'settled areas' and another one for the 'tribal areas'. In 1973, Pakistan's new constitution brought FATA under the executive administration of the President of Pakistan represented by the Governor of the province of NWFP.

In 1979, FATA became the frontline in the decade long Soviet-Afghan war. This is when a new cold war troika – General Zia, the CIA and Saudi Arabia's Al Mukhabarat Al A'amah (Saudi Arabia's paramount intelligence agency) – teamed up to turn FATA into a vast jihadi breeding ground.

Poverty, illiteracy, exclusion from Pakistan's mainstream political process (that have long been the three hallmarks of FATA) all topped with religious

¹ Maulvi Faqir is a senior leader of the Taliban in Pakistan, the *Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP).

² Baitullah Mehsud's first TV interview; <http://pakistanpolicy.com/2008/01/29/Baitullah-Mehsuds-first-interview/>.

³ Islamabad Policy Research Institute; IPRI Paper Number 10.

indoctrination turned FATA into an ideal hub for the forces of hate, violence, militancy and extremism.

The primary objective of this report is the identification of militant organizations operating within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), their detailed profiling and the identification of their supporters in the rest of Pakistan.

During 2008, indications for more violence in Afghanistan and in the border areas of Pakistan have been evident, mostly in the form of attacks perpetrated by militant Islamic movements. These were attacks directed both against western forces in Afghanistan as well as terror attacks targeting civilians, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan (an example was the bombing of the Marriot Hotel in Islamabad in September 2008). This trend has been visible for the past years, with more attacks including suicide attacks, and it can be said with some degree of certainty that this will continue to be the case in the foreseeable future.

There are numerous reasons for this: an ongoing cooperation between militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan⁴, a continued influx of money and weapons from abroad into the tribal areas of Pakistan in support of the Taliban and International Jihadists in Afghanistan⁵ and continued difficulties in the ongoing negotiations between the new government⁶ in Islamabad and the tribes of the NWFP in trying to put a lid on the violence in the province (a violence that has spilled over from FATA to the NWFP as well as to Afghanistan) and in FATA⁷.

This trend is further borne out of the increase in violence in Afghanistan during 2007, the bloodiest since the Taliban was ousted from power in 2001⁸. Official figures put the number of deaths to 6,500⁹, including 1,500 civilians and 222 foreign troops, serving either with NATO or the US forces engaged in counter terrorist operations. There was also a spike in the number of suicide attacks (a

⁴ See: Magnus Norell: *The Taliban and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)*, in: 'The China And Eurasia Forum Quarterly' (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Programme), Vol. 5, No. 3, August 2007.

⁵ See for example: Laura King, "Girding for a spring offensive in Afghanistan" in *The Dawn*, April 15, 2008 and Ed Blanche, "Pakistan: a major stepping stone in Al Qaeda's global strategy" in *The Middle East*, April 2008, issue 388, page 6-10.

⁶ A new government that also has continuous problems in staying and working together. Since the inauguration of the new administration, it has been plagued by tensions between the erstwhile political enemies in the PPP and the PML (N). More than once, the government has been on the verge of collapsing due to threats of one or the other party to resign. Finally, in August 2008, the government fell apart with PML-N leaving the coalition.

⁷ These negotiations are at the time of writing (May 2008) more or less 'outsourced' to one of the coalition parties, the Awami National Party (ANP) who won the elections in NWFP. For more on this see also ICG-report No: 125, December 2006: "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing The Militants".

⁸ It was also the worst year for terrorist violence in Pakistan with casualties during 2007 greater than the past six years combined.

⁹ Unofficial figures are higher, but since these are from sources that cannot be verified, they are not included here. The official figures are from *Dagens Nyheter*, April 4, 2008. p. 30-31.

phenomenon virtually unknown in Afghanistan before 2002) as well as attacks on aid workers, both Afghan and foreigners. The opium harvest was a record high (a sure sign that the development and aid programmes of the West are failing to live up to their aims). The year 2008 began with the abduction of the new Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan when on his way to Kabul by road. Taliban militates waylaid him in the Khyber area in February and released him in May after a 97-day captivity.¹⁰

In addition to these developments, the security situation is exacerbated by the fact that the fighting in Afghanistan is so closely connected with the situation in Pakistan's tribal areas (and to a lesser extent, with Baluchistan), it is impossible to separate the issues of Pakistan from the ongoing violence in Afghanistan if a long-term solution is to be found¹¹. This fact adds an extra dimension to the Pakistani government's attempts to negotiate a peace-agreement with the tribes and militants in FATA. The new government is between a rock and hard place, being pressed by the Afghan government¹² as well as western countries with troops in Afghanistan (most overtly the US and the UK of course) to curb the aid pouring over the border to help the militants in Afghanistan, and at the same time being forced to recognize the fact that at present, there is no 'stick' big enough to force the tribes into adhering to an agreement, if they violate it¹³.

With the election in February 2008 going rather smoothly (despite the murder of former Premier Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007 in a terrorist attack¹⁴), a new government took over in Islamabad. Former political enemies – Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N) of ex-premier Nawaz Sharif and Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) (Bhutto's Party) created a coalition government and decided, as one of the first major political initiatives, to push for a deal with both the tribes of the FATA area as well as with the militants fighting in Afghanistan (and being supported from Pakistan's tribal areas¹⁵). This policy was kept even after the break-up of the coalition in August 2008 due to disagreements between PPP and PML-N over the successor to former President Musharraf. PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari was elected new President on September 6.

¹⁰ In April, a filmed message was sent from his kidnappers where the Ambassador asked his government to agree to terms demanded by the Taliban.

¹¹ Magnus Norell: "The Taliban and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)", FOI Memo 2021, March 2007.

¹² In the middle of June, and after a new surge in Taliban-instigated violence in the South of Afghanistan (close to Kandahar) Afghan President Karzai threatened to send troops into Pakistan to fight the militants.

¹³ Earlier agreements between Islamabad and the Militants and the tribes have failed for these reasons. As a comment: Ibid ICG-report No: 125, December 2006.

¹⁴ The assassination was widely attributed to parties closely connected with the so-called Pakistani Taliban, the "*Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*" (TTP) as well as Islamic militants associated with the ideology of Al Qaeda. See for example: Gulf Monitor, March 2008, Vol.2, No. 2. p 12-14.

¹⁵ Ibid note 7.

The necessity for a solution in the conflict between the Pakistani government and the militants (first and foremost is the Pakistani Taliban organized in the “*Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan*”, the TTP¹⁶) and their tribal backers in FATA, has been underlined with a vengeance during spring and summer. The long-awaited spring-offensive materialized as expected in late April/early May with an increase in fighting in the Afghan provinces bordering Pakistan. In particular, Helmand and Kandahar provinces were hard hit¹⁷. Despite reinforcements brought in to bolster the NATO forces fighting in the south of Afghanistan¹⁸, first indications are that the Taliban are every bit as motivated and prepared to mount serious resistance to any attempts to calm or normalize the situation in the southern Afghan provinces. Having been rather badly beaten and suffering high losses in previous futile, large-scale and frontal attacks on NATO forces, the Taliban commanders have shifted to a more sophisticated tactic of roadside bombs, pin-point suicide attacks and targeted killings of foreign aid-worker (and their Afghan colleagues).

During the winter-months when harsh weather conditions forced a lull in the fighting, NATO had the opportunity to go after Taliban commanders, as well as key-leaders of the more international Jihadi-movements. But most of these people have been replaced and so far at least, these attacks on the “head” of the insurgency has not seemed to have made any large dent in the capacity of the militants to field new recruits and ship material into Afghanistan.

All this has led the Western powers active in Afghanistan, as well as the Afghan government¹⁹, to put pressure on Pakistan to curb the uninterrupted flow of men and material feeding the militant insurgency in Afghanistan. That the insurgency in Afghanistan would be a very different operation altogether if it weren't for the support received from Pakistan, is the underlying reason for the pressure on the new Pakistani government. But support for the insurgency in Afghanistan, regardless of whether it is from the TTP, the Afghan Taliban or the militants in the Jihadi groups, runs deep in many layers of Pakistan.

For the tribes in FATA, it is not only the fact that the bulk of the resistance in Afghanistan comes from their own kin, various Pashtun tribes with connections on both sides of the Durand line. It is also a question of economy. A large portion of the income, and with it political influence, that the tribes have in FATA comes

¹⁶ The TTP is a loose alliance of c:a 40 jihadi networks and tribal groups in North Western Pakistan.

¹⁷ See for example, “The Dawn”, April 15, 2008; “*Girding for a spring offensive in Afghanistan*” (Laura King). Furthermore, the province of Helmand is the epicentre of Afghanistan's opium production and since a lot of the narco-trafficking is used to fuel the resistance, it is no coincidence that the so much of the fighting has been concentrated there.

¹⁸ Most importantly in this regard, are perhaps the 2300 US Marines of the 24th Expeditionary Unit, based outside Kandahar.

¹⁹ See for example “Roznama Khabrain”, May 4, 2008. “*Afghanistan Asks Pakistan To Prevent Use Of Its Soil By Militants*”. The MEMRI Urdu-Pashtu Media Blog, May 6, 2008.

from smuggling goods and persons across the border. It is true that up until now, FATA is supposed to be run directly from Islamabad, but since this is far from the truth in reality, the tribal elders and their militant allies, have been able to run things in FATA very much the way they like. So far, a number of attempts by the federal government to impose some order in FATA by way of military means have largely failed²⁰.

All these are factors that the new government in Islamabad has to take into consideration when tackling the security issues of FATA and Afghanistan, are so intimately connected. As far as can be assessed, the new initiative of the Pakistani government is to de-couple the issues of FATA and Afghanistan. This is not because the government can't see the connection. It has more to do with the domestic problems of Pakistan, trying to balance a very vocal (and sometimes violent) support for the insurgency in Afghanistan with the fact that the low-intensity conflict in FATA has gone on for too long without coming to any kind of conclusion. To this can be added pressure from outside Pakistan to stop, or at the very least, drastically try to curb ongoing support crossing the border, a support that is stoking the flames of the insurgency.

The strategy, for now at least, is to try and negotiate an agreement with the tribes. This way it is hoped that the tribes (or rather the tribal leaders) will find it in their interest to stop supporting Taliban on both sides of the border. This time around, all the aid promised through foreign countries (but funnelled through Pakistani agencies) are conditioned on the premises that the tribes themselves stop supporting the militancy and actively help the federal government to combat whatever remains of foreign Jihadi fighters in FATA. On paper this might look good. But in reality, the government has very little means to actually follow through if there should be breaches in any deal worked out.

In addition to this, the government is negotiating directly with the TTP, also in order to calm things down in FATA and to retain something closer to a real administration in the restive areas. These negotiation processes are run parallel and it is hoped that, in the end, the calm restored in FATA will lead to a lessening of cross-border militant activity. Support for this policy comes also from Pakistan's foreign backers in the US and UK. But this support is, in its turn, conditioned on the ability of Pakistan to, if necessary, fight the militants. As far as the militants are concerned, there is support for peace talks with the Islamabad government, but it has also been clearly stated by the Islamists that the fight against the US (and other Western powers in Afghanistan) will continue²¹.

For the Pakistani government, the difficulty of balancing these various interests is compounded by the fact that supporters for the militants, as well as the

²⁰ Ibid note 2.

²¹ See for example "The News", April 17, 2008, "*Govt, Taliban may reach peace accord next month*" (Mushtaq Yusufzai).

militants themselves, already have a rather strong position in the FATA. An illustration of just how strong could be seen in April 2008 when the TTP held a conference in the Mohmand district (in FATA)²². It was a two-day conference, announced beforehand and with journalists present. When one is considering the fact that the leader of TTP, Baitullah Mehsud, was indicted for the murder of Benazir Bhutto, both by the Pakistani police and the Scotland Yard, it is telling how much leeway these supporters of the militancy in Afghanistan have inside FATA²³. Some commanders formerly associated with the TTP had also dropped hints in private conversations that Baitullah Mehsud had his hand in Bhutto's murder.

There are several possible incentives for the various tribal agencies to sign a peace deal with the new federal government. These range from the obvious advantage of getting the army out of the territories (or at least withdrawn to the barracks), to the benefit of having a new, rather massive, influx of aid money coming in. The fact that this aid, for all intents and purposes, will mainly be distributed by local agencies²⁴ will also mean that the tribal leaderships can keep a tab on how distribution is done, thereby retaining influence and power within the areas. If the advantages are great enough for the tribes, they can possibly also be persuaded to take on at least some of the foreign Jihadi groups²⁵. This provided that they get the material and manpower to do it.

Since July 2008, there are positive developments with regard to countering the Taliban militants in FATA and NWFP. The first positive sign came when the government initiated a military operation against Maulana Fazlullah-led TTP in Swat district of NWFP. This was followed by a military operation in Bajuar. Gradually, it was witnessed that various Tribes rose against the Taliban militants

²² "Roznama Mashriq", April 17, 2008. "Pakistani Taliban Hold Jihad Conference, Issue 6-Point Shari'a Implementation Program". MEMRI Urdu-Pashtu Media Blog, May 6, 2008.

²³ Another telling point on what kinds of difficulties the government of Pakistan must handle even if there is a deal with the TTP, came with the six-point programme that the conference decided upon. These points were:

- 1: Women will wear a veil and will not leave their homes without covering themselves
- 2: End all business transaction based on interest/usury; return all money obtained in this manner
- 3: Locals who left due to fear of Taliban are forgiven and should return home
- 4: Taliban coming from other areas will report to the local commander in Mohmand Agency
- 5: A committee of *ulema* has been formed to issue *fatwas* as per *shari'a*
- 6: A complaints committee has been formed to hear grievances against the Taliban

²⁴ From interviews with both the US and UK embassies this point was underlined, implicitly conceding the fact that it can be very difficult – and dangerous – for foreigners to venture to far into the FATA areas.

²⁵ There are three (3) main groups of militants active on both sides of Durand line; the TTP (and their local backers), the foreign Jihadi groups (including fighters from the Arab countries and Central Asian countries, especially Uzbekistan) and finally tribal militias (*Lashkar*) that are used by the tribes for local protection and internal security. It is this last group that has given the federal army such headache during the past few years when attempts have been made to crush the Islamic militants.

in Buner, Lower Dir, Upper Swat area of NWFP and Bajaur Agency of FATA. Respective tribes within these areas raised their own lashkars (tribal militias) to evict the Taliban from their areas. Subsequently, Taliban are facing hostile attitude from the locals, depriving them of crucial logistic, financial, moral and political support. The government has openly supported the lashkars and is providing them with weapons.

So, there are a few signs that the tribes will go after their “own kin” in the TTP or Afghan Taliban with ties to the Pakistani side of the border. This, however, is dependent on the tribes getting a long-term and sustained help from the government. As said earlier, the aim is to quiet down the Pakistani side of the border and try to de-couple that issue from the war in Afghanistan, so it remains to be seen how far the current offensive can reach. But by enticing the tribes to at least help to get the foreigners out, it is hoped in Islamabad that enough calm will prevail for the resistance to sink to a more manageable level. However, that could probably only work if there is a strong enough “stick” to deal with remaining militants (whether domestic or foreign) who are not prepared to lay down their arms. This “stick” is supposed to be formed around a boosted and strengthened Frontier Corps (FC), but this will take time to create. Success will also depend on much more and efficient tripartite-cooperation between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US in trying to oversee the border more effectively. Today this looks very much like a rather distant possibility. There are various reasons for this; one is the continued suspicion between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with the Karzai government accusing Pakistan of, if not outright helping, at least turning a blind eye to activities at the border. Another is the continued wide-spread resentment of the US (and the UK) in Pakistan, rendering more cooperation with the US (and the West as a whole) a “hard-sell” for the new government in Islamabad. This is also one reason why the government in Islamabad has been so forthcoming in letting the Awami National Party (ANP)²⁶ in NWFP take the lead in negotiations with the tribes and the militants.

A final difficulty in the ongoing negotiations between the tribes and the federal government is the way aid will be distributed and used. The idea behind tying more development aid to a tribal support for taking on the militants (at least the foreign ones) is that this will create an incentive for the tribes to cut support. An added incentive is the promise to abolish the Frontier Crimes Regulation²⁷ (FCR), the special legal underpinning of the direct rule (from Islamabad) over FATA. As a result of successful negotiations, the government has pledged to

²⁶ The ANP won the elections in the NWFP, surprisingly ousting the MMA from power and creating a new opportunity to push for new initiatives in trying to negotiate a solution to the FATA-violence.

²⁷ For more on this see: “Responding to Terrorism: Pakistan’s Anti-Terrorism Laws”, by Shabana Fayyaz, in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. II, Issue 6, March 2008.

reconsider, and eventually abolish, the FCR and make FATA a part of either the NWFP or create a new province consisting of FATA (and probably also the so called Federally Administered Northern Areas or FANA)²⁸. However, there is also some fear on part of at least some tribes that they might lose some of the independence that the direct rule (which in effect has never really made an impact) has given them. Lack of the rule of law has created a vacuum that has been filled by tribes involved in various criminal activities such as smuggling and racketeering²⁹. Since the idea with more aid is to wrestle control away from those tribes involved in these criminal activities (which also help sustain the insurgency in Afghanistan), the way this aid is distributed will be a key factor in how this process plays out.

For the Afghan Taliban and various foreign militants fighting in Afghanistan, the new political situation in Pakistan has created both risks and opportunities. The risks are that the government in Islamabad succeeds in driving a wedge between themselves and the tribes of FATA. Both the TTP and the militants they are backing could lose out on such a successfully managed deal. There is no question that the insurgency in Afghanistan owes much of its success to the fact that it is sustained from Pakistan with both material and manpower. Cutting these supply lines will severely disrupt the ability for the Afghan Taliban and their foreign allies to keep up the fight. Consequently, disrupting these connections between Pakistan and Afghanistan is on top of the NATO agenda. If NATO can reach a level where serious development work can be initiated, a corner might be turned in the fight against the insurgency. As pointed out in an earlier study, this can only happen if security and development work is done much more simultaneously³⁰. Knowing this, the government in Islamabad is betting a lot on the success of the negotiations. In trying to talk the TTP into being more of a political player, it is hoped that they will find it more to their advantage to play a political role than to keep on supporting the Afghan militants. The flip-side of this strategy is of course that the price demanded by the TTP (and their allies) might, in the end, lead to the break-up of any new government since this would almost certainly entail legal and social reforms pushing for a more Islamist agenda. Rolling back or hindering, proposed liberalising legislation concerning women for example goes directly against what at least the PPP is striving for.

Opportunities for the militants are of course that the withdrawal of the army (from FATA) can create even more space to continue their activities. Since a major problem for the tribes are that they are often outgunned by the militants, if push comes to shove, the tribes – even if they wanted to – might not be in a position to counter the militants. Using the FC instead of the regular army is a

²⁸ For more on this area – consisting of Gilgit and Baltistan – see ICG report, Asia report No 131 – 2 April 2007.

²⁹ Ibid note 2 and note 7.

³⁰ Ibid note 2.

sound idea from a counter-insurgency point of view, but to build up the FC will, as pointed out before, take time. It also has to be backed up by support from NATO troops in Afghanistan, something that easily could create even more resistance against the Pakistan government and of course give scope for the militants to show the tribes that crossing them comes with a heavy price and that the government can't protect them.

For the militants in the TTP, finally, negotiations with the government have raised them to the level of a "negotiating partner"³¹, and thereby giving them an even stronger position than before. Since the aim of the TTP and their political allies is not only constrained to Afghanistan and the fight against the West, the conservative, religious and social issues the TTP are pushing for, will surely be on the political agenda to an extent that the elections results, that saw Islamic parties loose, really indicated that a large part of the Pakistani population were not interested in. This will especially be a problem for the PPP, who have drawn a lot of support by advocating a more liberal agenda for Pakistan, including reforms that would ease situations for women and minorities.

Added to this, is the fact that the ties between the TTP and the internationally active Jihadi groups and networks in Afghanistan are becoming more, instead of less visible. Apart from being accused by both the British and Pakistani governments of being involved in the Bhutto assassination, the TTP also has the potential of turning the local conflict in FATA and Afghanistan into a more international one³². Since 2001, the TTP has been building up a power base in the North West, much of it done by aiding ousted Taliban and international Jihadi groups from Afghanistan. A deal between the government and the TTP could still be possible of course, but it is difficult to see just how such a deal, based on what's on the negotiating table right now, could seriously affect the TTP and force them to cut down on support for the militants.

So the purpose of this report is to show the scope of the support that the militants – on both sides of the Durand line – receive from Pakistan. An additional purpose is to show how interconnected the security situation in Pakistan is with the low-intensity war in Afghanistan. Finally, the report has mapped and described what supports for the militants look like as well as who some of the key players are both individuals and groups.

³¹ The strong position that the TTP in effect has in FATA can for example be seen in the conference held in April in Mohmand. Both the fact that the conference was held at all, as well as the outcome, underlines the influence of TTP in FATA. Ibid note 17.

³² Ibid Blanche, p 6-10.

3 What is FATA?

Admiral Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in June, 2008 that any future terrorist attack on the United States probably would originate in Pakistan's western tribal regions.

"I believe fundamentally if the United States is going to get hit, it's going to come out of the planning that the leadership in the FATA is generating, their planning and direction," said Mullen. "I'm not saying it is guaranteed it's going to happen, or that it's imminent. But clearly we know the planning is taking place," he added.³³

- On May 26 (2008), Michael Chertoff, the US Homeland Security Chief, called on Pakistan's new government to "strike back against terrorism in its regions bordering Afghanistan or face more attacks of the kind that killed ex-premier Benazir Bhutto".³⁴
- On May 23 (2008), the United States Department of Defense said: "The growth of Al Qaeda safe havens in FATA is troubling and it may take Pakistan several years to turn around the situation."³⁵
- On May 20 (2008), John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Secretary stated that "Pakistan's FATA challenge [amounted to] securing one of the world's most dangerous areas".³⁶
- On April 12 (2008), President Bush, in an interview with ABC News, described FATA as "one of the most dangerous areas in the world... where Al-Qaeda had established safe havens and was plotting attacks against the United States" adding that "Pakistan and not Afghanistan or Iraq is now the most likely place where a plot could be hatched to carry out any 9/11-type attack in the US".³⁷
- On April 6 (2008), Senate Democrats sent a letter to President Bush urging him to refocus America's counter-terrorism strategy on Pakistan's FATA.³⁸
- In 2003, Pakistan suffered a total of 189 terrorism-related fatalities. In 2004, 2005 and 2006 terrorism-related fatalities were 863, 648 and 1,471, respectively. Total fatalities have continued to grow, setting a new annual

³³ Spiegel, Peter, *U.S. admiral counsels patience with Pakistan*. Los Angeles Times, 11 June 2008. Retrieved on December 3, 2009 from <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jun/11/world/fg-isaa11>

³⁴ <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5i8dGftYb0s4XWdUMRdIVs3vh1CKAD90TF2VG0>.

³⁵ http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C05%5C25%5Cstory_25-5-2008_pg1_4.

³⁶ <http://www.state.gov/s/d/2008/105041.htm>.

³⁷ <http://www.apakistannews.com/bush-calls-fata-most-dangerous-region-66866>
South Asia Terrorism Portal: www.satp.org.

³⁸ <http://democrats.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=295679&>.

high in 2009. During the first eleven months of this year, terrorism-related fatalities reached 10,810.

Table 1: Terrorism-related fatalities – 2003-2009

Annual Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan, 2003-2009				
	Civilians	Security Force Personnel	Terrorists/Insurgents	Total
2003	140	24	25	189
2004	435	184	244	863
2005	430	81	137	648
2006	608	325	538	1471
2007	1523	597	1479	3599
2008	2155	654	3906	6715
2009*	2080	968	7762	10810
Total	7401	2833	14081	24295

* Data till November 30, 2009

Year 2009				
	Civilians	Security Force Personnel	Terrorists/Insurgents	Total
January	250	69	245	564
February	216	31	430	677
March	168	67	171	406
April	132	89	297	518
May	279	155	1590	2024
June	200	157	1397	1754
July	156	58	768	982
August	155	34	531	720
September	111	77	662	850
October	255	118	1001	1374
November*	175	93	792	1060
Total	2080	968	7762	10810

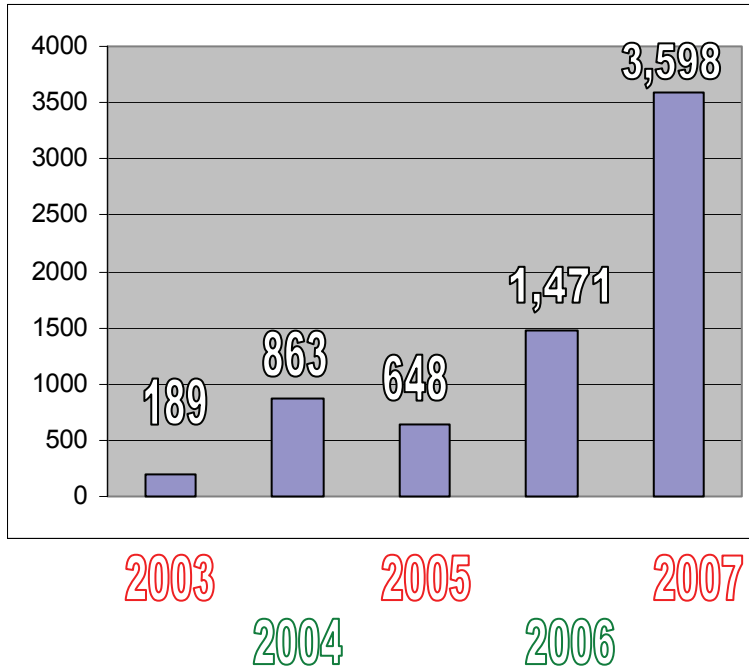
* Data till November 30, 2009

Source: Figures are compiled from news reports and are provisional.

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal, Casualties of Terrorist Violence in Pakistan, Retrieved on 3 December 2009 from

<http://www.satp.org/satporngtp/couneteries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>

A graphical depiction of annual terrorist-related fatalities in 2003-2007 is shown below:



In 2004, on an average day, 2.36 Pakistanis had fallen victim to terrorism. By 2007, the same figure had shot up to an average of 9.86 per day. For 2008, preliminary data from January to May 13 shows that the daily average is about the same as in 2007.

3.1 Historical Overview

Before setting out to explain what Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) means, some background circumstances to today's situation are worth recalling. Imperative here is to understand the resistance – among the tribes – towards the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), the legal underpinnings for the FATA areas (see below). This resistance had over time coalesced (gaining momentum in the 1990's after the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets) in a movement called Tehreeke Nifaze Shariate Mohammedi (TNSM). Basing itself on conservative readings of the Koran which tied in with the traditional customs of the tribes, the TNSM had a strong militant strand inherent and paved the way for today's militancy in many ways.

As reported by writers of this report, as they attended several meetings of a former Khyber Agency Political Agent (PA)³⁹ – Amjad Ali Khan – with tribesmen from the agency, one of the demands that resonated the most in those gatherings was the desire to get rid of the FCR. “Would you like to see the corrupt Pakistani police desecrate your homes? Would you like them to intrude into your private homes the way they do it all over Pakistan?” was how PA Khan attempted to blunt the demand. On other occasions, deputies to Khan used similar arguments in areas like Jamrud and Landi Kotal.

Khan was holding meetings to the context of Mullah Soofi Mohammed’s TNSM, which at the time had galvanized tens of thousands of people across FATA. In fact the most vicious demand revolved around Islamic Sharia. One of the attending tribal elders – Malik Behram Khan – told media that the jirga had decided that only Sharia law was an acceptable alternative, if the government was bent on removing the FCR.

Back in the 1990’s, most people interviewed during the TNSM rallies simply hated the FCR, which they called ‘draconian.’” We want justice and that will come only with Sharia,” was the favourite argument by most of the charged tribesmen, ostensibly because the prevalent feeling among the tribes that the political agents and their subordinates were extracting financial benefits from the system (including smuggling and participating in the drug trade) as well as acting as uncrowned kings of their respective territories, thereby imposing penalties at will.

Scores of discussions with residents in the Waziristan region, Khyber, Darra Adamkhel, and Bajaur left no doubt that the “uncrowned kings” have simply been playing havoc with lives of common tribesmen. They could, theoretically, drive even the rich Maliks broke, thereby adding to the present chaotic state of affairs in the FATA region.

To the backdrop of this desire, the FATA Grand Alliance – an alliance consisting of various strands of tribes – urged Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani on March 31, 2008 to accept the proposed amendments made by a committee headed by Justice (Retired) Mian Muhammad Ajmal and rename the FCR law as the FATA Regulations. Talking to media at the Peshawar Press Club, the Alliance President Zaman Dawarr reiterated that the FCR law should be renamed FATA Regulations, after necessary amendments, so as the executive and the judiciary could be separated. This demand, moderate and more realistic in nature, essentially lies at the heart of the attempts to transform FATA – both legally as well as politically.

³⁹ A PA is the representative of the Federal Government in FATA. The position and the very strong mandate, give the Agent in place much leeway and freedom in conducting his job.

As early as June 14, 2007, a Grand Tribal Jirga held in Peshawar representing various tribes drawn from all the seven administrative agencies (for explanation, see 3.3 and 3.4 below) demanded a separate legislature for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), to enable the people to chalk out policies that are more in synchronization with their culture and traditions rather than an import from Islamabad. The gathering had also sought approval of the amendments to the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) suggested by Mian Mohammad Ajmal and their enforcement, followed up by proper legal system in the FATA through extension of the writ of the courts to these areas. Most of the other demands at the Jirga also revolved around issues of governance and socio-economic injustice i.e. jobs in the FATA Secretariat; introduction of Local Government system to the FATA; extension of Zakat Act; setting up of Utility Stores; resolution of disputes on the Pakistani – Afghan border by securing peace; inclusion of tribal elders, intellectuals and parliamentarians in the proposed Pakistani – Afghan Peace Jirga (held in August 2007); allocation of cash share for the FATA in the National Finance Commission Award (NFC); payment of royalty to the tribal people on the Warsak, Gomal Zam and other dams constructed on their lands.

Senator Hamidullah Afridi (at the time of writing – September 2008 – a federal minister) had also addressed the Jirga and condemned the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) as a draconian law that had made the lives of people miserable. "We neither want the FCR, nor will we accept the laws of Thana (police station), courts and Patwari. We do not need those laws which have already failed to solve the problems of the settled areas."

3.2 FATA: Legal Status, Geography and Governance

Although constitutionally part of Pakistan, the FATA region functions as a semi-autonomous area run under special laws designed and implemented by the British colonial rulers in 1901 for their own convenience. This worked as a buffer between the British and Russian-influenced Afghanistan. This traditional system of governance continues to date in tandem with the "jirga" (assembly of tribal elders) that determines law and its execution as and when necessary. British Foreign Secretary David Milliband apologized to the Pashtuns of the region on April 7, 2007 in Islamabad for introducing this law.

Under Article 247 of the Constitution of Pakistan, the President exercises the executive authority over FATA through the Governor of the North West Frontier Province. This presidential agent is assisted in his functions, largely by the Political Agents of all the seven administrative agencies.

A Political Agent (PA), assisted by Assistant Political Agents (APA) / Officers in-charge of specific sub-divisions, represents the grass root functional entity of the political administration. The Frontier regions are administered by District Coordination Officers (DCO) of the respective districts. The Political Agents and DCOs in charge of Frontier Region (FR, see 3.4 below) work under the overall administrative control of the Governor's Secretariat (FATA).

The Political Agent is the pivot of the entire administrative set-up of the tribal areas, who controls, governs and rules the areas with the help of the FCR. The PA administers justice in accordance with local and tribal customs. He least interferes with domestic affairs of the tribes who are regulated by a tough unwritten code of conduct or better said 'code of honour', which the tribesmen guard and cherish above everything. The Political agent has the authority to demolish or set to fire any house belonging to the offenders or any place, building or hujra (an important traditional and social institution for collective decision-making in Pashtun society) used by the offenders for the purpose of crime. No one in FATA can construct any larger structure without prior approval of the political Agent, or else, he is liable to punishment for 6 months imprisonment, or fine or both. Section 40 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation empowers Political Agent/Assistant Political Agent to force a person to execute a bond with or without sureties for his good behaviour, or for keeping peace for not more than 3 years regarding prevention of murder, or culpable homicide not amounting to murder to dissemination of sedition in the area. Such offenders can be arrested any time on the basis of suspension, having the solid information conveyed to the Political Authorities by the informers or any other independent source/enquiry. The accused so arrested can be granted good-conduct bail by the Political Authorities purely on the latter's discretion, that is, if the Political Agent/Assistant Political Agent does not wish to release a culprit prior to 3 years period, he will remain confined to jail for the said period.

The informers are paid handsome amounts from the Political Agent's secret funds, depending upon the nature and circumstances of the case. The bail bond is confiscated to the state and the bail amount realized from the culprit, in case terms of bond are violated. Jirgas frequently come to Political Agent as 'Nanewati' (a Pashtu expression meaning *sanctuary* and it will give any stranger protection or political asylum by the Pashtu who take him in) seeking release of the culprit on the basis of guarantee of good conduct by the accused for the future. No appeal lies against any such decision, order, decree or sentence passed by the Political Agent/ Assistant Political Agent, though review powers rest with the Commissioner who after scrutiny of the record revises such orders. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to set aside the finding of the Council of Elders on any question of fact, unless he is of the opinion that there has been a material irregularity or defect in the proceedings or the proceedings have been so conducted as to occasion a miscarriage of justice.

The Frontier Corps (see below) is the principle force available to maintain law and order in the FATA. Frontier Constabulary is required to man the border between the tribal and settled areas.

FATA are spread over an area of 27,220 Km, which is 3.4% of Pakistan's land mass. It runs in a narrow belt along the 600 km-long Pakistani-Afghan border, popularly known as the "Durand Line", named after Sir Mortimer Durand, who surveyed and established it 1890-94 (see below).

The 1998 national census puts the FATA population at 3.2 million people. The current estimate is up to 5 million, which is, less than 2.5% of Pakistan's total population, with a 125 persons per sq. km density.

Official statistics notwithstanding, the literacy rate is dismally low because of poor education facilities. The socio-economic infrastructure is also extremely poor with an extremely deficient medical cover, insufficient water and even fewer years-around roads. Less than ten percent of the land area is cultivable. Most people live off smuggling "custom-free" goods from Afghanistan into Pakistan, car theft rackets, drug trafficking from Afghanistan and the illegal sale of locally-made weapons.

Geographically, FATA runs north to south, forming a wedge between Afghanistan and the settled areas of the NWFP. As many as 60 major Pashtun tribes inhabit the FATA lands. The numbers rise above 400, if all sub-clans are counted as well. The largest and most influential tribes are the Afridis, Achakzais, Bangash, Durranis, Khattaks, Mehsuds, Mohammadzais, Mohmands, Orakzais, Shinwaris, Yusufzais and Ahmedzai Wazirs (South Waziristan) and Dawar Wazirs (North Waziristan).

The Durand Line divided Pashtun tribes between British India and Afghanistan in 1893 and since then this delineation has been viewed with contempt and resentment by Pashtuns. After Pakistan's emergence in 1947, this line became a major source of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Despite being a legal-geographical part of Pakistan under the Article 247 of the constitution, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) remain in the clutches of the political administration, which in cahoots with 35,000 odd tribal elders called Maliks perpetuate a system that requires even common Pakistanis to seek permission if they wish to visit these areas. The rules for foreigners are far more stringent.

At present, 12 Members of the National Assembly (MNA) – all male – represent the FATA that comprises seven agencies (Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan). Another six Frontier Regions are also under the federal government control. The federal government runs the affairs of the FATA through political agents who work under the provincial governor. The agents administer the respective areas under the above mentioned,

special set of laws called Frontier Crimes Regulation , introduced by the British Colonial rulers way back in 1871 and re-enacted with additions in 1901.

The FCR comprises six chapters, 64 sections and three schedules; the FCR-40 being the most notorious among them. The FCR 40 deals with Collective Responsibility issues i.e. the PA can punish any tribe, or sub-tribe, whenever he deems fit. This means if somebody damages government property in Area A, the PA can punish people from Area B on mere suspicion and impose heavy penalties. If a crime takes place in area C, the tribe living in the area is responsible for redemption, even though miscreants or rivals might be responsible for the act. This section further empowers the government authorities – the Political Agent and his subordinates – to arrest a person or members of a tribe, as the case may be, accused of the breach of peace or for the purpose of maintaining good behaviour to execute a bond (sections 40, 41), failing which the accused or male members of his tribe can be imprisoned for 3 years up to life (sections 43, 44) without any right of appeal in any civil or criminal court (section 48). The term of imprisonment can be extended if the magistrate (political agent) is of the opinion that it should be extended further (section 45).⁴⁰

The Political Agent conducts business with the border tribes on behalf of the central government of Pakistan. However, under the FCR, the PA – a civil servant – acts as a prosecutor, investigator and judge in disposing crimes. He nominates members of a council of elders, locally known as Jirga (section 8), to enquire into a dispute. However, the findings of the council of elders are not binding on the political agent and if he rejects the Jirga recommendations, nobody can question the Political Agent, nor can his acts be challenged in any civil or criminal court (section 10, 60).

Under sections 20 and 21 of the said regulation, members of a hostile or unfriendly tribe can be put behind the bars, their property could be seized and/or confiscated, and their houses demolished (section 33, 34). Fines can be imposed and recovered from the whole tribe of which the accused happens to be a member (section 22) and public emoluments of persons or a tribe guilty of or conniving at crimes can be forfeited under section 26.

To pay penalties imposed by the Political Agent, the tribe and sub-tribes maintain a collective kitty to which all earning members contribute monthly. Whenever collective fines are imposed, the head of the tribe pays out of this kitty, which keeps running thin because of excessive fines by the PA and his administration.

The provisions of the FCR are in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Constitution of Pakistan (articles 8-28). These

⁴⁰ Khalid Aziz, in “Tribal Areas of Pakistan, Challenges and Responses”, p.116, IPRI, Islamabad September 2005.

sections are called Territorial Responsibility thereby implying that every person of a tribe is responsible for a crime of any kind that takes place in the territory of the said tribe. Even, if a Prime Minister or President belongs to a tribe of FATA and some crimes happen in his native town, the political agent can arrest the Prime Minister and President also.

The Frontier Crimes Regulation from 1901 revolved around the Section 21. A brief scrutiny of these laws is an eye-opener for a person even with the minimal knowledge of fundamental human rights.

According to sub-section (4) of section 1, some special and discriminatory provisions exist that are applicable only to Pathans and Baluchis. The argument presented for the existence of such a discriminatory clause is that, since these two tribes have peculiar traditions, therefore, it is necessary to have such provisions.

Section 38, sub clause (4) reads: "But this section gives a right to cause the death of a person against whom those portions of the FCR 1901, which are not of general application, may be forced". "I find no parallel in any other existing law, which legitimizes the use of undue force as a normal administrative measure. It is the presence of this inhuman clause of law, which is responsible for there being no inquiries for the violence of the state apparatus against its own people."⁴¹

Furthermore, Section 38 (i) gives a right to privately arrest anyone suspected of an offence under the FCR. This was a much abused provision when the FCR was operative in the Frontier districts until its abolition in 1963. The Khans used it against the Hindu tenants and others to accumulate land and wealth with the tacit support of the administration. Today, the more powerful of the Maliks manipulate it in some cases against weaker opponents. If the above quoted clause is read with Section 29 the possibilities of abuse increase manifold. This clause permits a punishment of 5 years imprisonment on grounds of suspicion alone.

Under section 21, once the political agent has determined that a person or tribe is hostile; he has five options available to him, some of which are given below:

- The seizure and arrest of the proscribed members; any of them or their property.
- The confiscation of any such property and imprisonment of the persons seized.
- Prevention of a tribe or individual of the districts, from any intercourse or communication with the proscribed person or tribe.

Under clause 31, tribesmen within 5 miles of the border of the district can undertake no hamlet or other construction.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Under clause 32, if on military grounds a village or habitation is found dangerous, it has to be removed. No building or *Hujra* (which is an important traditional Pashtu social institution for collective decision making, conflict resolution, information sharing and social development) can be constructed or set up, or used as such, without the approval of the political agent (Section 33).

Under clause 40, the political agent can ask anyone to provide security, if it is determined by him that this would prevent murder or sedition. If a person fails to do so or the political agent finds the securities inadequate, the targeted person may be imprisoned for three years. Such a period of imprisonment can be extended to a total of six years. It is for the political agent to decide whether the imprisonment is to be simple or rigorous.

3.2.1 Militias and Rifles

Local militia Scouts and Rifles and the military-led Frontier Constabulary (FC) are responsible for administrative control in the region.

The first militia in the Indian sub-continent was the Turi Militia, which was raised out of Turis in 1892 by Capt. CM Dallas, who volunteered to serve under the British in their own area, the Khurram Valley. Turi Militia became Khurram Militia in later years, which can rightly be called as the Mother Militia.

Subsequently many a Militia was raised in different areas, where the local tribes were enrolled as soldiers.

Some of the famous Militia Corps created by the British that exist even today are stated below:

- Turi Militia (1892) – now Khurram Militia.
- North Waziristan Militia (June 1900) – now Tochi Scouts 1922
- South Waziristan Militia (1st July 1900) from South Waziristan Constabulary – now South Waziristan Scouts 91922)
- Mohmand Militia- raised in 1917 and disbanded on 20 December, 1921 at Shahqadar
- Frontier Horse Militia Derajat
- Changhai Militia (1948)
- Zhob Militia (Balochistan)

In the post 9/11 Pakistan-US cooperation, four additional wings of FC were raised to enhance security in the FATA region. Until mid 2003, these areas were policed by militia guards composed of people from within the tribes – popularly known as Khassadars, while the political agent or the administrative heads of these agencies did not have any police force at their disposal except the Khassadars.

3.2.2 Social System⁴²

Nikat

Nikat is the *raison d'être* of the tribal system. It denotes interest in profits and losses within the tribe and between the tribes according to ancestral “wesh” (yardstick of distribution of profits and losses). Any deviation from “Nikat” invites serious trouble and no political administration can venture to enter into this forbidden area. Its rigidity could be imagined from the fact that in some agencies even the ration and development outlay is based on the dictates of shares contrived under “Nikat”.

Moajib and Malaki/Lungi Allowance

Subsidies/allowances payable to the assured tribes are known as Moajib in the tribal parlance. It guarantees continuous allegiance of the tribes to the state. During the Mughal and Durrani period these subsidies were paid in lieu of right of way through various passes. The British Empire followed this rule for extending its hold to every new area brought under its control by means of road communication and locating.

Malaki Allowance is hereditary, whereas, the Lungi Allowance is sanctioned for political services to the administration. The latter terminates on the death of the Lungi holder.

Collective Tribal Responsibility

The principle of collective tribal territorial responsibility is enshrined in the customs and usages prevailing in the tribal areas. Under this system, if a crime originates anywhere, the section of the tribe on whose soil the crime is committed is held accountable and answerable to the Government. Political agents use (and very often abuse) this system to impose heavy penalties on tribes for “failing to guard government assets and installations in their areas”.

Khassadari / Protective Responsibility

The institution of Khassadari, comprising local tribesmen, is as old as the Malaki system itself. Introduced in 1849, during Afghan king Ahmed Shah Durrani's rule, Khassadars and Levies are a sort of police at the disposal of Political Agents in the agencies. The Khassadar or Levies forces ensure good conduct of the tribes for safe passage through their country, and thus, they are known as protective tribal responsibility. The British Empire strengthened this system after the

⁴² The following chapter is based on Dr. Syed Iftikhar Hussein, at the Area Study Centre, Peshawar University. It gives a comprehensive account of the social systems in place in the FATA and FR areas. Interview conducted on April 10, 2008.

boundary alignment agreement – Durand Line – with Afghanistan in 1893. Now this system is all over FATA either in the form of Khassadaris or the Levies. The main difference between Khassadars and the Levies is that, whereas, the Khassadari is hereditary and the incumbent supplies his own weapons, the Levies get rifles and necessary arms from the government and they can be replaced by selection.

Easement Rights

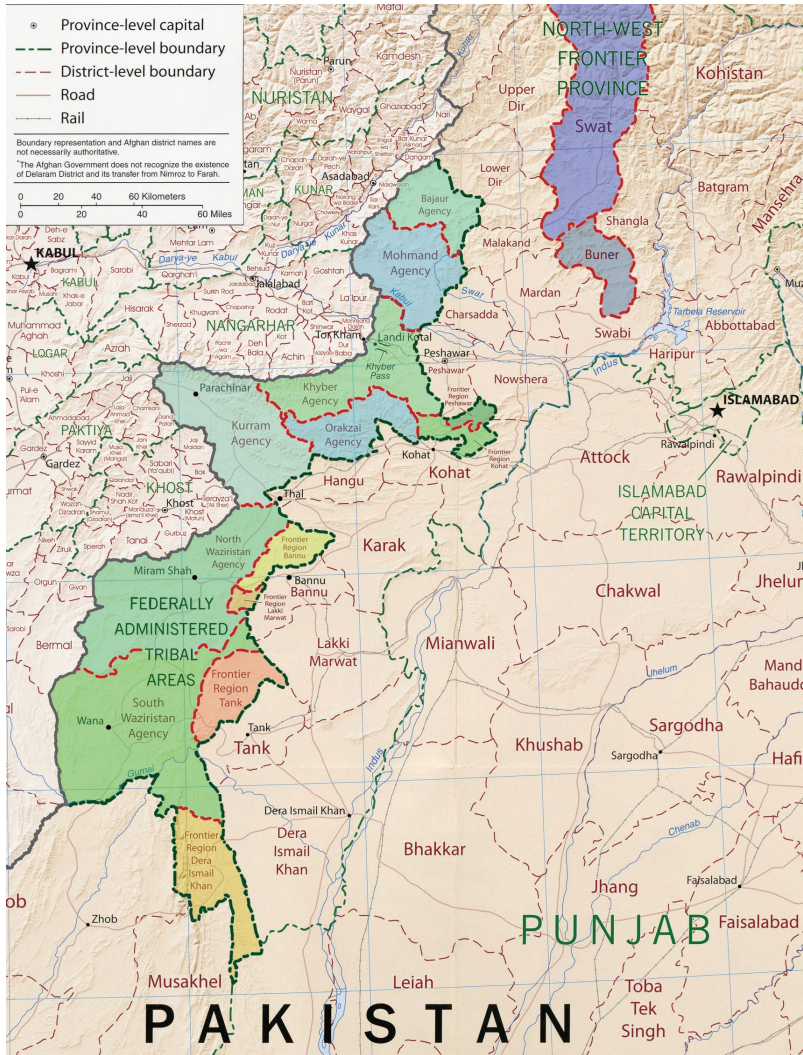
Under the Durand Agreement tribes living on both side of the border are allowed free ingress into one another's quarters for obvious reasons. No immigration restrictions could be imposed on the long porous border. It gives an added sensitivity to the border but a very satisfying aspect of respectability of the alignment is noticed as its sanctity is being maintained by the tribes which otherwise would have required a very large force for its maintenance.

According to official estimates, some 40,000 Afghans, Pakistanis and tribesmen daily cross the border from Torkham and Chamman only.⁴³

The Easement Rights clause also became subject of controversy when Pakistani officials attempted to impose restrictions on the cross-border movement through a new bio-metrics system at Chamman in the south-western Balochistan province that shares some 1800 kilometres of border with Afghanistan. The Afghans rejected it. Also, the tribes living across the Durand Line opposed it. (The Canadian government is guiding officials from both countries to institute permanent mechanisms to address issues such as border traffic controls, and counter-narcotics. The latest round was held in 2008 between May 5th and May 8th in Bhurban near Islamabad).

All this adds obvious problems with the present border traffic between Pakistan and Afghanistan, making it virtually impossible to patrol the border and weed out traffic connected with the insurgency in Afghanistan.

⁴³ Official statistics provided by the ministry of interior. Source withheld.



Agencies of FATA and the eastern Pak-Afghan border. (Map Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin. Modified by FOI)

3.3 FATA – Profile of the Agencies

Administratively, FATA is divided into seven agencies and six additional small pockets of tribal areas known as Frontier Regions (FR).

The Agencies are:

- Khyber Agency
- Kurram Agency
- Bajaur Agency
- Mohmand Agency
- Orakzai Agency
- North Waziristan Agency
- South Waziristan Agency

Frontier Regions are:

- FR Peshawar
- FR Kohat
- FR Bannu
- FR Lakki
- FR Tank
- FR D.I. Khan

The FRs is essentially transition areas between FATA and the adjoining settled districts of the NWFP. They are jointly administered by the NWFP and the tribal agencies. Chapter 3.3 is mainly based on “Profiles of Pakistanis seven Tribal Agencies” by Hassan Abbas, Oct. 20, 2006.

Khyber Agency

It derives its name from the world famous Khyber Pass which provides the most vital and important link between Pakistan and Afghanistan. With a population of around 500,000, it is inhabited by three important tribes; Afridis, Shinwaris and Mullagoris. Afridis are the biggest tribe inhabiting the Khyber Agency and are divided into eight sub-tribes – Adam Khel, Aka Khel, Kamar Khel, Kambar Khel, Kuki Khel, Malikdin Khel, Zakka Khel, and Sipah. Afridis respect Sufis (mystics) and their shrines, which intellectually align them with Barelvi Sunnis – the antidote of conservative and pro-Taliban Deobandi groups.

Shinwaris, the second largest tribe of this agency are concentrated in the Landikotal area of the Agency. Shinwari is one of those tribes that are divided on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (Durand Line). They are also influential, but its members mostly inhabit the Ningarhar province of

Afghanistan. They are largely involved in business activities. The third tribe, Mullagoris, is a small one, mainly inhabiting the Landikotal area of the Khyber Agency. The Mullagori area is rich in mines that contain world-class marble and precious stones.

In recent years, Khyber Agency has been a trouble spot known for hosting illegal radio stations supporting religious extremism and encouraging pro-Taliban activities. This could hardly have gone on without at least the tacit knowledge of the tribal Malikis of the Shinwaris.⁴⁴ The Darra Adam Khel area of Khyber Agency is famous for manufacturing and sale of local-made weapons in the entire Pakistan. However, it has recently gained notoriety for being a hub of TTP militants.

Kurram Agency

Comparatively more accessible than other agencies, it has a population of about 450,000 and is home to three tribes – Turi, Bangash and Mangal. A land of gardens and orchards, this agency has often been called pro-Northern Alliance because the Turi tribe predominantly belongs to the Shiite sect of Islam, which is anti-Taliban in its orientation. Turi tribe (Turkic origin), with a tradition of good horsemanship, also belongs to the Shiite sect and has been at loggerheads with pro-Taliban Deobandi elements in the neighbouring area. The Bangash tribe is a mix of Sunni and Shia. Some non-Shiite extremists in the area, especially the Mangal tribe, however, were supportive of the Taliban.⁴⁵ The Mangals also inhabit the neighbouring Khost Province of Afghanistan, and have remained at war with the Tori as well as Shia Bangash. Due to their presence in Afghanistan, they also receive support from their tribesmen from across the border in the event of hostility with Toris.

Bajaur Agency

Smallest of all, this agency is largely inaccessible due to its hilly terrain. It was initially a part of the Malakand Agency, and was created as a separate entity in December 1973 with its headquarters at Khar.⁴⁶ With a population of about 600,000, it borders Afghanistan's Kunar province, which is a hotbed of Taliban forces. Its prominent tribes are Tarkani and Utman Khel, which are further subdivided into subtribes. The alliance of religious political parties – namely the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) – has great influence in this area since two MMA politicians from this agency are represented in the National Assembly and one in the Senate. Similarly, the pro-Taliban Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) maintains a considerable presence in Bajaur Agency,

⁴⁴ Hassan Abbas- The Dawn, December 2, 2004.

⁴⁵ Hassan Abbas, Terrorism Monitor; Jamestown foundation: Volume 4, Issue 20-October 19, 2006.

⁴⁶ Bajaur Agency, <http://www.khyber.org/places/2005/BajaurAgency.shtml>.

especially with the Mamond subtribe, from where the present leadership of TNSM comes as well. Mamond has remained important post-9/11 due to the presence of Al Qaeda leadership in the area. Al Qaeda has been able to establish cordial relations with the leadership of then TNSM, Maulana Faqir Muhammad and Maulana Liaqat Hussain (died October 2006) as well as with the clerics in the area. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's deputy leader, is known to be married to a local woman from the Mamond tribe. Also Maulana Faqir Muhammad's grand-daughter is married to an Arab militant from Al Qaeda.⁴⁷

Bajaur's proximity to Kunar keeps fuelling suspicions that Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri may be hiding in the area. An aerial attack reportedly executed by the CIA and targeting Ayman al-Zawahiri, took place in a village in Bajaur Agency on January 13, 2006 killing 18 people. Al-Zawahiri was not found among the dead and the incident led to severe outrage in the area. It is also relevant that Abu Faraj al-Libbi, a senior member of Al-Qaeda who was involved in an assassination attempt on President Pervez Musharraf, told interrogators after his arrest in May 2005 that he had lived in Bajaur for some time.⁴⁸ It was reported on August 13, 2008, that Al Qaeda's head of finance committee and head of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan Mustafa Abu Yazid aka Abu Saeed al-Masri was killed in Pakistani military operations in Bajaur.⁴⁹ However, the news could not be confirmed.

Mohmand Agency

The Agency takes its name from the Mohmand tribe who resides there and numbers about 350,000. Mohmand is a very powerful and influential tribe, and is divided into three main subtribes: Tarakzai, Baizai and Khwaezai. The Halimzai clan of the Tarakzai is the most important and influential of all the other clans. The Mohmands gained some renown as good guerrilla fighters already during the British era. One of the important themes among Mohmands is the description and details of the wars in which they have fought. Indeed, they are widely known to have given more trouble to the British than any other tribe. Another distinguishing mark is the importance that they give to their clerics and divine leaders – they fought most of their wars under the leadership of their Mullahs. In reference to the political scenario, Mohmand tribal leaders challenged the idea of joint combing of the area by Pakistani and US forces in 2003, and later, the NWFP government (led by the MMA) came forward to support the stance of the Mohmand tribe. Despite that, Pakistani army units conducted various search operations in the area and tribal leaders decided not to opt for a head-on collision with them. Another tribe that inhabit alongside the Mohmands are the Safi tribe

⁴⁷ 'Mystery of Arab Afghans in Tribal Areas', The Post, 20 October 2008.

⁴⁸ Weekly Pulse, Nov.23, 2007.

⁴⁹ Saeed Shah, 'Leading Al-Qaeda Militant Killed After Days of Fighting in Pakistan', The Guardian, August 13, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/aug/13/alqaida.pakistan>.

which, although numerically much smaller than Mohmands, is known for its fundamentalist and religious inclinations in the entire Agency. Safi is situated on the border of Mohmand and Bajaur Agency. Safi had given stiff resistance to the British Indian government during colonial rule. In recent years, the TTP's leadership as well as their activities started from the Safi tribe which then spread to other parts of Mohmand Agency.

Orakzai Agency

The Orakzai Agency was created out of the Kohat and Hangu Frontier regions to a separate entity in December 1973. Measuring 700 Sq.miles in area, it is a small Agency with a population of about 240,000 and is primarily inhabited by the Orakzai tribe from which it derives its name. The other important tribes in this area are Daulatzai, Ali Khel, Mullah Khel, Mishti, and Sheikhan. Unlike most of the agencies, Shiites and Sunnis both live side by side in Orakzai, although seldom in peace. Regular sectarian clashes have diminished the effectiveness and influence of the Orakzai tribe. This is the only agency that does not have a common border with Afghanistan. The governor of the NWFP and former corps commander in the region, Lieutenant General (Retired) Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai, belongs to this tribe. Some senior bureaucrats in the civil service of Pakistan also hail from this tribe giving them influence in the power corridors of Pakistan. Despite having a comparatively high literacy rate, the agency was the first one to ban Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from operating in the area, declaring them anti-Islamic. The possession of televisions has also been declared a crime here under the influence of the local Taliban.⁵⁰ Orakzai has witnessed the rise of Taliban groups in the Agency.

North Waziristan

The second largest agency in terms of area, hosts about 375,000 people mostly belonging to the Uthmanzai Wazir and Dawar tribes. The Waziristan region was a chronic headache for the British; even after the creation of Pakistan, Waziris continue to draw regular attention to Pakistan for their support to Pakhtoonistan/Pashtunistan (the joining of all Pashtun areas to create a new state) and hence, maintained good relations with Afghanistan. Since the 1970s, however, Waziris joined the ranks of the Pakistani armed forces in considerable numbers as compared to members of other tribes. The transport business in the region is their monopoly. It is the kidnapping-for-ransom business, however, that they are known to be most notorious for. As ironic as it may sound, Waziris are also fond of music and dancing and despite the Taliban's influence they continue to cherish these hobbies.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Associated Press May 21, 2008.

⁵¹ CRSS interview at Hayatabad Market, Peshawar- May 2008.

The Pakistani army's military operations in this agency started in 2002, and led to a full-fledged military confrontation with the Waziris. Aimal Kanshi, a former CIA employee, also hid here and worked at a gas station before his capture in 1998, and eventual execution in the United States a few years later. Many important Al-Qaeda leaders such as Abu Zubayda and Khalid Sheikh Mohammad transited through North Waziristan on their way to Pakistan cities of Faisalabad and Rawalpindi, where they were captured⁵². At present, the North Waziristan is host to militants from Al Qaeda, Islamic Jihad Union and East Turkistan Islamic Movement. Also, notorious Afghan Taliban commander, Maulana Jalaluddin Haqqani, is believed to be maintaining his home and madrassah (Arabic for educational institution) in Danda Darpakhel village near Miramshah, the headquarter of North Waziristan Agency.

Several militant tribal leaders have become legendary figures in the process. Turning in their comrades to government authorities, as demanded by the army, meant a treacherous course of action for them. Interestingly, since the recent peace accord between Pakistan and the tribal elders of the agency, the Taliban have opened up offices in three important cities to "control law and order".

South Waziristan

The largest agency in the area, South Waziristan is home to around 425,000 tribesmen, mainly from Mehsud, Ahmadzai Wazir and Bhattani tribes. Two other tribes, Sulaiman Khel and Urmurs/Burkis, though insignificant, also inhabit the South Waziristan Agency. The Mehsuds form the largest population of the agency. According to estimates, they are 75 percent of the entire population of the agency and inhabit the centre and northern areas of the largely mountainous agency. The Ahmadzai Wazirs are divided into nine sub-tribes that include Zalikhel, Tojekhel, Khojalkhel, Gangikhel, Sarkikhel, Bazankhel, Khonikhel, Sperkai and Mughalkhel.⁵³ The Zalikhel is the largest clan in terms of numerical strength and its sub-clan, Yargulkhel, is the biggest subclan of the entire Ahmadzai Wazir. It was the Yargul Khel from which the initial leadership of Taliban belonged, such as Nek Muhammad (dead June 2004), Haji Omar (dead October 2008), Noor Islam and Maulvi Abbas.

In Pakistan, Mehsuds are often depicted as being equally valiant and ferocious. They live up to the tradition of protecting a refugee even at the cost of their lives. Afghan war veterans – Abdullah Meshud (killed in action) and Baitullah Meshud, currently the head of the Tahrike Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella for like-minded extremist, pro- al-Qaeda Taliban groups operating in the entire FATA region – also belong to the same tribe, that has been notorious for

⁵² Ibid note 48.

⁵³ Mushtaq Yousafzai, 'Protest over drone attacks', The News, November 5, 2008, http://thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=144982.

murders, abductions for ransom and of late, for way-laying Pakistan army and government officials. The Wazir and Mehsud tribes share a reputation as warriors and for frequent blood feuds. While they have produced many senior civil and military officers, the overall political leadership of South Waziristan is dominated by conservative Mullahs. The two National Assembly members from this agency are clergymen affiliated with the MMA. Militants from Central Asia, especially those associated with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, were also based in this area. In 2004, they created a stir when they launched rockets at Peshawar city, targeting official buildings including military ones. Nek Mohammad, a notorious militant leader (although a hero to the region), was a Waziri from this Agency.⁵⁴

The Bhattani are another significant tribe which occupies the strategic pass connecting South Waziristan Agency with the settled districts of North West Frontier Province. Jandola is the main town of the Bhattani tribe. Urmurs/Burkis occupy the Kanigurum area in South Waziristan Agency and are surrounded by the Mehsud tribe from all the four sides. The Urmurs maintain strategic ties with the Mehsuds and fight in their ranks when the need arise.

⁵⁴ The Friday Times, March 31, 2006.

4 Tribal lands: Cauldron of militarism

As of June 2008, Pakistan's embattled tribal region – also called FATA – simmered with religious and political militarism; while Al-Qaeda inspired, anti-US Pakistani militants and their Afghan ideological partners vowed to continue their “Jihad” until foreign forces leave Afghanistan and Islamic Sharia is enforced there as well as in Pakistan. Close to 120,000 Pakistani and some 81,000 US and NATO-led International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), together with over 70,000 Afghan National Army were battling these Islamist forces.

The combatants of this conflict can be categorized as follows:

Pakistan Government represented by the Army, paramilitary forces, Intelligence Agencies, and the civilian administration.

Afghan government and the NATO-led international peace troops.

Militant organizations in FATA represented by:

- Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
- Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban (Local Movement of Taliban)
- Lashkare Islamic
- Anasarul Islam
- Amr Bil Maroof o Nahi Analmunkir (PVPV)
- Tehreeke Nifaze Shariate Mohammedi(TNSM)
- Jaish-e-Islami
- Karwan-e-Naimatullah

Militant organizations outside FATA

Jaish-e-Mohammed

Harkatul Mujahideen

Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)

Lashkare Jhangvi

Cross-border allies – Afghan Organisations

Taliban

Hezb e Islami (HI)

Foreign components – IMU, Arabs and Chechens

Al-Qaeda transcends Durand Line⁵⁵

The picture that emerges from various studies and interactions with residents and intellectuals of the FATA region is one of a cobweb of local militants, Pakistani and Afghan Taliban and Arab, Uzbek and other foreign elements pitched against the US-led international coalition. Not only have these pro-Al-Qaeda groups been fighting the US and its allies but they often also fight one another for territorial influence and political power.

As of late May and early June 2008, South and North Waziristan were swarming with Pakistani, Afghan, Arab and Uzbek Taliban, with people from the area feeling insecure and frightened over the danger of militants virtually taking the entire region hostage.⁵⁶

Since the launch of the anti-terror war in October 2001, militant Islamist movements has undergone a reactive transformation; already in 2005, German terrorism scholar Rolf Tophoven, Director of the German Institute for Terrorism Research and Security Policy had concluded that the US-led onslaught had forced al-Qaeda and its affiliates to form decentralized small units that were spread across the world and threatened the states more than the group did when it attacked the US on Sept 11, 2001.⁵⁷

According to Tophoven's assessment, there are more than 30,000 Muslim extremists in Germany, while about 10,000 active supporters and affiliates of al-Qaeda are present in the United Kingdom. Most of these people had a direct or indirect connection with Afghanistan.

During this period, Al-Qaeda went even further to become an ideology that transcended borders and was able to network local extremist outfits to pursue its sometimes narrowly defined, but globally consequential objectives.

Jason Burke, the British journalist and one of the best sources on Al-Qaeda, says that "Al-Qaeda has metamorphosed from an organisation to a movement that can be called 'Al-Qaedaism'. The term denotes Al-Qaeda's transformation from an organisation with specific linkages with its affiliates, into a movement that has become influential in inspiring radicals into attacking in the name of Al-Qaeda. This transformation has allowed Al-Qaeda to transcend the physical limits imposed by its isolation in remote border areas of an obscure area to one of a global brand. Al-Qaeda may no longer provide operational leadership, but its

⁵⁵ Al Qaeda should be understood here as the 'brand-name' for all Islamist networks proscribing on the same worldview as the original network.

⁵⁶ CRSS interviews with Waziristani tribesmen who occasionally shuttle between Peshawar and their home towns. Details withheld.

⁵⁷ Gul, Imtiaz in www.thefridaytimes.com, September 9-15, 2005.

'central command' is now providing inspirational leadership, encouraging others to attack".⁵⁸

Muhammad Amir Rana, a Pakistani terrorism and militancy expert, says that the January 2002 ban on various Pakistani militant organizations had forced them into restructuring for the sake of survival. The logic behind the restructuring was that Jihad organizations will no longer use the words jihad, Lashkar, Jaish or Mujahideen (as prefix or suffix) to appear more political than militant.⁵⁹

Rana and other analysts agree that the complex situation – continuous hunt by the Americans and ban by the Pakistan government – prompted them to join al-Qaeda's underground groups and started operations on the Pakistani soil. This also instilled fear into the government machinery, as well as, people at large. Here is one example:

"The Bajaur Agency administration is finding it difficult to get tribal chieftains on its side against wanted militant Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, who is suspected to be sheltering al-Qaeda-linked militants in the border area with Afghanistan. Tribal chieftains are wary of getting on board because speaking openly against al-Qaeda can invite serious problems from the militants," a Daily Times reporter said after a visit to the Bajaur region.⁶⁰

"It is difficult to take on al-Qaeda since the organization shows no mercy to people working against it and for the government ...three jirgas (assemblies of local elders) have been called since the Damadola incident (where a US missile strike on January 13 left at least 83 seminary students dead) but most tribal elders stayed away for fear that al-Qaeda-linked militants may target them," the paper quoted a tribal elder, who wished not to be named for fear of reprisals from the administration and al-Qaeda.⁶¹ Jaishe-e-Muhammad is now working by the name Al-Rehmat Trust, Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami as Al-Ershad Trust and Harkatul Mujahideen as Al-Asar Trust in Pakistan.

In the new structure, movers and shakers of the Muttahida Jihad Council (established in 1991 but extensively used as an umbrella for the anti-India Jihad in Kashmir) co-opted five Pakistan-based organizations; Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Brigade 313, Al-Bader Mujahideen and Jamaatul Furqan. All leaders agreed that no organization would issue any press statement, nor would disclose the activities and operations.

These five outfits – all of them headquartered in the most populous Punjab province – drew inspiration from Hezbe Islami of Gulbudin Hekmetyar,

⁵⁸ Burke, Jason, "Al Qaeda", I.B.Tauris, London 2004.

⁵⁹ Rana, analysis in South Asianet, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Aug 2006.

⁶⁰ Daily Times, Jan 26 2007.

⁶¹ Rana, analysis in South Asianet, Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Aug 2006.

Jalaluddin Haqqani, Mullah Omar (Taliban Supreme Leader), and Maulvi Nabi Mohammadi.⁶²

However, Markaz-Al-Daawatul Ershad, essentially Lashkare Taiba's (LeT) parent organization, which is ideologically close to the pro-Saudi Arabia Afghan war veteran Prof. Abdul Rab Rasool Sayyaf, was an exception that had realized the gravity of the situation just after a shift in Pakistan's pro-jihad policy. It renamed itself as Jamaatud Daawa and dissolved LeT's Pakistan chapter and shifted its offices in Azad Kashmir.

Jaish-e-Muhammad converted into Tehreeke Khudamul Islam (Movement of Servants of Islam), Harkatul Mujahideen into Jamiatul Ansar (Party of Hosts) and Sipah Sahaba became the Millat-e-Islami. From December 2001 to August 2002, these organizations remained silent, but with the passage of time they started their activities again.⁶³

Pakistani Punjabi Factor

The fact that Punjabi Taliban – activists of the Punjab-based organizations mentioned above – are scattered all over FATA, attached either with Baitullah Mehsud, Mullah Nazir, Maulana Faqir Muhammad (Bajaur) or TNSM (Malakand, Swat). This also explains the ideological nexus that exists between groups based in and outside FATA.

In one instance, when a close aide to Mullah Nazir (South Waziristan), Maulvi Iqbal and several of his fighters fell during skirmishes with US-led coalition forces in the Paktika province in March 2008, many were later identified as Pakistanis from the Punjab province. About a dozen dead bodies were brought from Paktika and buried in Wana. A few Punjabis were also among them.⁶⁴

In its June 5, 2008 issue, The News also confirmed the presence of Pakistani Punjabi Taliban. "Maulvi Iqbal was killed along with many other militants including many Pakistanis from the Punjab province."

In another instance, when a dispute arose over the control of the shrine of Pashtoon freedom fighter Haji Sahib Turangzai's shrine and the mosque adjacent to it in a Mohmand agency village in August 2007, around 300 masked Urdu- (Pakistan's national language) speaking Taliban were also among the 3,500 militants who had occupied the site.

⁶² Also see Pakistani Militant Organisations and Profiles of wanted Afghan leaders above.

⁶³ Ibid note 75.

⁶⁴ CRSS interviews with locals in Wana during the FATA survey, April/May 2008. Details withheld.

“No one recognises the Urdu speakers guarding the shrine. I talked to an Urdu-speaking Talib who belonged to Punjab and could not speak Pushto,” a man asking not to be named, told the Daily Times.⁶⁵

“Some Taliban have good command over English, Urdu, Arabic and Pushto and are issuing statements in several languages to the national and international media,” the paper quoted source as saying. The militants also went on to rename the facility after Islamabad's Red Mosque, in support of Abdul Rashid Ghazi, a cleric who defied the government and was killed during bloody army siege in the capital on July 11, 2007.

Most of the Punjabi Taliban is associated with groups like Harkatul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkare Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba and Al Badar. One of their leaders is Owais Qadri, who comes from Jhang. Sipah Sahaba's Qari Hussain Mehsud is blamed for stirring sectarian rights in Kurram Agency and is accused of killing family members of a former Political Agent of the Khyber Agency in May 2007 in the Tank district of NWFP. Hussein grew up and got his education in the central Pakistani towns of Faisalabad and Jhang, before returning to Waziristan and becoming one of the most important Taliban leaders.⁶⁶

Scores of activists and fighters of these Pakistani Jihadi organizations were based in Afghanistan when the anti-terror war began. They also suffered huge human losses, losing important commanders and hundreds of warriors to the US bombing. Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami lost as many as 340, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen lost 79, Jaishe Muhammad 36 and Lashkare Jhangvi 27 militants in the coalition attacks.⁶⁷

An elderly Pakistani from the Punjab province – called Chacha Akhtar – used to be in charge of the Pakistani Taliban contingent at the Rishkore camp south of Kabul. Wanted on criminal charges, Akhtar had shifted his family to this camp in early 2001. According to sources in Kabul, most trainers of recruits from the Middle East, African and Central Asian countries were also predominantly Pakistani Punjabis.⁶⁸

In “A to Z of Jihadi Organisations” and in “True Face of Jihadis” (by Amir Mir), it is said that over 450 terrorists, about 200 of them Yemenis and Saudis, were captured by Pakistan until late 2003. At that time as many as two-thirds of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were from Pakistan, all of them captured inside Afghanistan. About 14 of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, 7 of Jaish-e-Muhammad and 11

⁶⁵ Daily Times, Aug 4, 2007.

⁶⁶ CRSS interviews during the FATA survey, April/May 2008 Details withheld.

⁶⁷ Also see South Waziristan, Tehrik-e-Taliban: Mullah Nazir.

⁶⁸ Gul, Imtiaz: The Unholy Nexus.

of Harkat-ul-Jihad militants of Pakistani origin were also among the Guantanamo bay inmates.⁶⁹

Tehereeke Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) emerged to the context of a series of military operations; US-led missile strikes on the one hand, and the abduction of over 250 soldiers in the Mehsud area of South Waziristan on the other (on August 30, 2007). The capitulation of such a large number of troops was the worst humiliation the Pakistani army had suffered in the tribal areas on its own territory since it became an active ally in the anti-terror war. Most of the captured army men were released in the first week of November in exchange for about 25 Taliban prisoners.

Qari Hussein Mehsud (Sipah Sahaba Pakistan, SSP), in charge of the suicide training camps of Baitullah Mehsud, called some friends in the media on December 14 (Friday being an auspicious day to Muslims) to announce the formation of TTP. He declared that the TTP would be guided by a 40-member central Shura (assembly), comprising representatives from all the seven FATA agencies.

Interestingly, the formation of Mehsud's TTP was, in fact, the revival of an organization with the same name that had been founded in 1998.

“Led by Mohammad Rahim, the TTP made its appearance on the national horizon when on Dec 13, 1998 it sentenced and publicly executed Khial Ghaffar, a murder suspect, in the Orakzai agency.”⁷⁰

The organization also banned television, VCR and music in the Orakzai agency. Rahim had denied contacts with Afghan Taliban, yet he fashioned his TTP on more or less the same lines.⁷¹

Baitullah Mehsud's TTP, however, is a trans-agency outfit, wedded to anti-Americanism and determined to enforce Taliban-style Sharia (Islamic Law) in Pakistan. Its creation underscored a new and more threatening development; most militants realized the need for a central command and found in Baitullah Mehsud, a unifying force that transcends tribal regions. The TTP maintains strong presence in almost the entire FATA area in the sense that individual Taliban groups in areas other than Waziristan also owe allegiance to Baitullah Mehsud.

⁶⁹ Amir Rana, Daily Times April 12, 2003.

⁷⁰ Rana, M. Amir in 'A to Z of Jihadi Organisations in Pakistan', p. 190.

⁷¹ Also see Taliban in Orakzai Agency.

Inspired by Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda, these militants have morphed into the TTP because they share the same goal; drive the foreign forces from Afghanistan and enforce Sharia wherever possible.⁷²

Mehsud's interview with the mentioned group of about two dozen journalists in May 2008 also reconfirmed his resolve to fight until the eviction of foreign troops from Afghanistan. Whether it is Maulvi Faqeer of Bajaur, or Mullah Nazir of South Waziristan, Maulvi Fazlullah of Swat (who is also the Taliban chief administrator, Nazime Aala) or the pro-government Haji Naamdar of the Khyber Agency, they all share this goal, and thus, would remain a headache for authorities in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As of June 2007, investigators found the footprints of Baitullah Meshud's group everywhere; almost all incidents of abductions, killings of officials, attacks on military convoys or on government infrastructure from Khyber Agency to North Waziristan, bore the hallmarks of the TTP.

"Baitullah is the prime suspect for links with foreign instigators. His people have been all around – killing government and non-government officials as well as abducting and executing innocent people and also fighting battles inside Afghanistan" a well-placed intelligence official said.⁷³

A proof for Baitullah Mehud's involvement came in early June, 2008 when about 18 of his militants fell to airstrikes on positions in the the Helmand province by coalition forces in Afghanistan.⁷⁴

One of Baitullah's senior commanders informed the newspaper that four bodies were brought to the Makeen town in South Waziristan Agency through unfrequented routes after hectic efforts. He said dozens of Mehud tribal militants, led by Commander Khan Ghafoor, had gone to Afghanistan to fight against the US-led forces there. Around two dozen militants had been sent to retrieve the remaining bodies.

A tribal journalist, whom TTP activists regularly call for disseminating their information, says the organization is growing in influence among young and jobless youth in the Waziristan and money seems to be no problem for them.⁷⁵

This journalist believes that the TTP is using Islamic Sharia (as espoused by Mullah Omar of the Afghan Taliban) to peddle its political agenda. This may not necessarily be an honest projection of their cause, he believes.

Ruthless attacks on Pakistani military and government targets, says this journalist, offer ample evidence that publicly the TTP wants to counter US

⁷² Interview with a FATA journalist who met Baitullah Mehud on May 24, 2008.

⁷³ CRSS interview at Peshawar, March 2007. Details withheld.

⁷⁴ The News June 7, 2008.

⁷⁵ Personal interviews at Peshawar – Details withheld.

hegemony, and it may be acting on somebody's behalf to keep Pakistani forces on tenterhooks.⁷⁶

Organisational Structure

The 40-member shura, or council, that Baitullah Mehsud heads comprises representatives from all seven agencies. Maulana Faqir Muhammad of Bajaur Agency and Hafiz Gul Bahadur of North Waziristan Agency were appointed as Deputy Heads while Maulana Fazlullah was appointed as the Secretary General of the TTP. The heads of TTP in the agencies are called Deputy Emir to Baitullah Mehsud and they meet as and when necessary. The TTP essentially is a conglomerate of about two dozen individual commanders, who share the same world view and which became the common bond for their unification under the TTP banner.

Maulvi Omar, whose real name is stated as Saeedullah, is the general Spokesman for the organization, and often interacts with the media via various landlines and mobile phones. He hails from Bajaur Agency's Mamond tehsil (a small administrative unit, only used in India and Pakistan) and enjoys influence within his tribe.

All TTP components operate independently. The craving for Islamic sharia and the "cleansing" of FATA, as well as, of Afghanistan of foreign forces, are the larger objectives that unify them.

TTP activists usually maintain a one-way contact with the media and sympathizers, usually themselves; making phone calls to the people they want to talk to.

Owais Ahmed Ghani, Governor of the Northwestern Frontier Province (NWFP), reckons that Baitullah Mehsud had spent around Rs 3 billion on his outfit annually. "He [Mehsud] is spending between Rs 2.5 – 3 billion yearly on procuring weapons, equipment, vehicles, treating wounded militants and keeping families of killed militants fed," the governor has said.⁷⁷

Ghani believes that "narco-dollars are feeding militancy in both Pakistan and Afghanistan." He also held the US and United Kingdom "responsible for ignoring my early warnings of serious repercussions if poppy cultivation was not curtailed in Afghanistan after the ouster of the Taliban regime".⁷⁸

A report by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs in March 2008 had stated that "Narcotics traffickers provide revenue and

⁷⁶ CRSS Survey, April/May 2008. Details withheld.

⁷⁷ Daily Times, May 30, 2008.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

arms to the Taliban, while the Taliban provide protection to growers and traffickers and keep the government from interfering with their activities”.⁷⁹

In 2007, Afghanistan provided 93 percent of the world’s opium poppies, the raw material for producing heroin, the US report adds. “In my meetings with the US and British envoys [in Islamabad], I was pleading [for] the two countries not to allow poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, otherwise the narco-dollars will not help end the militancy,” said Ghani.⁸⁰

Journalists familiar with the organization say that the militants spend huge sums on the means of communication – vehicles, fuel and equipment. They are also well-equipped for casualties of fighters, who are provided quick and considerable treatment in the mountains.

Maqami Tehrik-e-Taliban (Local Taliban Movement)

While Hafiz Gul Bahadur was initially appointed as the Deputy Head of the TTP, he eventually distanced himself from the TTP. It is believed that the development took place after Mullah Omar of the Afghan Taliban expressed his disapproval of the formation of TTP and advised the TTP not to indulge in attacks inside Pakistan. Mullah Omar eventually disassociated himself from Baitullah Mehsud.⁸¹

On June 30, 2008, Mullah Nazir, commander of the Taliban of the Ahmadzai Wazir Tribe of South Waziristan, and Hafiz Gul Bahadur Wazir, leader of the Taliban of the Uthmanzai Wazir and Daur Tribes of North Waziristan, announced the merger of their groups under a common front, the Maqami Tehrik-e-Taliban to fight ISAF-NATO and US forces in Afghanistan.⁸²

Subsequently, Hafiz Gul Bahadur was appointed as the overall commander of both the Ahmadzai and Uthmanzai Taliban, Mullah Nazir as the deputy commander and Mufti Abu Haroon as the spokesman of the group.⁸³ While the formation of the militant bloc was stated as “defending the Wazir Tribe’s interests in North and South Waziristan”, it in effect was aimed at countering Baitullah Mehsud and his TTP.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs official website, April 2008. <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/>.

⁸⁰ For more on the “narco-dollar” question see also: “Is Afghanistan a narco-state?”. Thomas Schweib, NYT, July 27, 2008.

⁸¹ ⁸¹ Mullah Omar Sacks Baitullah For Fighting Against Pak Army, *Daily Times*, January 26, 2008, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C01%5C26%5Cstory_26-1-2008_pg7_28.

⁸² Sadia Sulaiman, ‘Empowering “Soft” Taliban Over “Hard” Taliban: Pakistan’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy’, Volume 6, Issue 15, July 25, 2008, <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374331>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Mullah Nazir, the Emir of his Ahmadzai Taliban faction in South Waziristan had developed differences with Baitullah Mehsud when put together a lashkar – tribal militia of local tribesmen – and mounted a vicious campaign in March 2007 against foreign militants, predominantly of Uzbek origin, living in the hamlets such as Sheen Warsak, Azam Warsak and Kaloosha west of Wana – the administrative headquarters of South Waziristan. The eventual eviction of Uzbek militants and their local supporters from Yargulkhel clan by Mullah Nazir was not liked by Baitullah Mehsud who gave refuge to the fleeing Uzbek militants and Yargulkhel commanders.

The Ahmedzai Wazir tribe dominates the western parts of South Waziristan agency, and as such, controls the economically lucrative border trade routes between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ghalib Wazir, who defeated ex-Member of Parliament Maulana Abdul Malik from one of the two constituencies from South Waziristan to the national legislature in the February 18 national elections, also reportedly owed his success to local Taliban commanders, including aids to Mullah Nazir, who went all out to help him win the election.

Objections by Mullah Nazir and local opposition to attacks on army and government targets led to several weeks of pitched bloody battles and skirmishes. Beginning in the first week of March, Pakistan army officials insisted the tribesmen had turned the tables on foreign militants; the commander of Pakistani troops in the tribal areas, Maj. Gen. Gul Muhammad claimed the tribal army put down up to 200 foreign militants.⁸⁵

President Pervez Musharraf, however, told a gathering of officers in Islamabad that nearly 300 foreign militants had been killed. “And they got support from the Pakistan Army, as they asked for support,” he said, in a first public admission that troops were involved in the offensive.⁸⁶

Cause of Rift

Nazir had, in fact, fallen out with the rest of the Taliban after residents started complaining of the militant activities of the Uzbeks. There were approximately around 500 battle-hardened fighters who had retreated into Waziristan after the US-led coalition forces had swept Mazare Sharif and other northern territories of Afghanistan in December 2001.

Locals also had confirmed that differences between Nazir and the Uzbek fighters erupted in November 2006, after the former alleged that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) activists, rather than fighting foreign troops in Afghanistan,

⁸⁵ Press briefing in Wana, South Waziristan, April 1, 2007.

⁸⁶ Speech at National University of Defense, April 12, 2007.

preferred to target pro-American Pakistani tribal elders, government officials and military personnel as well as strategic installations.⁸⁷

Sensing the conflict, both the military and intelligence agencies leapt to exploit the growing differences between locals and foreign militants and got Mullah Nazir on board for a crackdown on the Uzbek fighters. They eventually engineered the “Lashkar” which became the face for the army’s renewed assault on Uzbeks and Arabs in the Waziristan region, which had remained perilous and practically out of bound, even for Pakistanis. Foreign journalists are also not permitted to visit the tribal areas, except a few selected ones under strictly controlled visits.

Officials dealing with the tribal areas at the General Headquarter (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, south of Islamabad, said the lashkar operation was part of a new strategy comprising three elements: coercive deployment, political engagement and socio-economic development – to “win over the hearts and minds of the people”.⁸⁸

This new strategy, however, appeared to result from the intense pressure that the United States and NATO countries had been exerting on Pakistan for a stronger and sincere effort to contain the spreading lawlessness of its tribal areas which Pakistani, Afghan and foreign militants have been using to wage an expanding insurgency across the border in Afghanistan.

Officials and tribal journalists familiar with the situation did confirm that the Waziristan region had turned into a Taliban state after the September 2006 peace deal between local authorities, tribesmen and militants in North Waziristan. As a result, the Pakistani military abandoned broad-scale military operations in favour of negotiated peace deals with the militants over the past two years.

“We did provide them support; there was no way around it,” said Major General Shaukat Sultan, the head of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) department, at that time.⁸⁹

Sultan admitted that army sharpshooters and strategists were part of the “lashkar” that swept across the areas mentioned above and forced the Uzbek militants to flee the area. Officials claimed as many as 250 of the Uzbeks were eliminated during the operation.

Fierce army power, combined with local commanders and fighters led by Mullah Nazir, estranged Haji Sharif and his brothers – Noor Islam and Mullah Omar – from Mullah Nazir, who had prevailed and eventually replaced their younger brother Maulvi Omar in the group’s internal power struggle.

⁸⁷ CRSS interviews for this study during March to April 2008. Details withheld.

⁸⁸ The Friday Times, Lahore, April 14, 2007.

⁸⁹ CRSS interview at Rawalpindi April 10. Details withheld.

Mullah Nazir's tacit alliance with the authorities and the active support of disguised Pakistan army commandos, mostly from the central Pakistani province of Punjab, compelled the Sharif, Omar and Noor Islam brothers to abandon their ancestral homes in Azam Warsak, Kaloosha and Sheen Warsak hamlets and take refuge in discrete locations inside North Waziristan.

Interestingly, recall locals from Wana (now settled in Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan towns); most residents and non-combatants had initially taken the "newcomers" for Punjabi mujahideen and Taliban who they thought had been sent by ideological partners from other parts of Pakistan to assist Mullah Nazir against the Uzbeks, whom Nazir's spokesman Mullahh Owais Hanafi had condemned for their criminality and the failure to participate in the jihad in Afghanistan for the past four years.

"They have no link with the Islamic Movement of Taliban or al-Qaeda...their behaviour had been earning a bad name for these clean people," the spokesman had maintained, while defending the crackdown on Yuldashev's men.

Underlying all such condemnations, however, was the fact that the Central Asians were not the only foreigners Nazir wanted to fight. "We will continue our jihad (in Afghanistan) if that is against America, the Russians, British or India, as long as we have souls in our bodies," one of Nazir's aides had told Pakistani reporters in Wana.⁹⁰

Outsiders also questioned as to whether the Nazir-led operation was directed at Uzbeks only. "There is also no sign that the offensive has targeted Arabs associated with al-Qaeda, as they are still thought to take shelter in South Waziristan," observed an Associated Press report after Pakistan's army had ferried journalists by helicopter to show them how they had regained control of the region.

"The government says that foreigners are being hunted by the local tribesmen, but reports from Wana suggest that only Uzbeks are the target of Mullahh Nazir's fighters. There is no mention of the real Al-Qaeda (the Arabs) in either official or unofficial reports from Wana."⁹¹

One of the tribal journalists, now settled in Peshawar, offered another interesting story about how Mullah Nazir and Yuldashev fell apart. He spoke of a couple of thousand Punjabi Taliban belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Lashkare Jhangvi (LJ), Sepahe Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), descending on Wana in early 2007. They "occupied" some of the houses close to where Uzbeks were living. Smelling rat, most Uzbeks moved to the main town Wana.

⁹⁰ Dawn, March 29, 2007.

⁹¹ Dawn, April 12, 2007.

This was the time when Mullah Nazir agreed with the authorities to shelter Arabs who would liaise with Arab comrades shuttling across Afghanistan (for intelligence purposes).⁹²

Tahir Jan Yuldashev caught wind of the impending operation and began contemplating counter-strategy. The murder of a widely respected Saudi, Sheikh Asadullah, operational commander of al-Qaeda, on March 13 served as the tipping point in Yuldashev's relations with Mullah Nazir. Asadullah was known as Mr. Money Bags for his wealth. He had succeeded Ahmad Saeed Khaddar aka Abdur Rehman al-Masri aka Abdur Rehman al-Canadi; the Egyptian-born Canadian citizen killed along with Hassan Makhsum, head of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in a military action in Baghar in Angor Adda near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in October, 2003, who was known for being a conduit for finances to Al-Qaeda affiliates.

Asadullah was on his way to hand over some money to the widow of another yet unidentified foreign militant allegedly killed by Uzbeks, when he was ambushed on the way and executed.

Now, Arabs move freely in Wana which is obvious from the fact that the US has conducted about two dozen missile attacks, mostly fired from drones, in the Waziristan region.⁹³

Government claims of having control over South Waziristan, accompanied by relative calm over the area. Mullah Nazir automatically became a suspect collaborator. He reportedly received millions of rupees as a reward – mostly in the form of stipends and funds for development schemes in his area. Two foiled assassination attempts, therefore, also came as no surprise; one of them by a youngster from Bajaur who was intercepted some time in June 2008 with an explosive-laden belt. He told his interrogators that the Uzbek militant, Saiful Asad, sent him to “blow up” Mullah Nazir.

As of June 2008, Wana and the hamlets around it remained firmly in Mullah Nazir's control and an unwritten understanding with the authorities enabled the army and government officials to move in and out of the area. Local residents say after the mop-up operations were concluded in some parts of South Waziristan that more Arabs had returned to the area and were moving around freely.

“Hundreds of Arabs also are hiding in Mirali (a small town a few kilometres away from Miranshah, the administrative headquarter of North Waziristan) where they have occupied the houses left behind by Daur and Uthmanzai Wazir tribesmen who had fled the area during the Dec 2007/January 2008 military operation. Unlike the Uzbeks, who are despised by the local Taliban and

⁹² CRSS interviews. Details withheld.

⁹³ CRSS source reports in Wana, April/ May 2008. Details withheld.

tribesmen, the Arabs have good relations with both,” said a journalist with good access to Taliban circles.

He said the Arabs are divided into two groups: the Egyptians and the Libyans. Ayman al-Zawahiri (Osama bin Laden's lieutenant) leads the Egyptians while Abul Laith al-Libbi leads the Libyans. After his death in a drone-fired missile attack in early February 2009, Yahya al-Libbi, who had escaped from the Bagram jail two years ago, leads this group.

4.1 Local Implications of the Militancy on a Regional Level

North Waziristan

North Waziristan is the most important outpost, transit area, as well as shelter for all Afghan and non-Afghan radical Islamists.

Sirajuddin Haqqani aka Khalifa, the son of Afghan war veteran Maulana Jalaluddin Haqqani, and Maulana Bakhta Jan (Khowst) – both Afghans – loom large over North Waziristan that borders Afghanistan’s Khowst province. They also call themselves Taliban.

Both Sirajuddin Haqqani and Maulana Bakhta Jan were part of the talks that led to the September 5, 2006 North Waziristan Peace Agreement in the area. They continue to dominate the political landscape in the Waziristan region, providing spiritual and militant guidance to the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban movement in North Waziristan, as well as, across the Durand Line, largely in the eastern Afghan provinces of Khost, Paktia and Paktika.

On June 21 2006, Sirajuddin Haqqani issued a decree that it was no longer the Taliban policy to fight the Pakistan Army.⁹⁴ This marked the end of significant fighting in North Waziristan. However, the Taliban intentionally did not circulate the decree in North Waziristan, thereby keeping pressure on the government, as the terms for a comprehensive accord were worked out.⁹⁵

Paradoxically, despite their commitment not to target Pakistan government and military, Haqqani and his colleagues continue to shelter Islamic Movement of Afghanistan IMU fugitives, as well as their supporters from South Waziristan including brothers Haji Sharif and Noor Islam.

⁹⁴ Syed Saleem Shahzad, ‘Dadullah’s Death Hits Taliban Hard’, *Asia Times Online*, May 15, 2007, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IE15Df01.html.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Haqqani and his Pakistani partners were also instrumental in the controversial September 5, 2006 peace deal brokered with the Taliban and local tribesmen.⁹⁶

In July 2007, Maulana Abdul Khaliq Haqqani from the Dawar tribe and an important commander of Taliban in North Waziristan issued a press statement saying that the deaths of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa students will be avenged. “The targets of our suicide attacks are and will be security officials. Those who don’t understand our viewpoint will also be targeted”, he said.⁹⁷

Earlier in May 2007, the Haqqani-led Taliban Shura had imposed a stringent ban on the sale of CDs, cassettes and music in buses and passenger coaches in North Waziristan. The Shura also ordered owners of music and video shops in Miranshah to wind up their businesses immediately.⁹⁸

This decree underscored the Taliban strength and influence in the region which eventually rendered the local administration helpless, and also became a source of great intimidation to the Pakistani army.

Armed volunteers raided music centres and CD shops in the town and asked the shopkeepers to stop playing music in shops, buses, as well as homes. The Shura also threatened violators with ‘consequences’.

Haqqani Junior, who practically heads the infamous “Haqqani Network” and Amaraate Islami Afghanistan (AIA) military operations and Bakhta Jan, continues to influence the talks with the authorities and is closely linked with al-Qaeda leadership on both sides of the border. Dozens of Pakistani militants of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM), and Lashkar-e-Jangvi (LJ) live in the area under their protection and they all have been playing host to fleeing Al-Qaeda leaders and operatives. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, arrested in March 2003 and Abu Zubaida, arrested from Faisalabad a few months earlier, for instance, had also transited through North Waziristan.

Haqqani’s AIA exercises considerable influence over local politics as well. Local residents attribute the success of Kamran Wazir in the February 18, 2008 elections from North Waziristan (Northern Area, NA 40 constituency), to the national legislature. Kamran Wazir defeated his own party (Jamaat-ul-Islam) colleague, Maulana Nek Zaman in the election, promoting locals to suggest that ideological affinity with Taliban and al-Qaeda possibly ensured his victory over Zaman.

Kamran’s father runs the hospital “Zakeem” in Miranshah, which reportedly provides treatment to al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. A black American al-Qaeda

⁹⁶ The Afghan Taliban sent Mullah Dadullah (dead May 2007) to convince the Pakistani Taliban to stop fighting Pakistani security forces and sign a peace agreement. See Syed Saleem Shahzad, ‘Dadullah’s Death Hits Taliban Hard’, Op.cit.

⁹⁷ NNI news agency July 22, 2007.

⁹⁸ The Dawn, May 7, 2007.

operative was also treated here during the January operation before being arrested in the Bannu town.⁹⁹

Mohmand Agency

On 22nd October 2007, six groups agreed to merge into Tehrik-e-Taliban in the Mohmand agency, naming Omer Khalid as their leader. They also formed a sixteen-member consultative Shura (Assembly). The spokesman of the organisation, Abu Nauman Sangari, told journalists at a location near Ghalanai, the administrative headquarter of the Mohmand agency, that all the six groups would work together for peace as members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Mohmand Agency (TTM).

Maulana Gul Muhammad was declared as the deputy to Khalid. Khalid's real name is stated to be Abdul Wali Raghbir and he is an ISI-trained Jihadi who fought against Indian troops in Kashmir but retreated into Mohmand, following the January 12, 2002 ban on militant outfits as well as change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy. He is dead-set against the Pakistani government and has launched attacks against Pakistani security forces.

Before forming the TTM, Omer Khalid headed a separate group in the Mohmand Agency which had seized the Turangzai Sahib shrine and the adjacent mosque in Lakaro Area. His people had also renamed it after Islamabad's controversial (Lal Masjid) Red Mosque, which witnessed bloodshed in July 2007. In the presence of media and official negotiators (political agents), TTM declared the venue as Red Mosque in August 2007. The Taliban caught some criminals during a crackdown in which some of the Taliban and four criminals were killed. Later, they slaughtered them one after the other in front of thousands of people. This happened just one day before the Muslim Eid festival. The dead bodies were left on the spot for over 24 hours to teach the locals a lesson. In the last week of January, the Pakistani Taliban shot some eight officials and caught another eight alive. In the last week of April, 2008 in Muchnai area, again Taliban killed five criminals and caught one alive and shot him in front of hundreds of people.¹⁰⁰

Under Khalid's leadership, the TTM practically controls the entire agency and was also involved in the abduction of ten paramilitary personnel, who were later released on the intervention by local elders, in summer of 2007.

The TTM practices the Mullah Omar style of shariat justice through a Shariat court which dispenses justice according to the group's interpretation of Islamic Law, including punishments such as beheading of criminals, in the area under its influence. Rampant crime, injustices, abductions, and an extremely inefficient

⁹⁹ For more see also: Profiles of Afghan Militants and Profiles of Pakistani militants.

¹⁰⁰ CRSS interviews in Ghalanai. Details withheld.

and helpless administration provide the militants with grounds conducive for enforcing their agenda.¹⁰¹

Following the footsteps of the bloody Red Mosque incident in July 2007, TTM zealots had also ordered female teachers and students of the girls' schools to observe veil.

Only days later, a female teacher was murdered by unknown gunmen, triggering apprehensions that TTM did it to terrorise others. The murder resulted in the closure of over 100 girls' schools in August.

Girls' schools, however, reopened late May as a result of a Peace Jirga, held on May 27 2008, led by the locally influential Malik Zahir Shah Qandhari. Following meetings with officials and local Taliban representatives, Qandhari secured the promise that girls and female teachers including all government departments' staff would be allowed to go to schools. The Taliban also assured providing security to government employees. They, nevertheless, refused to allow NGO employees to conduct their business.¹⁰²

Qari Shakeel, Moulana Ehtisham Ulhaq, Maulvi Nisar and Dr. Asad – the organisation's mysterious spokesman – are some of TTM's zealots who have a following of at least 2,000 armed militants. They also act as vigilantes against criminals.

“Killing of innocent people, kidnapping for ransom, blowing up check-posts and attacks on government targets and officials are a routine”, CRSS surveyors concluded.

A wave of militancy sweeping Mohmand Agency came with the TTM militants launching their military training in Karerd of Lakro sub-district near the shrine and the mosque, which they declared as Red Mosque in August 2007. Initially, a few dozen militants participated in the training – some put the amount at 40. However, the numbers have meanwhile swollen into hundreds.

In the earlier phase, militants trained in the dark after the sunset, but the inactive administration emboldened them to brandish weapons even during the day. Citizens' complaints fell on deaf ears.¹⁰³

After about two months of intensive training, TTM began sending out threatening letters to barbers, drug dealers, and video shop-owners of the area, ordering them to stop their non-Islamic business.

¹⁰¹ CRSS interview with Intelligence Official, Peshawar. Details withheld.

¹⁰² Geo TV May 26, 2008.

¹⁰³ CRSS report from Ghalanai. Details withheld.

Now the militants appear in a uniform wearing war-jackets and long boots. They march through the bazaars to show their strength and uniformity and have started confrontation with security forces, and also chase away criminals.¹⁰⁴

In December 2007, Omar Khalid joined the TTP and is now the head of TTP-Mohmand chapter.

On May 26, 2008, TTM militants and tribal elders also signed an accord with a pledge to maintain peace in the Mohmand Agency, resulting in the release of several militants who had been arrested on charges of terrorism and attacks on security personnel in the tribal region.

Under the accord, the militants undertook to remain peaceful and refrain from targeting security personnel and government installations.

Prominent tribal elders Malik Muhammad Ali Haleemzai, Fazal Manan, former MPs Malik Fida Mohammad, Maulana Abdul Malik and local militant leaders Qari Shakeel, Nisar and Qari Akhtar Shah attended the Jirga held at the residence of Malik Zahir Shah in Lakaro subdivision of Mohmand Agency. The militants gave their word to the Jirga that they would not interfere in the government activities and would not obstruct the uplift projects.¹⁰⁵ The Taliban also announced that NGOs would not be allowed to resume work in the area and accused them of ‘spreading obscenity’ which could not be tolerated.

In July 2008, Omar Khalid eliminated the rival group Shah Khalid group from the Mohmand Agency and killed Shah Khalid and his deputy, Maulana Obaidullah. Shah Khalid formerly belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba which was considered as pro-government since it was focused only in Afghanistan and refused to attack Pakistani security forces. The incident took place when Omar Khalid asked Shah Khalid to show subservience to him, which the latter refused. Despite mediation by the Afghan Taliban, Omar Khalid went ahead to eliminate the entire group.¹⁰⁶ The killing raised much hue and cry among the militants in FATA and NWFP and Baitullah Mehsud appointed a commission to look into the matter. However, no progress was reported and the matter remains shrouded in mystery.

Kurram Agency

Kurram Agency, home to roughly 450,000 persons, had been a peaceful region until the Shia-Sunni began haunting it in the early 1980s, when the anti-Soviet Russian jihad in Afghanistan began some three decades ago.

¹⁰⁴ The Dawn and Daily Times, May 27, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ The News, *Mohmand militants, tribal elders ink peace accord*, May 27, 2008.

¹⁰⁶ Mushtaq Yousafzai, ‘50 killed as two militant groups clash in Mohmand’, *The News*, July 19, 2008, http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=16072.

In the last two decades, the sectarian strife has ruined the peace of the agency, turning it into a hotbed of sectarianism.

The emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan and the war on terror further precipitated sectarian tensions with Pakistani and Afghan Taliban, trying to extend their tentacles into the Kurram agency as well. This resulted in pitched battles between Shia and Sunni militants, and the closure of the main roads that connect it with other agencies and main towns like Hangu, Kohat and Peshawar.

Even in June 2008, the agency remains cut off, and commuters use a detour for their business in other Pakistani towns. Afghan provinces Pakitka and Jalalbad are the alternative routes for people to travel to Pakistan.

The present conflict in Kurram Agency started in the year 2007, badly affecting life in Puwara, Bara Chamkani and Masuzai sub-districts, and claiming over 200 lives in one year.

In the February 2008 elections, Shia candidate Riaz Hussein Shah escaped two assassination attempts; one of them being a suicide attack on his election rally resulting in about 60 deaths and in the second attempt, Shah survived at the cost of his guards.

The Shia population consists of two tribes, Tori and Bangash, while the Sunnis consist of six tribes which are Chamkani, Masuzai, Alisherzai, Bangash, Zarmusht and Mengal.

Despite a string of peace efforts, skirmishes between the combatants have continued with the involvement of TTP activists. Qari Hussein, the in-charge of the TTP suicide squads, has reportedly, himself, supervised the Sunni response to the shias, as well as, guided actions against them.

On October 16, 2008 both Shia and Sunni representatives finally reached an agreement and vowed to work for peace.¹⁰⁷ But more than a year of hostilities has created a humanitarian crisis for the locals; continued road blockades have led to food and medicine shortages. Prices of basic items such as wheat, flour and sugar have sky-rocketed. Most schools have been closed in different places.

Orakzai Agency

Sectarian tensions and the involvement of the TTP elements in the conflict in the last couple of years have also infected the Orakzai agency. Though the Shia population in Orakzai agency is just seven percent, yet the conflict in the neighbouring Kurram agency does affect it, as sympathizers and supporters try to help their respective combatants.

¹⁰⁷ Kurram Agency Tribes Sign Peace Agreement, Dawn, October 16, 2008.

In September 2007, in one major sectarian incident spread over a span of 15 days, at least 70 people lost their lives.

Since early 2008, most of the Orakzai agency including Dabori Ghalju and Masoodzai has been occupied by local Taliban in the Sunni concentration. Government forces and political authorities have little control over the events, and people like former governor Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai, cannot visit their home towns.

Taliban initially launched themselves in the area through a vicious crackdown against outlaws in the area and also executed five people after convicting them. In April, 2008 the Taliban arrested nine criminals and have shifted them to Waziristan. Local residents say that the Taliban are continuing their anti-Shia campaign in a very calculated way under the command of HakiMullahh – an important commander of Baitullah Mehsud.

To press their agenda ahead, local Taliban issued a decree in May 2008, banning women education and barring Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from the Orakzai Agency.

"From now on, we will not allow girls and community schools and NGOs to operate in the Orakzai Agency," Taliban leaders told a jirga at Dewray area of the Orakzai Agency, which was also attended by members of Ulema Council and elders.¹⁰⁸

Media reports said that the jirga took strong notice of the activities of the NGOs in the area and vowed to hand tough punishments in case of any violation. They also warned kidnappers, robbers and other criminals to surrender before the Taliban Shura or face punishment according to the Shariah.

The participants of the meeting urged the government employees to resume their duties and improve their performance without fear and said that they would monitor performance of government schools and hospitals in the agency.

During the Taliban crackdown against criminals they also recovered two Sikh community members and helped them return home.

These activities also underscore the fact that the inability of the government legal and administrative machinery offers non-state actors to step in and fill the vacuum.

At the same time, the Taliban in Orakzai also initiated their activities in the neighbouring districts of Hangu and Kohat of NWFP. Also, Taliban from Orakzai took part in sectarian clashes in the neighbouring Kurram Agency since early 2008. However, the majority of the Taliban in Orakzai comprised of either foreign militants or non-locals, i.e., Mehsuds from South Waziristan Agency.

¹⁰⁸ The News, May 10, online news agency 09, 2008.

However, the Taliban in Orakzai came to the limelight when they conducted a vehicle-borne suicide attack on a local tribal jirga of Ali Khel tribe which had assembled in Khadezai area of the Agency. The purpose of the Jirga was to evolve a strategy to evict Taliban out of the area since the entire tribe was coming under intense pressure from the Political Agency. The attack left 40 tribesmen dead and injured more than 100. The attack led to growing tensions between the Ali Khel tribe which is a Shia tribe and the Masozai tribe which is a Sunni one, since the Taliban are believed to be hiding in the Masozai tribal territory. The growing pressure on the respective tribes in Orakzai might see a departure of foreign and non-local militants from the Agency and could decrease the activity of the Taliban in the area for the time being.

Bajaur Agency

Bajaur Agency is part of FATA and shares borders with the Afghan province of Kunar and Pakistan's violent Malakand region. Its over half a million population is spread over seven sub-districts: Khar, Mamond, Sadozai, Brung, Qazafi, Naogati, and Chimarkand. Two major tribes Utman Khel and Tarkani are dominant here. These tribes are further divided into the sub-tribes: Salarzai, Alizai, Shamoza, Mandal and Targhavi.

Bajaur has been under the influence of numerous extremist groups including al-Qaeda, the Taliban Islamic Movement, Hezbe Islami (HI) of Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, Jamaat al-Daawa ilal Quran wal Sunnah of Sheikh Jamilur Rehman, Tehrike Nifaz Shariate Muhammadi (TNSM), Jamaatul Mujahideen (JM), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulemae Islam (JUI). An al-Qaeda affiliate, called the Takfiris (Takfir wal Hijra), led by Mustafa Al Seerat Al-Suri, also has deep roots in the area.

Strategically located, the Bajaur Agency was one of the most suitable places for setting up jihadi camps for the anti-Soviet Russian jihad in the 1980s.

The presence of all radical groups that share the anti-western, pan-Islamist agenda also makes it a hot target that is under continuous US satellite and human surveillance. The suspicion that Osama bin Laden, his deputy Dr. Aiman al-Zawahiri and Hekmetyar are hiding in the mountainous region, keeps it under the special focus of the American, Afghan and Pakistani intelligence.

As recently as January and October 2006, Bajaur shot into international headlines because of two US missile attacks – one at Damadola village on January 13, 2006, that killed TNSM followers and the other at Chenagai village in October that left about 83, predominantly teenage seminary students, dead. The attacks, which caused widespread mayhem because of human losses, appeared to be the result of intelligence reports that Dr. al-Zawahiri was present there.

Khaled Ahmed, an authority on Islamic movements and militancy and consulting editor of weekly The Friday Times, says that the Takfiri Arabs' group enjoys

influence in the agency. This is the hardline face of al-Qaeda characterised by fanaticism. At present, Abu Musab Mustafa Al-Suri, a wanted international terrorist is leading this group. Dr. Aiman Al-Zawahiri's own jahiliyya (an Arab word meaning 'state of ignorance', a label for pre-Islamic societies) philosophy incorporates the aggressive Takfiri violence against fellow Muslims advocated by the founder Shukri Mustafa of Egypt. During the Afghan jihad, thousands of Arabs came to Afghanistan. Apparently, they fought the Afghan jihad together but remained divided in small factions with serious differences. Their differences increased during the 18-year-long war as the result of which the big groups further crumbled and started fighting with each other for land-base and power. The Takfiris among them were from Egypt and Algeria.¹⁰⁹

Currently, Maulana Faqir Mohammed, the vice chief of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Maulana Sufi Muhammad, the founding leader of the now defunct Tehreek Nifaze Shariate Muhammadi (TNSM), share the Sunni Muslim followership in the Bajaur agency. Following his futile attempt to save the Afghan Taliban from the US-led onslaught through his ill-trained and ill-equipped volunteers, Mohammed was jailed in December 2001 and released in late April 2008 in the hope of restoring peace in the neighbouring volatile Malakand Swat region. Soon after his release, Maulana Sufi Muhammad advocated a peaceful struggle to ensure implementation of Shariah in the Malakand region.

But in a show of defiance and assertion of TTP, Faqir Muhammad snubbed the deal and openly said that talks with Maulana Sufi Muhammad will not help the NWFP government bring peace to Swat. The government should hold talks with Mullah Fazlullah instead of Sufi Muhammad, Faqir Mohammed said.¹¹⁰

Also, the anti-western rhetoric continues to top these militants' agenda; Faqir Mohammed and colleagues remain wedded to the goal of driving foreigners out of Afghanistan.

Addressing a gathering of about 5,000 tribesmen, who had gathered for the funeral of a local journalist in Bajaur Agency, the militant leader expressed unrelenting opposition to the US-led forces in Afghanistan.

"We will not attack government positions and whoever indulges in such an attack will be treated as an enemy...but we are Muslims and the enemy of infidels and will continue our jihad in Afghanistan as long as the foreign allied forces are there."¹¹¹

The Taliban-led intimidation of the local population also continues unabated. Most music shops and hair-cutting salons here have been closed and their owners

¹⁰⁹ Ahmed, Khaled, www.thefridaytimes.com.

¹¹⁰ Daily Times May 4, 2008.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

have switched to other businesses. Some of them moved out of the agency after pro-Taliban militants bombed their shops.¹¹²

Early May 2008, the TTP spokesman Maulvi Umar even set a two-month deadline for growing beards and warned people at large of strict punishment in case of non-compliance. He said shaving beards was “against” Shariah law.¹¹³

Since late April 2008, Taliban vigilantes have also been checking private and public transport vehicles, searching for cassette and CD players (which they consider un-Islamic). On several occasions they seized cassettes and players from several vehicles and smashed them on the spot. Masked gunmen also warned clean-shaven commuters to grow beard or face punishment. They also ordered passengers to remove musical ring tones from their cell phones and not to use mobile phones with built-in cameras.

While both Maulana Faqir Muhammad in Bajaur Agency and Maulana Fazlullah continued to operate under the banner of TNSM until May 2008, they subsequently shifted to operate under the banner of TTP. This was because Maulana Sufi Muhammad, founder of TNSM and father-in-law of Maulana Fazlullah, was in jail until his release in May 2008. During his imprisonment, he disowned Maulana Fazlullah in November 2007 due to his militant activities in the Swat district.¹¹⁴ After his release, the leaders ceased to be members of TNSM and now operate under TTP-Bajaur chapter and TTP-Swat chapter.

It appears that the consolidation of TTP in Bajaur has overshadowed the TNSM, and the attempts by its founding leader Mullah Sufi Muhammad, are not likely to yield the results that the administration had hoped for when it decided to set him free. Instead, the son-in-law Maulana Fazlullah rules the roost in the Malakand division and draws his support from the regional TTP stalwart Faqir Mohammad.

In a glaring display of their authority and obscurantist and offensive agenda, TTP militants executed a woman after accusing her of being a spy for the US and of being a prostitute. The body of the unidentified woman was found dumped beside a road near the town of Khar in the Bajaur region on the Afghan border; a hotbed of support for al-Qaeda and Taliban militants. A note was found with the body which said “she was killed because she was an American spy and a prostitute and those who found doing such activities will face the same fate”. A villager said that the woman had apparently been strangled as there were rope marks on her neck. “I didn’t see any bullet or knife wounds.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² The Dawn, May 7, 2007.

¹¹³ NNI news agency May 5, 2008.

¹¹⁴ Ismail Khan, ‘Officials’ Apathy Fuelled Militancy’, Dawn, November 3, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/2007/11/03/top8.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Reuters, June 11, 2008.

It was the first execution of a woman under espionage charges. Taliban forces have killed close to 100 alleged US and government spies since the war on terror began in late 2002.

In August 2008, the Pakistan security forces launched a massive military operation employing air and land forces to destroy the Taliban stronghold in the Bajaur Agency. The operation came when Pakistani security forces came under heavy attack while operating in Loisam area – a strategic town that provides passage to Afghanistan’s Kunar province and connects three of the four valleys of the Bajaur. By October 2008, the Pakistani security forces were able to capture the area and disrupt militant communications and infiltration routes. The military operation led to the displacement of nearly 190,000 local tribesmen displaced as a result of fighting.¹¹⁶ The government also claimed to have killed more than 1,500 militants in the military operation and losing 73 soldiers.¹¹⁷ Similarly, 300 foreigners were also reported to have been captured in the fighting including Uzbeks, Tajiks and Afghans.¹¹⁸

The most important development was the rising of Lashkars (tribal militias) in various parts of Bajaur by tribal elders that deprived local support to Taliban and foreign militants. Subsequently, the TTP-Bajaur offered unilateral ceasefire and peace talks which were rejected by the government. The military operation continues and militants are facing a tough time in Bajaur.

Talibanisation of Khyber Agency

Talibanisation of this agency is relatively recent and also different from the evolution of these movements in other agencies. Currently, three groups loom large over the agency i.e. Lashkare Islam (LI) led by Mangal Bagh Sipah, Ansarul Islam (AI) headed by Mehbubul Haq and Amar bil Maroof Wa Nahi Analmunkir (Promotion of virtue and prevention of vice) led by Haji Naamdar. Ideologically, almost all these groups are essentially Deobandi Sunnis, yet for various political reasons they have been at loggerheads, particularly Mufti Shakir and Pir Saifurrehman since 2005.

Khyber connects Peshawar to Kabul via the Khyber Pass. Bara and Landikotal are two sub-divisions within the agency. Most of the area hosts markets for foreign smuggled goods as well as fake goods manufactured or bottled in small industrial units. Historically, several armies transited through the Khyber Pass, fighting and bribing the Afridi tribes or also entering into deals of convenience with them. The bulk of Afghans, forced out by the Soviet-Russian occupation of

¹¹⁶ ‘Pakistan: Militants targeted in air attacks in Bajaur, October 20, 2008, AKI, <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=3.0.2606581487>.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ ‘Maulvi Umer dies in military operation? Troops retake Loi Sam’ Statesman, October 26, 2008.

Afghanistan in 1979, also used the Khyber Pass for finding shelter elsewhere in Pakistan.

Khyber is also the hotbed of criminal gangs which operate in the cover of Taliban. Pilferages or hijacking of food trucks is also quite frequent. They usually target containers and trucks carrying fuel and food supplies for the US and coalition troops based in Afghanistan. In late March 2008, for instance, these gangs torched about 100 oil tankers parked near the Torkham border crossing.

Approximately 75% of the US supplies in Afghanistan, including 40% of the vehicle fuel, pass through or over Pakistan and Pentagon officials say they have begun honing contingency plans for sending those supplies through other countries for security reasons.¹¹⁹

In March 2007, for instance, several containers went missing while en route from Karachi to Torkham. They, in fact, were hijacked in the Karak Frontier Region, after which the American security apparatus area went for a different security and surveillance system that tracks the cargo electronically all through the route, hence easily traceable.

Security officials believe that burning vehicles is the easiest way of eliminating evidence of thefts. After looting the trucks and silencing the drivers at gun point or taking the drivers on board, the gangs put the vehicles on fire.¹²⁰

Local traders and residents believe that the combination of criminal gangs and the presence of the Taliban have come as a boon for security and government officials. Regular trade is also being disrupted by the raids on trucks travelling, which is a vital lifeline for impoverished Afghanistan, but there is disagreement about how serious the problem is.¹²¹

Zia-ul Haq Sarhadi, who heads an association of Pakistani customs agents helping traders move goods through the customs post at Torkham, claimed the average number of trucks had dropped to 250 a day from 500 early this year, before violence escalated.

“Political authorities depend on the Frontier Corps to provide law and order in the area but FC officers receive bribes from Haji Amal Gul of Malakddinkhel tribe to allow smuggling of goods through the Soolrghar area” a Khyber Agency trader said.¹²²

Pakistan’s ambassador to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin, was also abducted from here on February 11, 2008. He was on his way to Kabul when waylaid by

¹¹⁹ Weekly Pulse, November.23, 2007.

¹²⁰ CRSS interviews with intelligence and security officials at Torkham, May 3, 2008. Names withheld.

¹²¹ Associated Press May 21, 2008.

¹²² CRSS interview at Hayatabad Market, Peshawar- May 2008. Details withheld.

unknown armed people, before being handed over probably to Baitullah Meshud's militants. Azizuddin walked into freedom on May 16 in circumstances shrouded in mystery. In the days preceding his release, the government had struck some deals with the Taliban in South Waziristan, resulting in a swap involving the release of about 40 Taliban militants and suspects and of about 17 security forces personnel who had been in the custody primarily of the Baitullah Meshud's fighters.

In late 2003, a local cleric, Haji Naamdar launched the Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahianalmunkir (Promotion of virtue and prevention of vice – PVPV) and commissioned a fiery orator Mufti Muneer Shakir to “spread the word of God and also ensure justice to all”. Shakir's oratory soon galvanized locals, the majority of whom have been wary of the draconian FCR laws which treat them as C-grade citizens. Socio-economic deprivations also played a vital role in catapulting PVPV into an acceptable organization which was seen as delivering justice.

In late 2004, Haji Naamdar gradually went in the background, thereby pitching Shakir, who had meanwhile founded Lashkare Islami, against Pir Saifurrehman (Brevli). Ironically, there were at least two lethal radio stations; one run by the Lashkare Islami and the other by Pir Saifur Rehman, who had migrated from Afghanistan to settle down in the Soordand area of the Bara Tehsil, Khyber Agency. Both began a vicious propaganda war against each other through make-shift FM stations, resulting in violent clashes 2005 between their followers. This clash then resulted in the creation of Lashkare Islami. Saifurrehman also followed suit and formally launched Ansarul Islam. March 2006 witnessed some bloody feuds between rival Taliban factions in the Khyber Agency. More than two dozen deaths were witnessed within two days in Khyber Agency – in an area that falls in FATA but is hardly about a dozen kilometres from places where the governor, the FC Inspector-General, the Political Agent and the army corps commander's headquarters are located.

Both groups defied the writ of the government for a while until February 2006, when a tribal jirga ordered Pir Saifur Rehman to leave the area to ease tensions. The expulsion, however, helped little. Rival FM stations continued to spit venom against each other. Also, both radical clerics made a mockery of the administration as well as of the tribal jirga, which had been asking them to shut down their radio stations, but both rivals held their ground.¹²³

Mufti Shakir had meanwhile set up his own Sharia court, which adjudicated all crimes according to his understanding and interpretation of the sharia law – mostly the Taliban way.

¹²³ The Friday Times, March 31, 2006.

In some areas of the Khyber Agency, Lashkar-e-Islam practically established a parallel government, launched the illegal FM radio station, and its armed vigilantes would punish anybody they considered in conflict with their agenda. In May 2007, for instance, LI activists demolished 10 houses after picking up all valuables from there. Local militia (media reports said) acted as silent spectators.

“Armed LI activists patrol government roads and have set up illegal check posts as well. They forced private and public girls’ schools to close down and occasionally also forcibly shut down boys’ schools and colleges.”¹²⁴

The Bara residents alleged that when the political authorities had ordered the FC to take action against the LI, the Mehsud Scouts had refused to carry out the orders, rendering the political authorities helpless before the FC. They also alleged that some members of the Khassadar force are aligned with the LI. “Peshawar is not immune to what is happening in Bara and repercussions will affect the city if the government doesn’t put an end to this parallel government,” they said.

Following external pressures, the authorities finally cracked down on the combatants, forcing Pir Saifurrehman out of the tribal areas through a jirga. Saifurrehman reportedly retreated into Punjab for shelter, while Mufti Shakir has been in jail since late 2007. (The Political Agent invoked the FCR 40 and consigned Shakir to indefinite detention.) Mangal Bagh Afridi replaced Shakir and continues to command authority and respect in the region. Concentrated in several pockets of the Khyber Agency, LI continues to oppose “un-Islamic” practices; no films, no video or music CDs are allowed for open sale in the markets. Criminals, if held, are punished, as did the Afghan Taliban under Mullah Omar.

The departure of Pir Saifurehman led to the establishment of Ansarul Islam, which is presently headed by Qazi Mahboobul Haq. Ansarul Islam has confined itself to the scenic Tirah valley in Khyber Agency, while Lashkar-e-Islam is based in the Bara tehsil of Khyber Agency. The infighting between Lashkar-e-Islam and Ansarul Islam continues. In May 2008, Lashkar killed Maulana Mastamin, a leader of Ansarul Islam in Gagrina bazaar in Zakha Khel after he was kidnapped in December 2007 from Peshawar.¹²⁵ During May 2008, Lashkar kidnapped another Ansar leader, Haji Ghulam Nabi, from Peshawar, whose fate remains unclear to date.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Daily Times, May 20, 2007.

¹²⁵ Sudhir Ahmad Afridi, ‘Religious leader shot dead in Khyber Agency by rival militants’, Daily Times, May 21, 2008, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C05%5C21%5Cstory_21-5-2008_pg7_18.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

The Lashkar-e-Islam gradually tried to spread its tentacles to the entire Khyber Agency. By mid-2008, Lashkar attempted to establish its writ in the Landi Kotal and Jamrud tehsils of Khyber Agency which was resisted by the tribes and their political leaders, especially Noorul Haq Qadri in Landi Kotal area. At the same time, the Lashkar-e-Islam militants started advancing towards the Tirah Valley for a decisive showdown with Ansarul Islam.

Realising the growing threatening posture of Lashkar-e-Islam, when it started its vigilante activities in Peshawar city that included the kidnapping of Christians in the city, the Pakistani government initiated a military operation on June 28, 2008, against Mangal Bagh. The Lashkar did not give any resistance to the Pakistani security forces and started retreating to the mountains in the Tirah Valley. Nearly 52 militants of Lashkar were arrested during the operation, while the government also razed 10 buildings, including houses of Mangal Bagh, Mufti Munir Shakir and Pir Saifur Rehman.¹²⁷ It was only after an agreement was reached between a Jirga of Afridi tribe negotiating on behalf of Mangal Bagh with the government on July 9, 2008 that the military operation was brought to an end. According to the terms of the agreement, the government agreed to halt the operation and remove the curfew from the area while Afridi tribes would respect writ of the state and ensure peace. The tribesmen also agreed not to display arms in Bara. An official said that the presence of paramilitary troops in the region remains an unresolved issue. Political administration officials said the troops would stay until “restoration of peace” while jirga members said they were assured the troops would leave at a “proper time”.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, the surge in religion on the one hand and in crime on the other, prompted Haji Naamdar to revive his PVPV. Actually, the creation of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in December 2007 provided him with the trigger for getting active again.¹²⁹

Turning Point for Khyber Taliban

Until a suicide attack at Naamdar’s headquarters in Takya Bara Town early May 2008 (which left around 20 people injured), and a few other incidents including the abduction of the Pakistani ambassador and execution of several officials, the cleric had reportedly sheltered several TTP militants – both local and foreign – who had fled the military operation in South Waziristan in January. As a result, a small group led by Baitullah Mehsud’s deputy Hakeemullah Mehsud, also had

¹²⁷ ‘Pakistani forces patrol empty bazaar, arrest militants in bloodless operation’, Dawn, July 2, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/2008/07/02/welcome.htm>

¹²⁸ ‘Khyber Agency administration releases 5 LI men’, Daily Times, July 11, 2008, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008%5C07%5C11%5Cstory_11-7-2008_pg7_19

¹²⁹ CRSS interviews with Senior Intelligence Officials responsible for FATA, May 2008. Names withheld.

emerged and started interfering in local matters like detention and execution of government officials.¹³⁰ But a day after the attack on him, Naamdar ordered Baitullah's Taliban to leave the Khyber Agency.¹³¹

"All militants belonging to Baitullah Mehsud's group have been ordered to leave the Khyber Agency following the confirmation that was ordered by Baitullah," a close aide to Naamdar told reporters May 3.¹³²

HakeeMullahh defended the attack by telling Naamdar that he had "documentary evidence that you (Naamdar) were a government puppet posing as a mujahid".¹³³

HakeeMullahh had offered as justification a photograph of Naamdar published in a Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily, showing him seated next to the Frontier Corps (FC) Colonel Mujahid Hussain.

"We have ordered the attack to kill you because the picture leaves no doubt about your credibility", HakeeMullahh reportedly told Namdar on the phone while requesting the remains of the bomber.¹³⁴

Several security and intelligence officials conceded their contacts with Naamdar, saying "he listens to us and does not condone crime or killing in the name of Islam".

The situation in Khyber therefore remains tense, and the jihadist at loggerheads. Crime, corruption and religious conviction keep the agency on the boil, whereby the authorities reached out to Haji Naamdar to use him as a shield against the TTP threat that looms large all over FATA. The absence of any legal justice system and the abuse of the FCR have all contributed to turning the Khyber Agency into an explosive powder keg.

Haji Namdar was finally killed, ostensibly by the TTP, in August 2008.¹³⁵ He has been succeeded by Haji Hukam Khan.¹³⁶ Subsequently, it has become difficult for the TTP militants in Khyber to operate due to the hostility they have generated by killing Namdar.

Aversion to foreign troops and commitment to the cause of Afghan Taliban, as well as ideological affinity with Al-Qaeda serve as common denominators of the militant organizations in Khyber Agency where, like other FATA agencies, the precarious law and order situation adds fuel to the ever-increasing craving for legal and socio-economic justice.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Daily Times May 4, 2008.

¹³² The News, May 3, 2008.

¹³³ I.Kukikhel, a resident of Jamrud in an interview for CRSS. Details withheld.

¹³⁴ Daily Times May 4, 2008.

¹³⁵ 'Pakistan militant leader killed', BBC, August 13, 2008,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7557765.stm.

¹³⁶ www.satp.org/satporgt/p/countries/pakistan/Waziristan/timeline/index.html.

The nexus between the smuggler mafia and the administration is too often ignored and understated under the excuse of respecting local tribal customs and traditions. In the last few years, irrespective of claims made by the local community, the administration has refused to counter the increasing influence of local Taliban elements led by Haji Naamdar. For unexplained reasons, the administration also remained indifferent to violence between the groups led by Mufti Munir and Pir Saifur.

5 The role of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – Scapegoat or Culprit

Pakistan's Army and its affiliates, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, continue to suffer from, and be haunted by, their role in prosecuting the CIA-funded and -armed Jihad fought in the 1980s to free Afghanistan of Soviet occupation to this day. Triumph of that Jihad encouraged them to try to repeat the experience of religious zeal, humiliating an overbearing power in the Indian-controlled Kashmir too, through a 16-member Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC).

But the muddle that followed the Red Army's departure from Afghanistan and Washington's 'hands-off' policy, also muddied the image of Pakistan, its army and the ISI.

“Frankly, we weren't particularly concerned at what post-Soviet Afghanistan was going to look like,” former Director of Counter Intelligence, Robert Gates (now Secretary of Defense) observed; “the truth of the matter was that we expected it to look like pre-Soviet Afghanistan”.¹³⁷

This hands-off policy turned disastrous for Pakistan; the involvement in the CIA-funded anti Soviet-Russian operation turned the ISI into a monolithic organization, which not only indulged in the domestic politics but also turned its attention to the independence of the (Indian-controlled) part of Kashmir. It also threw its weight behind the Taliban, hoping they would act as Pakistan's satellite pliant state, and thus providing it with the so-called strategic depth to its west. The ISI was, in fact, credited with creating and supporting the Taliban movement.

No single state organisation is as discussed and argued over ‘unofficially’, as the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). People have a vague impression that the ISI conducts the covert war in Indian-occupied Kashmir, while also doing ‘political work’ for the incumbent government inside Pakistan. The politicians think that the ISI watches over them and, at times, punishes them for stepping out of line.¹³⁸

This is why the organization's image took an unusual beating, both at home and abroad after the 9/11 events, despite Pakistan's front-line support in the US-declared war on terror and reconciliation, replacing acrimony between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

¹³⁷ Cooley, *Unholy Wars*: P. 234.

¹³⁸ Khaled Ahmed, *The Friday Times*, March 28, 2002.

Interviews with locals in the past, along with the CRSS survey conducted in April/May 2008, did reveal that Muslim separatists from across the border were openly trained in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in Pakistan's FATA tribal region bordering Afghanistan; at least, until March 15, 2004 when the Pakistani army lost a couple of dozen soldiers and officers in a bloody encounter with the fighters of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) at Sheen Warsak near Wana, the administrative headquarter of South Waziristan agency.

Residents also identified Islamist militant groups such as Jaishe Mohammad, Harkatul Mujahideen, Lashkare Taiba and Lashkare Jhangvi as beneficiaries of the military and ISI-led establishment's largess. They believe that these outfits ran either their own complexes in FATA or used the hospitality of the local Taliban and Mujahideen outfits such as Tehreeke Nifaze Shariate Mohammade (TNSM) and Lashkare Islami for their operations. Maulana Jalaluddin Haqqani, an Afghan war veteran, and his son Siraj Haqqani have also been hosting like-minded pan-Islamist fighters for almost a decade in North Waziristan.¹³⁹

Since the senior and junior Haqqanis pop in and out of Miranshah easily, it suggests that their presence and regular visits to friends and families on the Pakistani side of the border enjoy tacit approval of Pakistani authorities. Residents of the Waziristan region and other FATA areas insist that without the tacit support of the ISI and other intelligence outfits, none of the Pakistani, Afghan, Arab or Uzbek militant outfits can survive in the tribal areas.

Many residents of the area interviewed by CRSS asked whether these groups would be able to move so freely in the region without the support of the ISI. The most prevalent perception revolves around the belief that intelligence agencies look the other way, if not connive, when local and Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives and leaders meet, move or murder pro-government officials and tribesmen. This belief fuels the speculation that sections within the ISI and other intelligence outfits continue to support Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan.

Western diplomats in Afghanistan and Pakistan and anti-army politicians in Pakistan say that this support is motivated not only by Islamic fervour but also by a longstanding view that the Jihadist movement allows them to exert greater influence on Pakistan's vulnerable western flank.

Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, holds similar views. Without naming the Pakistani military or the ISI, Karzai believes these organizations are still backing militants. "I don't hold the civilian government responsible but I just address the prime minister of Pakistan when I want to convey a message and I get the response to it when the prime minister speaks," Karzai said in an interview at his palace in Kabul.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Also see North Waziristan in Al-Qaeda's Extensions in FATA.

¹⁴⁰ CRSS interview, June 16, 2008. Names withheld.

In several of his articles and his book “Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military”, the current Ambassador to the US, Husain Haqqani, had held that Pakistani military and intelligence services have for decade, used religious parties as a convenient instrument to keep domestic political opponents at bay. Besides, such groups were also an important element of the country’s foreign policy adventures such as the US-backed Jihad in Afghanistan and anti-India insurgency in Kashmir.

“The religious parties provide them with recruits, personnel, cover and deniability...They trained the people who are at the heart of it all, and they have done nothing to roll back their protégés”, wrote Hussein Haqqani, who served rival political governments in Pakistan in the 1990s and authored the above mentioned book on the relationship between the Islamists and the Pakistani security forces during his stay with American think tanks.¹⁴¹

Pakistan, which was carved out of British India in 1947 in the name of Islam, has long seen Jihadi movements like the Taliban as a counter to Indian and Russian influence next door in Afghanistan. Its military's quest for “strategic depth” increased after Indian military intervention severed its eastern wing as independent Bangladesh in a civil war in 1971. Since then ISI has been linked by its detractors to violent struggles in Sri Lanka and Nepal also.

America's STRATFOR intelligence analysis service reported in April 2007 that “Pakistan was fuelling the growing Islamisation in South Asia and had a strong nexus with Bangladesh intelligence agencies in laying a militant trap for India which is fighting a growing Maoist movement”.

The Indian government has also continuously blamed most acts of terrorism in Kashmir and elsewhere in India on the ISI. In early 2003, it promised in the parliament to present a White Paper on the ISI's activities inside India, but reversed the decision four years later saying the move would jeopardize national security.

Until 9/11, western powers had almost abandoned ISI to its own devices following the Soviets leaving Afghanistan humiliated. But they needed its services again to fight the global war on terror after the US declared to finish the demon which the Afghan Jihad had created.

The Pakistani army’s and ISI's stock rose as they cooperated in the war on terror (WoT) and turned over 500 Taliban and Al Qaeda operators, known or suspected. But this cooperation started souring, particularly after the start of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, as US and its coalition partners increasingly accused ISI of playing a double game the protecting the agents it had cultivated during Afghan jihad days.

¹⁴¹ ‘Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military’ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 26, 2005.

Under the new terms of cooperation with the US FBI and CIA in late 2001, General Pervez Musharraf had to purge the ISI off its Islamic leanings to make the organisation do the US bidding in the war on terror. Still the muck thrown at Musharraf and ISI from all sides – at home and abroad – stuck on.

Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch wrote in 2003 that the CIA was close to the ISI during the Cold War and this relationship was rekindled after 9/11. Agents of the purged ISI were quick to seize suspected killers of Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl. And in early April 2002, more than 60 Al-Qaeda operatives were arrested in Faisalabad, along with Abu Zubayda, the organisation's third-highest-ranking member,¹⁴²

But the accusations only grew, as did punitive actions by the coalition forces in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal areas. In September 2006, the BBC leaked a report from the Defence Academy, a think tank run by Britain's Ministry of Defence, which implied that “indirectly Pakistan (through the ISI) has been supporting terrorism and extremism – whether in London on 7/7, or in Afghanistan or Iraq”.

President Pervez Musharraf retorted in an interview with the BBC: “Remember my words: if the ISI is not with you and Pakistan is not with you, you will lose in Afghanistan.”

His anger was understandable, as he was being distrusted by the very same Western powers whose support made him unpopular among his countrymen in the first place, and a target of assassination attempts by the Islamic militants who were destabilising Pakistan.

The US administration's suspicion and mistrust of ISI is rooted in 32 documents that the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the Pentagon had compiled in September 1999, and placed for public scrutiny in 2002 at the time of the anniversary of September 11 attacks.¹⁴³

The information contained in these documents clearly shows that the US State Department and the US Defense Intelligence Agency of the Pentagon knew of the role of the ISI in the sponsorship of not only the Taliban, but also the Al-Qaeda.¹⁴⁴

After General Musharraf seized power on October 12, 1999, the documents say, the presence of the Pakistani intelligence in the Taliban-controlled territory increased and Afghanistan became a veritable Pakistani colony, which was facilitated by the past nexus of many of the Mullahs of the Taliban with Pakistan's military-intelligence establishment. Yet, the Bush administration

¹⁴² 'Global Intelligence' – by Paul Todd & Jonathan Bloch. Zed Books 2003.

¹⁴³ DIA Report, September 1999, declassified in Sept 2002.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/index.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ Mir Amir in A to Z of Jehadi Organisations.

chose to close its eyes to the complicity of Pakistan and to project General Pervez Musharraf to its own public, as well as to the international community as a frontline ally in the war against terrorism.

Since becoming an essential element of the international anti-terror war, the ISI has undergone quite a transformation; its Afghan cell doesn't exist anymore. Most of the Afghan-related officers now interact with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Even retired ISI officers are also working for the US agencies. Yet suspicion abounds that within the ISI, several elements are still maintaining contacts with people like the Haqqanis, Mullah Omar – the head of the Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmetyar, and several Pakistani militant outfits mentioned above.

While the ISI stopped funding for the operations of the outfits battling Indian forces in Kashmir, it also curtailed its tentacles in Afghanistan. Out of strategic considerations, the organization maintains contacts with the Kashmiri outfits, but whether it disconnected itself from the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban remains a mystery.¹⁴⁵

Sources in Peshawar, who are familiar with the Jihadi leadership, claim that most of Hekmetyar's leaders and activists are quietly living in Peshawar. His family members have been quietly attending weddings of relatives." I would say that the intelligence agencies do know about these people but are probably keeping quiet as a policy of tolerance", a Pakistani journalist with close links to Hekmetyar's party, Hezbe Islami, said.¹⁴⁶

Discussions with the Afghan President Karzai and his deputy interior minister Abdul Hadi Khalid in June 2008 also yielded similar impressions; their arguments are deeply embedded in the belief that the ISI is pulling the strings of militants like Baitullah Mehsud and Fazlullah to destabilize Afghanistan.

Some cynics even went to the extent of suggesting that the abduction and the 97-day ordeal that Tariq Azizuddin, the Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan, suffered at the hands of the Taliban, was also stage-managed by the ISI.

In this context, the big challenge facing Pakistan is to convince the world that its ISI, as a counter-insurgency agency, is safe-guarding only the legitimate interests of the country. It requires a lot of hard work to prove that the ISI is now working against and not for radical fundamentalist groups, which now pose a direct threat to the Pakistani society as such.

"If the FBI and MI6 are here in the region to look after their interests, how can the ISI remain oblivious to the situation in its neighbourhood," asked Talat

¹⁴⁵ CRSS interviews with Kashmiri Militant Sources, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, May 2008. Details withheld.

¹⁴⁶ CRSS interview at Peshawar, June 13, 2008. Details withheld.

Masud, a defence and political analyst. Indeed, the ISI needs to purge its ranks of pan-Islamists. It must get rid of the sympathizers and supporters of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban but it would fail in its duty, if it left its job to foreigners, Masud said.¹⁴⁷ The stigma of “abetting terrorist groups” is deep and requires a much harder effort to remove.

¹⁴⁷ CRSS interview, May 2008. Details withheld.

6 Al-Qaeda's Uzbek and Arab components

Uzbeks

As of June 2008, militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) had morphed into a lethal non-Arab Al-Qaeda entity. From the late 1990s – when they opened their first training camp near Mazare Sharif in northern Afghanistan till their escape to South Waziristan from the US-led Operation Anaconda, most of the Uzbeks from the former Soviet central Asian republics are probably now making their last stand.

Welcomed whole-heartedly and greeted with open arms in December 2001, these IMU militants, led by Tahir Yuldashev, faced little problem in finding support and shelter amongst the Ahmadzai Wazir tribesmen inhabiting the regional headquarters of Wana, in South Waziristan.

Yuldashev had succeeded Jumma Namangani, who was killed in a US air strike in northern Afghanistan in November 2001. In fact, he became a star-speaker at a mosque in the Sheen Warsak region near Wana, South Waziristan.

Once well-entrenched with the local support, Yuldashev founded the organization Mohajireen o Ansar to pursue his agenda which essentially converged with the larger objectives that Osama bin Laden's organization had set itself. One of the Pakistani Punjabi fugitives, Qari Mudassir, acts as their spokesman.

After escaping the Kaloosha Operation and surviving the injuries he sustained during the March 2004 crossfire with the Pakistani army, Tahir Yuldashev began organizing his people into Mohajireen o Ansar. He also set up a private jail to try and punish people he thought were creating problems for the Uzbeks. The exact number of Yuldashev's followers is difficult to determine, yet various local sources spoke of up to 1,000 Uzbeks being present in the region. Usman Jan and Jafar Asad are reportedly the two trusted aids to Yuldashev.

Yuldashev's fate took a turn when his vigilantes began targeting Pakistan army and government officials. These anti-army strikes turned the Uzbeks from revered heroes to villains, and they fell out with the pro-government Taliban commander Mullah Nazir who disapproved targeting Pakistani army and civilian targets.

In early June 2008, the organization claimed responsibility for waylaying Malik Khanan, a pro-government commander, affiliated with Yuldashev's arch-rival Mullah Nazir. "Noor Islam and Qari Mudassir, who was once member of the SSP, admitted that they finally got Khanan after some botched attempts to kill

him. The other target was Mullah Nazir and we will get him too,” Mudassir told The News.¹⁴⁸

CRSS also secured the telephone conversation of Qari Mudassir in which he made the admission of having killed Khannan. Khannan was a commander for the hostile Shakai valley and was immediately replaced with Tensile Khan. Before Khannan, Mullah Nazir had lost another close aide, Maulvi Iqbal. He was killed along with several fighters, including many Pakistanis from the Punjab province, during skirmishes with US-led coalition forces in early 2008.¹⁴⁹ He was based in South Waziristan. His son was killed early in October 2008 in connection with his rivalry with Khanan Wazir.

Arab Taliban

American defense officials estimate that between 150 and 500 hardcore Al-Qaeda fighters are operating in the Tribal Areas.¹⁵⁰

Sources in Wana, South Waziristan, claim at least 200 influential Arabs still live in the region under the protection of Mullah Nazir.¹⁵¹

During the Taliban rule, two categories of Arabs had entered into Afghanistan: those who, filled with the jihadi zeal, kept pouring in from different parts of the the Arab world until the war on the Taliban and bin Laden was initiated, and those who had moved in from Pakistan after the expiry of their visas and settled in the eastern parts of Afghanistan, mostly Jalalabad. Many had stayed on after the Soviets had pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989.¹⁵²

Almost all of them – several thousand – either perished in the American attacks on Kandahar and the vicinity of Jalalabad and the Tora Bora mountains, or landed in jails. Most were among the 7,000 prisoners whom, according to the western coalition, they had held by the end of December. More than 200 were caught by Pakistan’s border security forces after they gave up their fight in the Tora Bora Mountains, south of Jalalabad.

According to a Jane’s Intelligence Report of October 2001, Arabs swelled the ranks of the Taliban fighting force and constituted the second largest foreign contingent. Again, the source for this was the United Front or Northern Alliance.

“...their numbers have grown notably over the past 18 months. There seems little doubt at least 2,000 combatants – all apparently affiliated to and financed by Osama bin Laden – were active in support of the Taliban at the time of the September attacks in the US. One source monitoring the military situation

¹⁴⁸ The News, June 5, 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ New York Times, April 30, 2008.

¹⁵¹ Also see Profile of Mullah Nazir, and Non-TTP Taliban in South Waziristan.

¹⁵² Gul, Imtiaz: The Unholy Nexus’ and, Mir Amir, ‘True Face of Jihadis’.

estimated that up to 3,000 Arab combatants may have been in the field in September. Certainly an Arab presence, including numbers of civilians and their families, was quite open in the southern cities of Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar,” the Jane’s report said.¹⁵³

At least 200 Arab Taliban was found executed on different locations in Jalalabad and Kandahar immediately after Mullah Omar surrendered power in December 2001. This also came as no surprise. The quote below is taken from the above-mentioned Jane’s Intelligence Report article.

Both Arab instructors and trainees have been seen at Rishkhor, near Kabul, following the August 1998 US cruise missile attack on training camps at Zhawar (in the eastern Khost province). Rishkhor expanded to become probably the biggest training base in the country, housing up to 1,500 trainees – Pakistanis, Arabs and others – as well as some 30 – 50 instructors (some of whom had moved from Khost). Courses covered basic field craft and small-arms training, graduating to specialised courses in support weaponry, demolition and escape and evasion. Last June, however, following international publicity and growing diplomatic pressure, the facility was emptied. Kabul-based journalists were permitted to visit it, but official denials that foreigners had ever been trained there, were belied by large signs on buildings in Arabic and Urdu.”¹⁵⁴ As for the Arabs, JIR had said; generally, Arab units were “deployed in an infantry role armed with nothing heavier than RPGs, PK machine guns and mortars. They were, however, widely recognised as currently the most aggressive and committed fighters in Taliban ranks.

Arab influence is seen as particularly strong within the Ministry for the Enforcement of Virtue and Suppression of Vice, the Taliban’s ubiquitous religious police and in cities where the presence of Arab fighters is open. So too is their hostility, towards Western aid workers.

Jane’s Intelligence Report said that Chechen units and the forces of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) constituted the other two main foreign contingents of the foreign Taliban.

While organisationally separate, with distinct leaderships, links between “Islamist militants from the two ex-Soviet territories are long-standing and it seems likely that Chechens are today attached to IMU combat units. Other

¹⁵³ Jane’s Intelligence Report, October 2001.

http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jid/jid010920_1_n.shtml

¹⁵⁴ Jane’s Intelligence Report, October 1999. <http://jir.janes.com/public/jir/index.shtml>.

foreigners, including Pakistanis from the SSP and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, are also operating under the IMU's military umbrella", Jane's said.

In June 2008, things had changed only to the extent that the Pakistani Taliban support for IMU and Arab Al-Qaeda is fragmented; the Haqqani-led Taliban in North Waziristan are sheltering both Arab and IMU militants. Baitullah Mehsud supported both Uzbeks and Arabs, while his Ahmedzai Wazir rival, Mullah Nazir, protects and harbours Arab fighters.

What causes concern among outsiders – including Afghans and Americans – is their pronounced objective; to continue supporting Jihad inside Afghanistan to drive out “foreign occupation forces.” And this certainly doesn't augur well because almost every body – ranging from the Afghan president Hamid Karzai to the US President George W Bush – sounds wary of these radicals. And as the pressure on Pakistan mounts to go after them, the danger of this pressure translating into physical action by the US-led international community against Al-Qaeda in the tribal areas is also growing.

6.1 The “Al-Qaedaisation” of Pakistan

Soon after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the American administration and Pakistan turned against those very elements that they once had lauded as “Holy Warriors” against an Evil Empire. Within weeks of the Operation Enduring Freedom that began on October 7, 2001, the al-Qaeda-supported Taliban government was swept from power, forcing all foreign guests – predominantly Arabs, Chechens, and Pakistani militants wanted on criminal charges – to retreat into the wild and to the medieval Waziristan region where they found cash-starved but hospitable hosts.

Pakistani authorities realized the gravity of the situation in mid March 2004, when the armed forces personnel stumbled upon an al-Qaeda shelter at Kaloosha near Wana in South Waziristan. It was the house of local influential cleric Maulvi Noorul Islam, Uzbek Islamist leader Tahir Yuldashev and had been used by as one of many sanctuaries.¹⁵⁵

The bloody encounter spanning over several hours resulted in dozens of deaths to para-military troops, as well as some locals. The entire Kaloosha village had risen against the army and made the operation pretty difficult. Tahir Yuldashev escaped seriously injured, out a trace with whatsoever to date.

The year 2004 and good part of 2005 witnessed a number of big and small search and surveillance operations – up to 100 according to locals in both parts of Waziristan – and a number of encounters between the security forces and the

¹⁵⁵ The Friday Times, April 2004.

local and foreign militants. Scores of rounds of negotiations between the authorities and the jirgas (assemblies of elders) were also held to push out foreigners from the region. But as Pakistan beefed up its military deployment and tightened the noose around local and foreign militants, Al-Qaeda became a household name, particularly in North and South Waziristan agencies, which are close to the eastern Afghan provinces Paktia and Paktika.

In an area about 15-km in radius and snaking along the Afghan border in South Waziristan, these militants hold sway even over the local Pashtun tribes, essentially the Ahmedzai Wazir and its sub-tribes Yargulkhels and Zilikhels. All of them are hostage not only to radical anti-American pan-Islamists stalking the forests, mountain passes, and difficult valleys, but they are also prisoners of poverty, ignorance and darkness.¹⁵⁶

This report in the Friday Times quoted above holds strong even today: though the Uzbek and Arab followers of the movement are split between Baitullah Mehsud, who supported the Uzbeks along with several Ahmedzai Wazirs like Maulvi Omar, Sharif and Noor Islam; while Mullah Nazir (reportedly) shelters scores of Arabs in the Wana and Shakai valleys of South Waziristan.¹⁵⁷

Investigations even in 2004 had revealed that most people in Waziristan, born-Muslims, adored al-Qaeda and the Taliban for ‘their love for Islam’. But fewer were ready to pick up arms and rise in support of the cause Osama and Mullah Omar have been peddling all along. But over these areas – as reports still keep pouring in from the embattled Waziristan – the region seems to have turned into a haven for unwanted elements, i.e. local and foreign terrorists.

Mariam Abou Zahab, a renowned French scholar with deep understanding of the religious politics in Pakistan, coined the term “Pakistanization of Al-Qaeda” in 2002 and reported that the Al-Qaeda and their Pashtoon hosts and supporters were on the run and regrouped in Pakistan’s port city, Karachi.¹⁵⁸

A blitz of attacks followed this regrouping in various cities of Pakistan, beginning with strikes at churches in Islamabad, Taxila, Murree, the beheading of the Wall Street Journal’s Daniel Pearl and the firing incident at the Convent of Jesus and Mary in Murree, near Islamabad. Pakistani intelligence services, with their grassroots intelligence-gathering and technical support of the Americans, were able to trace and uproot a large number of al-Qaeda hideouts in the urban centers of Karachi, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Faisalabad and Quetta. Almost all of the captors were handed over to the US for further investigation and interrogations and this process drove the al-Qaeda activists and leaders back to

¹⁵⁶ www.thefridaytimes.com, Jun 16-22, 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Also see profile of Mullah Nazir, and Taliban in South Waziristan.

¹⁵⁸ Islamist Network: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection (The CERJ Series in Comparative Politics and International Studies). Author(s): Mariam Abou Zahab, Olivier Roy, Format Book, Hurst & Company, 2004.

FATA, mainly the South and North Waziristan Agencies. Despite the Pakistan army's increasing numbers along the border, al-Qaeda continued to grow in strength.

The region, considered "terrorism central" by US commanders in Afghanistan, is now a fully operational al-Qaeda base area offering a wide range of services, facilities, and military and explosives training for extremists around the world planning attacks. Waziristan is now a regional magnet. In 2006, up to 1,000 Uzbeks, escaping the crackdown in Uzbekistan after the massacre by government security forces in the town of Andijan in May 2005, have found sanctuary with al-Qaeda in Waziristan.¹⁵⁹

From their early regrouping in Karachi in 2002 to their relocation in FATA, it took nearly two years, Ms. Zahab says. The Arabs and Uzbeks, supported by local and Afghan militants, continue to operate from the region.

Since March 2004, the authorities struck four peace deals with militants but they did little in denting Al-Qaeda. On the contrary, backed by Baitullah Mehsud, most of Al-Qaeda cadres have contributed in making the militancy in FATA more organized. Yet, Al-Qaeda stays in the background and the Taliban militants are leading the ideological and guerilla struggle both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Unlike Al-Qaeda's stated strategy and philosophy of pan-Islamic resurgence based on the Wahabi fundamentals, the Taliban apparently do not have such strategic aims and are rather focused on anti-Americanism in FATA and Afghanistan. Many observers believe that with the Taliban on the fore, Al-Qaeda would find itself ample time to regroup, recruit, reorganize and review its local, regional and global strategy, specifically against American and generally against the Western governments supporting the American-led Global War on Terror (GWOT).

What causes concern in Pakistan and elsewhere is that all of the new-generation militants share Al-Qaeda's ideology – as far as the "Jihad against infidels" is concerned. If locals were to be believed, the usual metaphor used for the militants is Al-Qaeda.

In NWFP and Balochistan, says Muhammad Amir Rana in "A to Z of Jihadi Organisations" and Amir Mir in "True Face of Jihadis", Pakistani outfits are still alive and providing human resources to the Taliban and al-Qaeda for the insurgency inside Afghanistan. "They can directly join the Taliban, especially in Federally Administrative Tribal Areas of Pakistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan's Pashtun belt," says Rana. Quoting local sources, Mir says that the Taliban allow individuals only to join them with a condition that they will not form any Pakistani group, within the Taliban. They put this

¹⁵⁹ Washington Post, September 11, 2006.

condition after some bitter experiences with Pakistan's Jihadi organizations i.e. repeated splits in the Jihadi outfits.

The criterion for selection into Al-Qaeda is also not different. Intelligence officials say that al-Qaeda itself chooses the members from the different Jihadi organizations, especially sectarian banned terrorist groups like LJ and Harkatul Jihadi Islami Alalmi.¹⁶⁰

A January 7, 2008 STRATFOR analysis also addressed the issue of al-Qaeda proliferation across Pakistan and says that the amorphous organization has very skilfully turned this country into its regional head-quarters. "Unlike in Iraq and most other places, al-Qaeda can actually claim a significant degree of success in Pakistan. However, the last time al-Qaeda issued a statement on Pakistan was Sept. 20, 2007, when bin Laden vowed to retaliate against Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf for the killing of the cleric who led the uprising at Islamabad's Red Mosque (in July 2007)."

Since then, the Jihadists in Pakistan have successfully staged multiple suicide attacks (at least 56 in 2007 alone) against army and air force installations and personnel, as well as those of the Inter-Services Intelligence directorate. More recently, the insecurity and instability in Pakistan increased sharply because of the assassination of top opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. The deterioration of political stability in Pakistan is obviously forcing the United States to re-evaluate its options – the New York Times reported on January 6, 2007 that the National Security Council is considering expanding the authority of the CIA and the Pentagon to conduct more aggressive covert operations in Pakistan's north-western regions. Chaos, weakening of government control and the entry of the US military into the fray: these are the conditions in which al-Qaeda thrives.

STRATFOR's analysis also converges with what Pentagon, in particular, believes. al-Qaeda prime is, after all, headquartered in Pakistan. With Washington's focus shifting from the chaos in Iraq to the chaos in Pakistan; it might be that the spotlight is shining uncomfortably close to the apex leadership. From al-Qaeda's point of view, the Afghanistan-Pakistan theatre is perhaps the only area of opportunity left for the Jihadists to exploit and the area where the final battle of the US-Jihadist war will be fought.

Al-Qaeda is taking advantage of Pakistan's political turmoil to ramp up operations in the tribal belt and possibly plot fresh terrorist attacks abroad; western and Pakistani officials warn. As President Pervez Musharraf battles to retain power, violence is surging in Waziristan, where Osama bin Laden's senior henchmen have taken shelter behind a corps of Taliban fighters.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies analysis, Aug 2006. <http://san-pips.com/PIPS-SAN-Files/SAN-Pakistan/SAN-PAK-Article63/San-Pak-Main-A63-D.asp>

¹⁶¹ The Guardian, September 27, 2007.

"They have humiliated the army and made things very difficult for a president who is already in trouble. It's a very clever strategy," said a western military official. The UK and US fear that a "catastrophic" terrorist attack could be launched from Waziristan, he added.

Afghan foreign minister Dr. Rangeen Dadfar Spanta also categorically declares that FATA remains as the terror central for Al-Qaeda. "We know that behind Afghanistan's border, behind the Durand Line, it is a sanctuary for terrorist activities. We know that some entities like madrassahs and other organizations are the sanctuaries for international terrorist networks and also for Taliban. We need to destroy this source and also the sanctuaries that we have inside Afghanistan with Pakistan's cooperation."¹⁶²

A US Country Report on Pakistan also made a similar assessment of al-Qaeda in Pakistan. The report stated that al-Qaeda had rebuilt some of its pre-9/11 capabilities in Pakistan's remote and less accessible areas and one major reason for the resurgence of terrorist attacks – despite al-Qaeda being weaker today – was the peace deal signed by Pakistan with tribal leaders in 2006 (September 5, Peace in North Waziristan). "Numerous senior al-Qaeda operatives have been captured or killed, but al-Qaeda leaders continued to plot attacks and to cultivate stronger operational connections that radiated outward from Pakistan to affiliates throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe," according to the report. The report said, "The December 27 assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto ... was the most prominent suicide attack"¹⁶³.

Waziristan's place as a hub of al-Qaeda operations was highlighted in March 2008, when police in Germany arrested three men – two Germans and a Turk – accused of plotting to attack a US military base in the country. German officials claimed they had travelled to Waziristan for explosives training.

The Pakistani military calls the Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants "miscreants" and by the end of September 2007, it claimed to have killed nearly 250 militants in Waziristan alone. The spokesman for the Pakistani Military, Major General Wahid Arshad, had then claimed that 25 of the total killed in Waziristan in 2007 were militants of foreign origins including Uzbeks, Arabs, Afghans and Tajiks. Observers of ongoing battles in FATA note that militants even from the Chechen origins were also fighting alongside the local Taliban and frequently shuttled to and from FATA after executing their operations in Afghanistan.

Another angle that surfaced during the high-pitched battles in FATA was that the Afghan-war toughened local Taliban soldiers who were often confused as foreign militants, because of their skill, toughness and commitment to hold the lines.

¹⁶² CRSS interview, Kabul, April 13, 2008. Details withheld.

¹⁶³ The Country Report on Terrorism, (podcast) released April 30, 2008.
http://video.state.gov/?fr_story=9780163677cb9fbf44dd03eddca5d656e67f8616.

“This is characteristic of what Al-Qaeda fighters are generally conceived as,” an observer said.

The US and its western allies remain concerned that the Waziristan-based operatives may be plotting more attacks in the US or Europe. Senior figures believed to be in Waziristan include Abu Laith al-Libbi, who tried to overthrow the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi in the early 1990s and who later escaped from a jail in Saudi Arabia. The US military blamed him for orchestrating a suicide bombing outside Bagram airbase during a visit by to Afghanistan by the US vice-president, Dick Cheney, in May 2007.

Other senior Bin Laden loyalists include Abu Yahya al-Libbi, a Sunni ideologue who escaped detention in Bagram and now frequently appears in al-Qaeda videos, and Adam Gadahn, a California native nicknamed “Azzam the American”.

A big controversy surrounds Al-Libbi, however. While Pakistani and US officials declared him dead, sources in Waziristan told CRSS that he is still alive.

According to a report in Asia Times Online in August 2007, there were 29 identified Al-Qaeda training camps in FATA and all but one “have been dismantled, apart from one run by hardliner Islamist, Mullahh Abdul Khaliq”, the report said. It was just after the American attack on Afghanistan, that Al-Qaeda started reaching out to the local Pakistani extremist elements including Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Jaish is suspected to have plotted at least three life attempts on President Musharraf which failed but the message was clear. A few of other like-minded militant outfits also joined al-Qaeda’s call and particularly operated against the Shiites in Pakistan. “This trend increased especially after the Shiites in Iraq supported the US plan to rule Iraq after occupying it and the local militants saw the Shiites as traitors,” a seasoned journalist had noted in a discussion. Al-Qaeda “appointed” Abu Ali Tunisi, an extremist from Tunisia, as the local coordinator in charge of liaison with the local Pakistani extremist groups. “These arrangements were made on strict military-like lines and people in all ranks followed the chain of command and that’s precisely what increased their effectiveness not only in fight with FATA but also their attacks in Pakistan.” Tunisi operated from his base in North Waziristan and was at least attacked three times but he escaped every time.

The fact nevertheless remains that Al-Qaeda continues to exploit the Pakistani territory – both in and outside FATA – in pursuit of its agenda. Khaled Ahmed, the consulting editor of the weekly The Friday Times, who has extensively dealt with the subject, had already cautioned of the consequences of eulogizing the organization’s anti-American agenda.

The coalition partners in the Global War On Terror firmly believe that Hamza Bin Laden, Osama Bin Laden’s son and likely successor, is believed to frequent North Waziristan along with Abu Kasha. They usually are the guests of the

Taliban and their foreign supporter, Najimuddin Uzbek. Abu Kasha is reportedly a powerful member of al-Qaeda's Supreme Council – Majlis-e-Shoora – and also known as the brains behind al-Qaeda's operations in FATA. Najimuddin Uzbek has been acting as the deputy of Tahir Yuldashev in matters of waging war against the coalition forces in Afghanistan and Pakistani military in FATA.

Since 2001, there have been tens of military strikes in FATA from the coalition. These include drones, missiles, artillery shelling etc. These strikes have produced both civilian casualties – tactfully termed as collateral damage – and killed the al-Qaeda leaders and/or their local supporters and hosts. The suspicions that both Osama Bin Laden and Aimanul Zawahiri could be in FATA became strong when in December 2005, al-Qaeda's third-in-command, Egyptian-born Abu Hamza Rabia Al-misri, was killed reportedly in a Predator drone-attack on his vehicle in Hasori, a small place near Miran Shah. President Musharraf in December 2007 claimed that a total number of 300 foreign militants were killed in Afghanistan and the total number of militants killed was around 4,000. Those of Al-Qaeda who were captured outside FATA included Khalid Shaikh Muhammad (2003), mastermind of the September 11 attacks in New York, Abu Faraj Al-libbi (2005), then third-in-command after Osama and Aimanul Zawahiri.

There is no solid data available as to how many al-Qaeda ranks were killed in Afghanistan, though a few of them, high in the order of al-Qaeda's hierarchy, were either killed or arrested and handed over to the US from many Pakistani urban centers. Abu Laith Al-libbi was killed on January 29, 2008 in a drone attack near Mir Ali in North Waziristan.¹⁶⁴ Al-Libbi was reportedly No. 3 in al-Qaeda and in charge of military operations in FATA and Afghanistan and also acted as the spokesman of the terrorist group. Also killed in a Predator drone-attack, he was believed to have been the mastermind of incessant suicide bombings in Afghanistan and Pakistan along with the attack on the Bagram Airbase. Similarly, Abu Obaida al-Masri was also reported to have died due to illness in the tribal areas sometime in April 2008.¹⁶⁵ Abu Khubab al-Masri, a famous explosive expert with close connections to al-Qaeda was also killed in a US predator drone strike in August 2008 in South Waziristan Agency.¹⁶⁶ Also reported to be killed were senior al-Qaeda leaders Khalid Habib al-Masri and Abu Jihad al-Masri, although there has been no official confirmation of their deaths.

Saif al Adel, reportedly a long-settled militant with extremely close ties with local Taliban and the strategists behind the Taliban "expansion of influence" in

¹⁶⁴ 'Killing of Abu Laith al-Libbi', www.pvtr.org/pdf/RegionalAnalysis/SouthAsia/Killing%20of%20Abu-Laith%20Al-Libbi.pdf.

¹⁶⁵ 'Al Qaeda Leader al-Masri Dead', BBC, April 9, 2008, news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/7339324.stm.

¹⁶⁶ 'Foreign militants among 12 killed in SWA US missile hit', The News, August 14, 2008, http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=16592.

other agencies and Swat, allegedly replaced Abu Laith Al-libbi as the third in command (other sources maintain that al Adel is in house arrest in Iran, but this cannot be confirmed). It is also believed that Abu Ubdeiydah Al-misri and Matiur Rahman, two field commanders of al-Qaeda and in charge of organization's operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, respectively, are operating from the bordering areas near Afghanistan.

In March 2008, Dr. Arshad Waheed, a Pakistani medical doctor believed to have access to top-level al-Qaeda leadership, was killed in North Waziristan in a drone attack. He was settled in the region to reportedly treat the injured Taliban and al-Qaeda, both from FATA and Afghanistan.

The adoption of al-Qaeda by a vast number of people in Pakistan, including the (religious-political) government of the NWFP whose ministers at times swear by the Taliban brand of Islam, cannot be ignored. Senators and Members of the National Assembly from the Tribal Areas, according to some, pretend to be on the side of the government and pose as mediators, but others state that they are clearly loyal to the worldview of al-Qaeda and some of them have benefited financially from this loyalty. One MNA, Shah Abdul Aziz, has appeared on a private channel and has admitted to having nursed Abdullah Mehsud – the Guantanamo Bay ex-inmate who abducted the Chinese engineers from the Gomalzam Dam in South Waziristan – when the two were in the tutelage of Mufti Shamzai of Banuri Masjid in Karachi. It was very clear that the loyalty of MNA Shah Abdul Aziz was more to the cause of al-Qaeda than to Pakistan.¹⁶⁷

Almost four years later, Ahmed's warning has turned into a reality and is threatening the future of a liberal and democratic Pakistan. The Al-Qaeda extensions believe time is ripe for taking on the Pakistani state to pave the way for enforcement of Sharia in the country. These thoughts are not heresy; somebody very important, who had to spend some time with the TTP leaders, brought this message after he returned to civilization. There's a strong and dire need in Pakistan for a tactful political and military handling so that the threat of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in FATA not only is addressed but the situation on the ground is also improved. Without improving indicators on the ground, no amount of military might or peace deals will make the strategy work.

¹⁶⁷ Ahmed Khaled, The Friday Times, Nov 19-25, 2004.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary objective of this report has been the identification of militant organizations operating within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), some more detailed profiling and identification of their supporters in the rest of Pakistan.

This report also shows the scope of the support that the militants – on both sides of the Durand Line – receive from Pakistan. In addition, the report shows how interconnected the security situation in Pakistan is with the low-intensity war in Afghanistan. It is obvious that in order to come to terms with the situation in the FATA (and increasingly in Baluchistan and the rest of the NWFP), Afghanistan and Pakistan needs to be discussed simultaneously.

In addition, the report has mapped and described the support for the militants as well as whom some of the key players in Afghanistan are, both individuals and groups.

In the report we have also outlined the various initiatives taken by the new Pakistani government to open up a “new approach” (as the term goes) in negotiations between, on one hand the Islamabad government, and on the other, the tribes and militants in the North West. The emphasis on negotiations and a possible “down-shifting” when it comes to the use of the military, have still to render any clear breakthroughs between the government and the militants and the tribes. But the will to change is there.

Based on the CRSS survey in the FATA region and scores of interviews with politicians, intelligence officials, FATA journalists, and Afghan officials, including President Hamid Karzai, certain conclusions can easily be drawn. These are listed below:

Different shades of Islamic extremists – Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Afghanistan and Pakistani militant organizations (including Jaishe Mohammad, Harkatul Mujahideen, Lashkare Jhangvi, Lashkare Taiba and Sipah Sahaba Pakistan) – have all converged in various parts of Pakistan’s tribal areas.

This alliance of ideological partners includes Afghans, Arabs, Chechens, Uzbeks, and Pakistanis (mostly Pashtoons and Punjabis).

Based on their own public pronouncements, these radical militants provide human and material support to Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives for their war against the Afghan government and the US-led foreign troops; whether it is the Taliban of Khyber Agency, Mohmand or of North and South Waziristan, they have all categorically vowed to continue their Jihad against “foreign occupation forces.”

Because of it, the state of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan has undergone further deterioration. President Hamid Karzai almost declared war on Pakistan at a press conference in Kabul when he warned that the “Afghan army wouldn’t refrain from chasing those militants who cause damage in Afghanistan and then retreat into the tribal areas on the other side of the Durand Line”.

In a CRSS interview the following day, Karzai defended his warning as a very serious matter, saying terror sanctuaries must be taken out: “This must stop and we want results. Otherwise we reserve the right of self-defence against people who commit terrorism in Afghanistan and take shelter in Pakistan.”

Afghan and US officials believe that Pakistan’s military establishment, the ISI in particular, is still supporting the militants and that the civilian government has little say in it.

The tripartite commission, comprising the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as their Joint Intelligence Mechanism based at Bagram airbase, has been unable to jointly and effectively address the issue of “Taliban and Al-Qaeda sanctuaries”, particularly in the Waziristan region.

Statements by US Pentagon and Intelligence officials as well as the Afghan leaders point to a gradual escalation of differences with Pakistan, which is seen as a “half-hearted partner in the war against terrorism.”

The June 9, 2008 report “Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan” by the US RAND Corporation, also came up with similar findings:

Every successful insurgency in Afghanistan since 1979 enjoyed safe haven in neighbouring countries, and the current insurgency is no different.... right now, the Taliban and other groups are getting help from individuals within Pakistan’s government, and until that ends, the region’s long-term security is in jeopardy.

The study found that some active and former officials in Pakistan’s intelligence service and the Frontier Corps – a paramilitary force deployed along the Afghan border – provided direct assistance to Taliban militants and helped secure medical care for wounded fighters.

The predominant perception in the Pakistani tribal areas also implicates “intelligence agencies” in the Taliban-led violence. People at large, and in many instances civilian intelligence operatives too, suspect that the military establishment tolerates, if not supports, the militant outfits because “they are fighting the foreign forces in Afghanistan”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Another twist of this problem are the frequent reports by various US and Pakistani sources of incidents where fire-fights have broken out between US forces hunting Taliban and/or foreign militants, and Pakistani forces, most commonly the FCR. For more on this see. International Herald Tribune, Saturday-Sunday September 6-7, 2008. As has been reported elsewhere – in this

Led by Baitullah Mehsud's Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Mullah Nazir's Tehrik-e-Taliban (South Waziristan), Mangal Bagh's Lashkare Islami and Haji Naamdar's Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue (Khyber Agency), a massive wave of Talibanisation is sweeping the North-western Frontier Province (NWFP) and the tribal areas adjacent to it.

Al-Qaeda-inspired "Independent cells" are spreading Talibanisation across the NWFP and several of its districts next to the FATA regions. Almost 90 suicide attacks in various parts of the country between January 2007 and June 2008, the abduction of the Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan, beheadings of suspected spies and criminals in the Waziristan and Mohmand and repeated attacks on video and music shops in and outside the tribal areas offer ample evidence that, however small in numbers, the Taliban zealots are out to spread their message and enforce their "code of life" with bombs and guns. This increasing "Al-Qaedaisation" of Pakistan's tribal areas is symbolized by the increasing influence of militant leaders like Baitullah Mehsud and Maulana Fazlullah with networks reaching as far as Karachi.

Pakistani armed forces appear demoralized in the face of this long-drawn low-intensity insurgency on its soil. This frustration flows from the fact that many army officers and soldiers are uncomfortable with the fact that "we are killing our own people."

The actual beneficiaries of the status quo are Taliban on the one hand and a few thousand FATA bureaucrats and 35,000 tribal elders called Maliks, on the other.

If FATA residents are not provided with a phased programme of political reforms backed by a strong social uplift process, a continuation of the present critical situation will likely occur. This will make the scope for reforms in FATA – both economically and politically – very difficult.

Creeping Talibanisation from the southern districts also threatens the provincial capital Peshawar, where the government has reportedly¹⁶⁹ devised a security plan that envisages deployment of about 3,000 extra special security men, around the city to protect it from Taliban who had briefly occupied and partially dynamited a strategic tunnel about 50 kilometres in the south, in January 2008.

Intelligence officials and some tribal journalists with close contacts to Baitullah Mehsud and other Taliban groups, say that these militants believe that the time is ripe for extending their support to Peshawar for eventual enforcement of Islamic sharia there. Such a development could throw up serious challenges as far as managing the insurgency is concerned.

study as well – this has also led to an increasing number of civilian casualties, especially when the Coalition forces are calling in air support.

¹⁶⁹ Samaa TV, June 11, 2008.

Allegations against Pakistan's role in the FATA insurgency (or at least the role of the ISI), which the governments of Afghanistan and the US believe is fuelling the Afghan insurgency, along with multiple vested competing interests, further complicate the FATA situation.

However, it is also clear that for the new government in Islamabad, the first priority is to calm the border regions on the Pakistani side. So far at least, the militants (whom the negotiations themselves have elevated to a more prestigious ground) have made it clear that they don't intend to stop the war in Afghanistan, but that they are happy to refrain from fighting the Pakistani army or paramilitary units of the Frontier Corps (FC). The strategic thinking behind this attempt to "de-couple" FATA from Afghanistan is that the calm that might emanate from such a "truce" between Islamabad and FATA will lead to a situation whereby the tribes find it more to their advantage to stop – or at least limit – movements by the militants back and forth across the border. Furthermore, if the end-result can be that the tribes and the local law-enforcing forces (such as the FC) themselves will be in charge of counter-terror and counter-insurgency operations, the government will have created a situation where support for the Jihad in Afghanistan is cut or drastically reduced. And this without having to resort to heavy fighting involving the army, a strategy that, so far, has met with severe losses for the army and a distinct loss of credibility for the government.

That the tribes would concede their hitherto closely guarded possibility to deal with the militants as they see fit, regardless of what the government in Islamabad thinks, is not necessarily going to happen though. On the face of it, what the government can offer in terms of "carrots" is more of what has been on offer in earlier negotiations; money and aid. This has been slow in coming and a lot of it has been wasted through corruption (both locally and on the federal level¹⁷⁰) or never materialized because of budgetary shortages. On this score at least, new initiatives are in the making with key foreign actors, such as the US and the UK, both having increased their aid-packages to the FATA¹⁷¹. As stated above, however, there is no clear evidence that these latest efforts will make a change in the situation, at least not in the short term. The "carrots" are there in the form of more aid (and hopefully the latest initiatives from abroad pared with a new government can put a lid on the widespread corruption that has followed aid programmes before¹⁷²) but the deal offered looks very much like the earlier ones, but without any real "sticks" if the tribes or the militants (or both) fail to adhere to any agreement being brokered. Furthermore, it will take time to build up the FC (the preferred force to handle the shooting war with the Taliban and other

¹⁷⁰ This point was underlined on several occasions during several trips that the editor has been doing to Pakistan over the last few years. For example during a trip to Pakistan in April 2008. For details of interlocutors contact the editor.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid ICG report No: 125, December 2006.

militants) and that time is not necessarily going to be quiet. Therefore, on the face of it, the recent attempts on part of the Pakistan government need a lot of time, luck and a sincere will from the tribes of FATA to change their hitherto rather open support for the militants.

To sweeten the deal, the Islamabad government is on record as saying that the FATA districts could become part of the regular administrative set-up of Pakistan, and become a part of NWFP¹⁷³. This would mean that the people of FATA would get the same rights as any other citizen of Pakistan. It would also mean that FATA could send representatives to both the local parliament in Peshawar and the federal parliament in Islamabad. However, this initiative was met with mixed responses. Most vocal in their response were the more militant Islamist parties (such as the Jamat-e-Islami¹⁷⁴) who immediately called for Sharia to be implemented in FATA (as well as in the whole country of course). For the tribes immediately concerned, the independence that they have today (at least the more influential ones) will not easily be discarded for the dubious price of having representatives in Islamabad and in Peshawar. As long as the smuggling across the border with Afghanistan continues to fill the coffers of the tribes most affected, they will be hard put to cease activities. And since the smuggling goes hand in hand with organizing support to the militants fighting in Afghanistan, both issues need to be tackled simultaneously. But that is not on the cards right now; the onus is on the negotiations to produce peace and quiet on the Pakistani side of the border. And it is this attempt to de-couple the security issues in Pakistan from the ones in Afghanistan that, in the end, might make a long-term peace deal between the Pakistani government and the militants (and their supporters among the tribes) impossible.

¹⁷³ FATA is today administered under the so-called Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), which means that the tribal districts of FATA are ruled directly from the federal government. In reality, however, Islamabad has no real authority over the area, as shown in this study. Another option than incorporating FATA into the NWFP is to let the area become a new province. This however, is a lot less likely to happen, both for administrative and political reasons.

¹⁷⁴ See for example "The News", April 17, 2008, p 3. "*Jamaat-e-Islamic calls for Shariah enforcement in Fata*".

Appendix 1.

Profiles of Militants

South Waziristan

Baitullah Mehsud

Baitullah Mehsud was killed in August 2009. TIME Magazine in its early May 2008 issue listed Baitullah Mehsud among its 100 most influential individuals; General Ashfaq Kayani (now acting commander-in-chief) being the other luminary from Pakistan. Both Kayani and Mehsud have been listed in the category of “Leaders and Revolutionaries”. This was critically commented on by retired General Talat Masud in the Daily Times where he deplored this fact and said that this: “shows to what extent our political, cultural, academic and intellectual leadership has been marginalised and the power of the people diminished.”¹⁷⁵

Talat Masud also asked as to whether these individuals are truly the most influential in Pakistan’s national scene today? Is this selection a fair assessment or merely a reflection of the US global agenda of pursuing their “war on terror”? The two “Leaders and Revolutionaries” – Kayani and Baithullah – represent the disproportionate ascendancy of militaristic and militant power in Pakistan. Clearly, it is also an indication of the high value placed on military power in the context of national and international security, although the most pressing security challenges in Pakistan and the region are in building constructive capacities as opposed to destructive ones¹⁷⁶.

Regardless of the questions General Masud raised in his article, most Intelligence officials working in FATA regarded Mehsud as the “most dangerous person.” Baitullah had three brothers, two of whom assisted him in South Waziristan, while the third one lives in the Bajaur agency.

Waziristani journalists and supporters also called him the governor of South Waziristan because of his influence over the Mehsud areas of the agency. He hailed from the Makeen village in South Waziristan, and had allegedly been behind most of the suicide bombings in 2006 and 2007.

The TTP also reportedly runs suicide training camps, located mostly in and around Shawaal area between North and South Waziristan. Baitullah Mehsud

¹⁷⁵ Talat Masud, Daily Times May 9, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

defended suicide attacks as a “viable form of self-defence” and equivalent to atomic bombs, yet denied the existence of suicide training camps in the area.

The Pakistani government also blames him for involvement in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Rawalpindi on December 27 2007, but during his May 24 meeting with about 30 journalists somewhere in South Waziristan; Baitullah Mehsud denied his involvement in the case.

*“We didn’t kill Benazir Bhutto. We are not involved. She had not taken any action against us, so there was no need to harm such a person,” he told the group visiting him.*¹⁷⁷

*“America is our enemy and we’ll fight against it wherever it is possible the Taliban could not negotiate with Americans, as Christians and Jews could not be friends with Muslims. They are the enemies of Muslims,” he said*¹⁷⁸.

In his first television interview, conducted by Al-Jazeera TV in December 2007, Mehsud had said that his ultimate aim was to attack New York City and London. This was more than mere rhetoric. In January 2007, Spanish police said that a cell of Pakistanis whom they had arrested in Barcelona, were planning suicide operations in Spain and possibly elsewhere in Europe. They had allegedly been dispatched by Mehsud.¹⁷⁹

In an encounter with journalists, Baitullah also came out with some statistics on the composition of Taliban forces battling US, NATO, Afghan and Pakistani troops; he claimed that Afghan Taliban made up 95 percent of those, leading the fight against US-led forces in Afghanistan. Pakistanis and other foreigners made up only five percent of the insurgents.

The stocky and bearded militant also denied his organisation’s involvement in the kidnapping of Pakistan’s Ambassador to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin. The TTP helped secure Azizuddin’s release but had no knowledge of his location, Mehsud told journalists visiting him.¹⁸⁰

During this meeting with around a dozen Pakistani journalists, the wily Mehsud tribesman also underscored the importance of the media. “The real war is the media war... It is our desire to learn also how one should fight the media war”, Mehsud told journalists, indicating that his men were preparing to launch a propaganda offensive with greater (global) outreach i.e. by acquiring ability to upload videos on websites such as YouTube.¹⁸¹ One of Mehsud’s colleagues, a

¹⁷⁷ NNI news agency, BBC Online, Samaa TV May 24, 2008.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Time Magazine: April 28, 2008.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid and Time Magazine May 12, 2008. See also: <http://aminwahidi.blogspot.com/2008/05/jihad-continues-in-afghanistan.html>

¹⁸¹ Daily Times, May 2008.

non-Pashtu on and non-combatant member of the Taliban's media cell, told some journalists "we will soon be available on YouTube," demonstrating how mindful the militants have been of the necessity of "outreach."

The Taliban media cell has already been releasing video CDs showing horrific images, apparently with different aims. One such video, screened during an army media briefing on May 18, shows a boy as young as 10 firing shots at the head of a blindfolded man and beheading another.

Mehsud's overtures clearly betrayed his attempt to win over reporters by terming the murder a day before of the private Express TV's correspondent Mohammad Ibrahim as 'unforgivable'. He assured journalists that his organisation would "hang the killers" of Ibrahim if they were identified.

A BBC Urdu reporter Haroon Rashid and another tribal journalist Shams Mohmand later told CRSS that the media show put on by the Taliban simply reinforced the impression that the area is under "complete control of the militants." It was show of strength as well as an attempt to demonstrate how the army had been forced out of the area, commented the two.

The Pakistani government struck a peace-deal with him at Sara Rogha on February 9, 2005 after his militants had swept the Sara Rogha and Laddha Forts in South Waziristan, which until then had been jointly manned by the FC and the Pakistani army. In January 2008 the army initiated a military operation against him that lasted for a couple of weeks. The military operation failed to weaken his base though, despite the fact that the military had taken over important Mehsud towns like Sara Rogha, Laddha, and Makeen.

The journalists' trip with the TTP organized in May 2008, said some of the participants, and was also meant to show them the destruction the military operation caused to residential and commercial centres in the Waziristan area. They took Baitullah Mehsud's claim of non-involvement in the assassination of Bhutto and in the abduction of the Pakistani ambassador as a "mere showmanship". TTP activists accompanying them admitted to several attacks and operations against the military. Indirectly, though off-the-record, they tended to own up responsibility for such acts of subversion.

Qari Hussain

Qari Hussein Mehsud is in charge of the suicide trainer squad of Baitullah Mehsud. These camps, also including those being run by the Haqqani family, are mostly in and around Shawaal area.

Hussain also heads the anti-shia operation in the Kurram agency, which is plagued with sunni-shia conflict. Hussain has also been a member of the now defunct rabid anti-shia Sunni outfit Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) based in the central Pakistani town of Jhang, which too has been a hotbed of shia-sunni

rivalry. He also announced the formation of the TTP, and is often the contact person for media organizations.

Hussain is practically the deputy to Baitullah Mehsud and belongs to the Eshangi sub-clan of Mehsud tribe and is living in Kotkai village near Spinkai Raghzay. He was reportedly involved in the killing of a local influential Amiruddin Khan's family on May 31, 2007. Later on, he was also involved in the kidnapping of 20 FC personnel and the beheading of one of them in August 2007. Qari Hussain has studied in the Madrassa "Jamia Farooqia" in Karachi for four years. He returned to his hometown in South Waziristan in 2003 when a military operation was launched there against foreign militants. During his stay at Jamia Farooqia, he had joined Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), and is still believed to be associated with the anti-Shia ideology of the SSP and maybe with the organization itself too. He commands the loyalty of about 400 – 500 personal fighting force.

During their May 2008 visit to Baitullah Mehsud, journalists also met with Qari Hussain, who told them that he had "by the Grace of God" survived the Pakistan Army clean-up 'Operation Zalzalā' in January the same year.

"I am born to live and serve the Taliban", Hussein, a grey-haired zealot in his early 30s, added. In a Pakistan army briefing at Speenkay Raghzai on May 18, the general officer in command, Brig Ali Abbas had claimed that they had intercepted militants' wireless communication which suggested that Qari Hussain had been killed during the operation launched on January 24.

"I am alive, don't you see me?" the influential Taliban trainer quipped, after his chief Baitullah Mehsud left the gathering of journalists that had been arranged at a government school building.

During the January operation, Qari Hussain's mud-house Kotkai became a casualty of the army tanks and heavy artillery fire. "Since my house was also targeted during the operation and it was destroyed, some of my mujahideen may have said on wireless that I am dead and the military believed it," When asked if he was still training suicide bombers, Qari Hussain did not respond directly and started looking at the Taliban standing by. Hussain also evaded a question asking whether he was affiliated with the banned militant sectarian organisation. "I am with every Muslim group," he said in the brief interview.

Gulbadin Hikmatyar

For long, touted as the blue-eyed boy of the Pakistani establishment, Hikmatyar stayed in exile in the Iranian town of Mashad until his anti-US statements annoyed the hosts and Tehran asked him to leave Iran early March 2002.

A Kharotay Ghilzai Pashtoon, Hikmatyar was born in 1948 at the district of Imam Sahib in Kunduz province. Originally, he is from the village Goral

Uluswali Qarabagh in the Ghazni province, from where his family had migrated to the North in 1948. Like rest of the Kharotays, the family had lived as Nomads.

Hikmatyar graduated from Sher Khan high school and then did a two-year course in military high school, Mehtab Qala, in Kabul. He joined the college of Engineering, at the Kabul University. He did not complete his studies because of the involvement in religious and political activities.

Hikmatyar became active in the Muslim Youth branch of the Islamic movement in the 1960's. As a man of great talent, he exercised great influence over fellow students and led most of the demonstrations between the periods of 1965 – 1972. He became a secretary of the Shura of the Muslim Youth branch in 1975, replacing engineer Habibur Rehman.

Hikmatyar was accused of killing a student of Shola-i-Javaid (a Maoist Organization), named Saidal Sukhundan, for which he was jailed. After his release, Hikmatyar left for Peshawar, along with several other Afghan Islamists where they became active with the support of Pakistan against the Afghanistan Republic of President Daud in the early 70s. General Naseerullah Babar, the Inspector General of Pakistan's Frontier Corps, organized these Afghan Islamists and trained them in guerrilla warfare fighting.

After the break up of a few alliances with other groups, Hikmatyar formed a separate Organization of his own Hizbe Islami and became a favourite of Pakistan, particularly of the Inter-services Intelligence Directorate. In alliance with Pakistan's Jama'at-i-Islami (JI) Hikmatyar became the recipient of the largest amount of monetary and military hardware assistance compared to other parties and groups in the CIA-funded war against the Soviet occupation forces in Afghanistan.

Hikmatyar is reputed as an organized person, a strict disciplinarian to the extent of ruthlessness. He was not trusted by fellow mujahideen leaders and others for which he paid dearly at the end. He authored several books on Islamic history, jurisprudence and religious issues.

On the eve of the fall of President Najibullah in April 1992, despite his excellent communication and intelligence system inside Afghanistan, Hikmatyar was outwitted by Ahmad Shah Masood, Hizbe Wahdat and the Uzbek warlord General Dostum. Shortly before Najibullah's fall, forces of Masood had already entered Kabul and occupied the camps vacated by the Soviet troops in the Khairkhana district. Hizbe Wahdat had strengthened their position in Pule – Sokhta and Mehtab Qala area.

Also, although under the Peshawar Accord, Hikmatyar was the prime minister in the cabinet of first interim president Sibghatullah Mujadeddi along with four party members as ministers. The animosity with Masood held him from entering Kabul during 1992 – 1994 except once. Hikmatyar had only been hurling threats

from Logar. He also made a wrong assessment of taking over the ministry of interior, situated inside the Kabul city. He could not retain it and it was soon recovered from him by Ahmed Shah Masood.

After the emergence of Taliban on the political scene of Afghanistan, Hikmatyar completely broke away from Pakistan and sought shelter in Iran, the country he had all along been condemning.

On June 2, 1997 Hikmatyar joined a new alliance, against the Taliban comprising of the following:

1. Jumbish-i-Mili of General Dostum
2. Jamiat-i-Islami of Rabbani
3. Shura-Nazar of Ahmed Shah Masood
4. Harkat-i-Islami of Asif Mohsini
5. Both factions of Hizb-i-Wahdat.

The new alliance was named "United Islamic front for salvation of Afghanistan" (first designated as "United National Liberation Front of Afghanistan,") replacing the September 1996, "Opposition Alliance Council for the Defence of Afghanistan".

Noor Said

He is the leader of local Taliban in Barwand area of South Waziristan and a close confidante and a deputy of Baitullah Mehsud. He led the 8-member Taliban group negotiating with the Pirs in Kanigoram on June 25th 2007, over the killing of Amiruddin Khan's family members. He participated in the jirga for the release of the 15 FC men and the Naib Political Tehsildar of Laddha, who were released on August 28, 2007.

Mufti Niamatullah

Also a militant commander affiliated with Baitullah Mehsud, who had negotiated with the 21-member tribal jirga for the release of the 15 FC personnel in August 2007 on behalf of the militants. Baitullah Mehsud and Qari Hussain were also present during the negotiation with the jirga and Mufti Niamatullah reportedly lost temper with the jirga members at one point and asked them to leave the place immediately, but other militant commanders calmed him down.

Maulvi Shamim

He is the local Taliban commander in Laddha running a madrasa. He is young (in his 20s) and is a Shaman Khel by tribe. He comes from a carpenter family basically. An FC colonel, along with 3 of his aides, was kidnapped by his men after he held negotiations with him over the control of a paramilitary check-post

in the region on August 25, 2007. Maulvi Shamim is reported to have lost his leg during a fight in Afghanistan.¹⁸²

HakiMullahh Mehsud

HakiMullahh Mehsud, a close confidante of Baitullah Mehsud, was caught by the coalition forces in Afghanistan during a raid inside the Pakistani territory in Lowara Mandi, Shawal area of North Waziristan on March 8, 2007. Hakimullah was previously the spokesman of Baitullah Mehsud and was known by his alias Zulfiqar Mehsud. He was the head of Taliban in Orakzai Agency. He ordered, planned and executed a failed assassination attempt on Haji Namdar in mid-2008. Mehsud may have been killed in August, 2009.

Asmatullah Shaheen

He is another aide of Baitullah Mehsud. He was shot and injured during one of the campaigns in Afghanistan but is still very active. He was injured in a clash between local tribesmen of Jandola and his men, when the latter tried to blow up an old British-era bridge in the area on October 5, 2007. Asmatullah Shaheen was purged from the Bhattani area in 2007 by the pro-government Aqwam Naymat Khail who formed the Turkistan group under the leadership of Malik Turkistan. In June 2008, Asmatullah Shaheen with the help of Baitullah Mehsud launched an attack on the Turkistan group, destroyed their houses and kidnapped 27 Bhattani tribesmen. 22 were later killed while others were set free after the intervention of a local jirga.¹⁸³ Asmatullah Shaheen was reportedly killed in August, 2009.

Sher Rehman Bhattani

Sher Rehman from the Bhattani tribe and is the deputy of Asmatullah Shaheen. Sher belongs to Jandola town. He is around thirty-three years old. He is married with children. He belongs to a lower middle class family. He got his high school certificate from the Government High School Jandola in 1992. Soon after this, he quit his studies, and remained idle for two or three years. Sher has not received any formal religious education. Later on, he got involved in criminal activities in the region, and began looting passenger buses on Tank-Jandola Road in the late 1990s. He also committed robberies in Tank city and its surrounding areas.

In 2004, Sher Rehman joined the Taliban movement at a time when the Pakistani Taliban were organizing themselves in the twin agencies of Waziristan. In Jandola, he joined the group of Asmatullah Shaheen and soon became his deputy.

¹⁸² The News, August 30, 2007.

¹⁸³ 'Pakistan vows to prevent attacks on Afghanistan', June 26, 2008, http://www.afghanemb-canada.net/en/news_bulletin/2008/june/26/index.php.

He is still active and is believed to be based in the Mehsud area of South Waziristan.

Shaharyar Mehsud

Shaharyar Mehsud is a Shabi Khel and belongs to a prominent family in the area. In the initial years (2004–2006), he remained very active and was vying for the leadership of Mehsud Taliban. However, after Baitullah Mehsud became the head, he was relegated a lower rank among the Mehsuds. He is presently trying to get closer to Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Mullah Nazir.

Shah Faisal Barki

Barki is a Taliban commander in the Saam village in Kanigoram, South Waziristan. He was the person who released the 3 FC personnel including a colonel, who were kidnapped on August 25 and released on August 28 after a jirga brokered a deal between the militants and the GOP.

Mullahh Asmatullah

A self-proclaimed Taliban leader, Asmatullah has enforced his writ in several areas at the outskirts of Tank.

Jahanzeb

He is the deputy of Mullahh Asmatullah; a Bhattani tribesman, running the militant group's offices in Jandola, the headquarters of FR Tank.

Khan Gul Bhattani

He is a resident of Bubbakhel village. Bhattani is notorious as a criminal, known to be involved in kidnapping for ransom, but a self-proclaimed Taliban after declaring allegiance to militant commanders in South Waziristan.

Mullah Nazir

32 years of age, he is the shura leader of the Taliban in the Ahmadzai Wazir areas of South Waziristan who replaced Haji Omar in 2006. He is a Kaka Khel Wazir belonging to the Zalikhel sub-tribe of the Ahmadzai Wazirs belonging to Karabagh. He has fought against the Northern Alliance alongside the Taliban on the fronts of Kunduz and Takhar in the past. He led a fierce campaign against Uzbek militants in the surrounding areas of Wana in March–April 2007.

Following his anti-Uzbek operations, Nazir also became suspect for his alleged contacts with the government and rivals sent a suicide bomber his way. Nazir's

guards overpowered the attacker before he could blow himself up close to Nazir. The assailant was arrested with explosives.¹⁸⁴

Nazir also heads the five-member Taliban shura of South Waziristan that was reconstituted after the ouster of Uzbeks from the area. In June 2008, Nazir joined hands with Hafiz Gul Bahadur to form the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban as a rival camp to the TTP. Mullah Nazir was reportedly injured in a US predator drone strike on October 31, 2008, in which 20 Arab militants, including Abu Okash was also reportedly killed.¹⁸⁵

Haji Omar

Haji Omar was the cousin successor of the slain militant leader Nek Mohammad Ahmadzai (Yargulkhel Wazir by tribe). He belonged to the village Kalosha near Azam Warsak in South Waziristan. He was a battle-hardened jihadi who has fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan. Haji Omar sided with the Uzbek militants during the fierce clashes between the former and local tribal militants under the leadership of Haji Nazir that started in March–April 2007.

Subsequently, he moved to North Waziristan and then the Mehsud areas of South Waziristan under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. He was one of the militant leaders who moved around a lot in many FATA agencies. On October 27, 2008, Omar along with 20 other militants was killed in a US predator drone strike in Shakai area in South Waziristan Agency.¹⁸⁶

Haji Sharif

A Yargul Khel Wazir by tribe, Haji Sharif is a brother of Haji Omar. He belongs to the village Kalosha near Azam Warsak in South Waziristan. He is about 55 years of age and is believed to be a supporter of foreigners. Though he is a brother of Haji Omar, he sided with Haji Nazir against his brothers during the clashes between Uzbek militants and local tribal commanders in March–April 2007 and was also injured during the clashes.

Noor-ul-Islam

Noor-ul-Islam is another brother of Haji Omar and Haji Sharif. He belongs to the village Kalosha near Azam Warsak in South Waziristan. He has fought alongside Taliban in Afghanistan in the past. He has spent a lot of time in UAE as well. He is believed to be very close to Uzbek militants and is sheltering not only the militants but also their families. During the clashes between local and Uzbek militants, Noor-ul-Islam fiercely supported the Uzbek militants during their

¹⁸⁴ NNI news agency, July 17, 2007

¹⁸⁵ '32 killed in US missile strikes', Daily Times, November 1, 2008.

¹⁸⁶ 'US missile strike kills Pakistani Taliban leader', Al Arabiya News Channel, October 27, 2008, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/10/27/58981.html>.

clashes with Ahmadzai Wazir tribesmen led by Mullahh Nazir in March–April 2007.

Zawal Khan

A Zilli Khel Wazir by tribe, Zawal Khan belongs to Khanghi village near Angoor Ada. He is believed to be a supporter of Uzbek militants.

Maulvi Abdul Aziz

A Yargul Khel Wazir by tribe, Maulvi Abdul Aziz is a resident of village Ghawa Khawa in South Waziristan. Besides being the Mohtamim of a madrasa at Azam Warsak, he is also a school teacher at Government Middle School Ghawa Khawa. He got his religious education from the madrasa of Maulana Noor Mohammad, a former MNA from South Waziristan. He was a strong supporter of Taliban in the area and is believed to have taken out a procession on March 31, 1999 in favour of Taliban in the area. He is a cousin of Haji Sharif and was also affiliated once with the TNSM.

Maulvi Abbas

He is a veteran Taliban commander who was controlling the Ahmadzai Wazir areas of South Waziristan alongside the slain militant commander Nek Mohammad. He belongs to the Malik Khel Wazir tribe and resides in the Kalosha area of South Waziristan. He is believed to be about 45 years of age. He has got his religious education from Dar ul Uloom Haqqania in Akora Khattak. He is a supporter of Haji Sharif. Reportedly, after he opposed the Al Qaeda supported Uzbek militants raid on Pakistan military at Zari Noor on Jan 8–9, 2004, he stopped supporting Al Qaeda.

Maulvi Javed Karmazkhel

Maulvi Javed is an Ahmadzai Wazir Taliban commander and has supported Uzbeks during fighting between Uzbeks and local militants in March–April 2007. In February 2007, a group of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, alleged suicide bombers had reportedly confessed to being trained in a training camp run by Maulvi Javed and Maulvi Abbas.

Shireen Jan

Shireen Jan is a militant commander who sided with Maulvi Nazir in the local-Uzbek standoff in March–April 2007.

Mittha Khan

He is a member of the reconstituted Ahmadzai Wazir Shura after the ouster of the Uzbeks. Mittha Khan was seriously injured in a bomb blast on September 2,

2007. He was treated in an FC hospital for his injuries, and later on in CMH Peshawar, according to one source. He fought alongside Mullahh Nazir to oust Uzbeks from the Ahmadzai Wazir areas of South Waziristan. He is a member of the five-member Taliban shura of South Waziristan that was reconstituted after the ouster of Uzbeks from the area. He also beamed a Malang member of the reconstituted Ahmadzai Wazir Shura after the ouster of the Uzbeks. He was a member of the five-member Taliban shura of South Waziristan that was reconstituted after the ouster of Uzbeks from the area. Mittha Khan was killed in 2008 in a car accident.

Malik Khanan Wazir

Malik Khanan was the Shakai Emir of the local Taliban and is against the presence of Uzbeks in South Waziristan. He was the target of Uzbek attacks in September 2006, in which he was injured and a few of his associates killed. So keeping in view his own past personal grudge against the Uzbeks, he had reason enough to side against them during their clashes with the local tribesmen in March–April 2007. His supporters were attacked by Uzbek militants again in January 2008, after which tensions grew between Ahmadzai Wazir and Mehsud tribesmen because Mehsud tribesmen are believed to be sheltering the Uzbek militants. He was a member of the five-member Taliban shura of South Waziristan that was reconstituted after the ouster of Uzbeks from the area. Malik Khanan was killed by Uzbek militants on June 1, 2008 near Dera Ismail Khan District of NWFP.¹⁸⁷

Saadi Khan Mehsud

Saadi Khan is a Mehsud and has a long experience in fighting in Afghanistan. He is permanently settled in Wana, which is inhabited by the Ahmadzai Wazir and has brought a home and some agricultural land. Saadi is a pro-Mullah Nazir, and has been appointed as main commander of the Wana town – a fact that is resented by Ahmadzai Wazir Taliban commanders. Saadi Khan received threats from Baitullah Mehsud, who is a rival of Mullah Nazir, for siding with the latter and has been barred by the former to visit his ancestral village in Mehsud territory.

HaleeMullahh

A Tojikhel Ahmadzai Wazir by tribe, HaleeMullahh was formerly associated with Haji Nazir but now has an independent command in the Tojikhel area of Kirkot. He is a member of the five-member Taliban shura of South Waziristan that was reconstituted after the ouster of Uzbeks from the area.

¹⁸⁷ 'Gunmen shoot dead pro-Pakistan militant commander', Dawn, June 1, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/2008/06/01/rss.htm>.

Ghulam Khan

He is an Ahmedzai Wazir tribesmen believed to be very close to Uzbek militants in the area. He sided with the Uzbeks during their clashes with the local in Azam Warsak, Shin Warsak and Kaloosha areas in March–April 2007.

Younas

A part-time journalist turned Taliban, Younas used to call Online in the past for news coverage from the area. He is now close to Uzbek militants and belongs to a sub-clan of Ahmedzai Wazirs.

Abdullah Mehsud

He was a Mehsud by tribe from Nano village in the Makin area, who was a Guantanamo Bay detainee and rose to prominence after he abducted two Chinese engineers and killed one of them. He was believed to be a close associate of Arab militants. He was killed in a raid by the security forces in the town of Zhob (Balochistan) on July 24, 2007. His brother Saifur Rehman has taken over command upon his death and is believed to have 300–400 fighters.

Wali-ur-Rehman

One of the key deputies of Baitullah Mehsud, Rehman took an active part in the negotiations with the jirga for the release of around 300 soldiers held by militants in September 2007.

North Waziristan**Maulana Sadiq Noor**

Maulana Sadiq Noor is 46 years old and hails from Khati-Kelay, a small village in the suburbs of Miranshah along the Tochi River in North Waziristan. He belongs to the Daur tribe of North Waziristan. He is also an experienced warrior who fought on the Bagram front in Afghanistan against the Northern Alliance. He is also believed to support anti-US entities in Khost, Afghanistan (excerpted from a report). For the past 15 years, Sadiq Noor has operated a seminary in his native village of Khati-Kelay. Sadiq Noor was believed to be housing a number of foreigner militants in his compound and was dragged into the limelight after Pakistani troops conducted an operation against his compound to flush out foreign terrorists in 2006. He refused to give in and started organizing his men in a bid to drive the Pakistani troops out of North Waziristan. After the military operation in North Waziristan July–October 2007, Sadiq Noor is believed to have ceased to support foreigner militants and is cooperating with the security forces in restoration of peace and order in and around Miranshah, with his supporters patrolling the streets to secure free movement of troops in areas under his

control. He is reported to be ousted from the local Taliban shura of North Waziristan these days. Sadiq Noor is reported to be fond of driving SUVs. Sadiq Noor is considered to be the second most important Taliban commander after Hafiz Gul Bahadur.

Maulvi Abdul Khaliq Haqqani

Maulana Abdul Khaliq, a Daur by tribe, is a Mullah of a mosque in Miranshah Bazaar. He is fond of delivering speeches against Presidents Pervez Musharraf and George W. Bush.¹⁸⁸ He came in the limelight when his men captured government offices like the telephone exchange and other buildings at his orders in March 2006. Khaliq is very close to Maulana Sadiq Noor.

Hafiz Gul Bahadur

He is a Madakhel Wazir by tribe belonging to the southern part of the North Waziristan. He is a very powerful local Taliban commander and is the main leader of the local Shura of Taliban in North Waziristan. Hafiz Gul Bahadur has risen to become the main leader of pro-Taliban militants in North Waziristan outshining many others, including Sadiq Noor. Hafiz Gul Bahadur entered into a peace-deal with the Pakistan army after the military operation against the militants in North Waziristan in July–October 2007. Gul Bahadur's resolve about not attacking Pakistani security forces was tested when Baitullah Mehsud requested him to support him during the military operation against Baitullah Mehsud-led militants in South Waziristan by the Pakistan army in January 2008. Gul Bahadur refused to cooperate with Baitullah Mehsud in a bid to keep North Waziristan out of the way of violence. At present, he is the strongest and most influential Taliban commander in the entire FATA region due to the numerical strength he enjoys as well as links with Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Sangeen Khan Zadran

He is an Afghan belonging to the Jadran tribe in Khost and is supervising the Taliban in Shawal. Jadran had claimed, in late November 2006, that his group had provided 40 suicide bombers for attacks that occurred in Afghanistan.

Maulvi Saifullah

Two Taliban militants belonging to North Waziristan and caught in Afghanistan had testified that they were sent to Afghanistan by Maulvi Saifullah across the border into Afghanistan, after the signing of the peace deal on September 2006. Maulana Siddique Darpakhel belongs to the Darpakhel area of North Waziristan and is a prominent militant leader.

¹⁸⁸ BBC Urdu Service, March 15.

Waheedullah

The Taliban shura member has currently been assigned the responsibility of administering the Miranshah town on behalf of the Taliban. He is a college educated Taliban.

Haleem Khan

He is a militant known to have links with foreigners, especially Uzbeks and is believed to be involved in targeted killings in the area.

Dr. Isa Khan

Dr. Isa Khan is presently the head of Taliban in Bannu district. He is a homeopathic doctor who served under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan before his capture by Northern Alliance troops after September 11, 2001. He was taken to Guantanamo Bay prison where he spent 3–4 years. Upon his return, he joined the Taliban movement and is part of the TTP. Isa Khan, while giving a statement to 'The News' on behalf of Baitullah Mehsud, claimed that Baitullah Mehsud had nothing to do with the October 19, 2007 suicide bombing in the Benazir Bhutto rally and told the reporter that he was Baitullah's deputy in Bannu. This comes across as strange because Taliban movements have been area and tribe specific.

Abu Okash

He is an Iraqi Arab militant who has gained considerable influence in parts of North Waziristan, like Mirali and Miranshah. His name according to some sources is Abu Kashif but he has gained fame locally with the name Abu Okash. There were reports that he had gotten injured in extensive aerial bombardment on certain villages around Mirali in October 2007. In early 2008 though, Abu Okash released his first video tape calling for jihad against the infidel. In 2008, Abu Okash formed his own group, Jaish al-Khorasan al-Islami, comprising of some Arabs, Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. He was reportedly killed in a US predator drone strike on October 31, 2008, although his death could not be confirmed officially.¹⁸⁹

Various other militants, who have considerable influence, are listed below:

- Maulvi Ahmed Shah Jehan
- Azmat Ali
- Mir Sharaf
- Hafiz Amir Hamza

¹⁸⁹ '32 killed in US missile strikes', Daily Times, November 1, 2008.

Bajaur Agency

Maulvi Sufi Mohammad

Sufi Mohammad is the leader of the Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM). In late April 2008, Mohammad was released from Dera Ismail Khan Jail after more than six years in prison, to facilitate an abortive deal between the Taliban and the administration. He had been jailed in late 2001 for sending several thousand armed fighters for jihad to Afghanistan soon after the US launched its attack against the Taliban in October 2001. After the law and order situation worsened in Malakand Division, especially Swat district in the latter half of 2007, Sufi Mohammad was shifted to Hayatabad Medical Complex in Peshawar, ostensibly for medical treatment in November 2007. On April 21 2008, Sufi Mohammad was released. It is now expected that Sufi Mohammad would play his role in calming the situation down in Malakand Division and paving the way for lasting peace in the region and controlling the activities of the followers of his estranged son-in-law, Maulana Fazlullah. In 1994 Sufi Mohammad's TNSM had launched a campaign in Bajaur and Malakand to establish Shariah in the region. He originally belongs to the Kubar village in Bajaur agency. He belongs to Maidan area of Dir according to some reports. He is presently based in Lower Dire area of Madyan, from where he has launched a peaceful struggle for implementation of Shariah in the Malakand and Kohistan areas.

Maulana Faqir Mohammad

In his early 40s, Maulvi Faqir Mohammad is the deputy of Maulvi Sufi Mohammad and is the commander of more than a thousand militants in Bajaur agency since the imprisonment of Sufi Mohammad. He was born in village Changai Bala in the Dama Dola area of Bajaur agency, about 9 km north of Khar. He is a graduate of the strict Wahabist "Punj Pir" seminary near Swabi. He fought against the Soviets alongside Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the past. He is one of the most wanted men in Bajaur on suspicion of supporting Taliban and Al Qaeda- especially after they escaped from Tora Bora in 2001–2002 – but still, he can be seen in public addressing rallies etc. He has expressed his resolve to wage jihad against the coalition forces in Afghanistan and Musharraf administration in Pakistan and to establish Shariah in Bajaur agency and adjacent districts, a number of times. He was also among the first few of the FATA militants to pledge support to the Red Mosque administration when the issue emerged in March 2007. Being the leader of TNSM and the successor of Sufi Mohammad Maulvi Faqir Mohammad, he is believed to be behind most of the terrorist incidents in Bajaur and the adjacent districts including attacks on security forces.

Musharraf's anti-Taliban policies forced them into suicide attacks. If Musharraf doesn't stop promoting the US agenda, peace may return to Kashmir and

Afghanistan but the situation in Pakistan will worsen. The government is trying to divide the Taliban and backtracking in its commitments with them.¹⁹⁰

Maulvi Liaqat

Maulvi Liaqat got killed in a military strike on October 30, 2006 on his madrasa in Cheengai village in which 80 others were also killed.

Sher Bahadur

Sher Bahadur is the Deputy Emir of Maulana Faqir Muhammad in Bajaur Agency. He is around forty years old, and belongs to the Mamond tribe of Bajuar agency. He is married and has four or five children and belongs to a middle class family in Bajuar. He is a madrassah graduate and joined the local Taliban movement in Bajuar in 2004, with the intentions to expel the Americans and NATO forces from Afghanistan and to enforce Islamic government in Afghanistan.

Maulvi Fazlullah

Maulvi Fazlullah is the new Al-Qaeda face in the Bajaur and Malakand regions. Fazlullah is the son-in-law of Maulvi Sufi Mohammad. He was also arrested with Sufi Mohammad and scores of others, late in 2001 and remained imprisoned for 17 months in D.I. Khan Jail. Fazlullah made international headlines in October 2007, when the government of Pakistan took military action against Fazlullah's supporters to restore writ of state in Swat district. The action was taken by the government of Pakistan because his supporters had challenged the writ of state and were trying to enforce Shariah. The confrontation continued for a couple of months resulting in the death of many of Fazlullah's supporters, including his brother Fazle Ahad, as well as security forces personnel. Fazlullah is still on the run along with his hard-line supporters, while many of his supporters are also surrendering to military forces or are getting captured. He was reported to be very popular among women as well because of his emotional speeches at his illegal FM radio station. In January 2007, he collected a large amount of money (Rs. 1.5 million) for the construction of a seminary in Imam Derai in Nikpikhel area of lower Swat from the residents of Mingora. Large number of people also volunteered for the construction work of his madrasa, which is a large sprawling 50-acre compound with a 100x100 hall of a mosque, separate compounds for madrasas, and an eidgah. He is believed to have gathered Rs. 3.1 million in donations for the madrasa. From his illegal FM station in Imam Derai, Maulvi Fazlullah has been successful in convincing people not to send their daughters to school. Another one of his brothers (younger than him) Fazle Wahid was killed along with 83 others in Pakistani Military's strike on Chinagai village in Bajaur

¹⁹⁰ Jang July 19.

agency on October 30, 2006. After the Red Mosque operation in July 2007, Maulana Fazlullah started anti-government propaganda through his illegal FM radio station and gave rise to violence against security forces in the area, which eventually prompted a military operation in October 2007.

Maulana Saifullah

Maulana Saifullah is the Emir of TNSM in Malakand. Addressing TNSM workers in Matta on March 25 2007, Maulana Abdul Haq (Emir of TNSM in Swat) and Maulana Saifullah set a 72-hour deadline for the government to release Sufi Mohammad and warned that 100 suicide bombers were ready to strike targets inside Pakistan if he wasn't released. Suicide bombings didn't go remarkably up in the country though until July that year.

Maulana Alam

He is the acting Chief of TNSM. He is believed to be close to the provincial president of PML-Q, and Federal Minister for Political Affairs, Amir Muqam.

Maulana Dost Mohammad. He is the Emir of TNSM in Matta sub-division of Swat.

Maulana Abdul Haq

Maulana Abdul Haq is the Emir of TSNM in Swat.

Khyber Agency

Mufti Munir Shakir

The founder of Lashkare Islami (LI) originally belongs to Kurram agency and had left his home after a family feud which also left his mother dead. Some say he killed his mother while others are of the view that she was killed while trying to save him from his father with whom he had developed serious differences. He then moved to some other city (most probably Karachi) and then came to Bara. Some accounts also suggest that he actually is from Karak but his family was settled in Lower Kurram.

In late 2005, his strict Wahabist organization Lashkare Islam (LI) developed serious differences with Ansar-ul-Islam, a Brelvi organization led by his rival Pir Saifurrehman. Both the groups would spread hatred against each other through their illegal FM radio stations. The differences between the two groups often get violent even to this date. Mufti Munir Shakir left Khyber agency in the last week of February 2006 though, after a stern warning from the political administration was conveyed to him by a tribal jirga through gruelling negotiations. He was

arrested soon after he left Khyber by some intelligence agency and the political agent sentenced him to indefinite jail.

Mangal Bagh Afridi

Mangal Bagh Afridi became the successor to Mufti Munir Shakir to lead Lashkar-e-Islam (LI). He comes from a humble background. Afridi is also an ultra-conservative cleric considered close to the administration. He enjoys considerable support of people because of his daring, though religious, decrees against vagabonds. When the government fails, Afridi steps in to maintain law and order. In the process he has gained formidable clout among local tribes. That is why he at times comes across as “an independent and high-handed cleric.” This also causes ripples in his covert relations with the political administration every now and then.

For instance, in June 2006 LI ran into trouble with the administration after the political administration disagreed with the peace committees that Afridi set up for maintaining law and order in the area. The disagreement also led to tensions and resulted in the closure of local markets for a few weeks.

Afridi has been dispensing vigilante justice from time to time, and also administered public punishments to people he declared as criminals. Besides, his illegal FM radio station keeps delivering sermons and urging people to take to the right path i.e. join the LI for serving God and Islam.

In the absence of effective government control, Mangal Bagh Afridi has grown enormously in his strength. Some locals suggest that depending on the situation the government some times ignores Afridi’s militant activities, and indirectly supports him whenever state machinery is unable to fix a problem.

Under the leadership of Mangal Bagh Afridi, the LI has occasionally picked battles with some of the local sub-tribes. In April 2008, his men had a skirmish with powerful Kukikhel tribesmen of Jamrud because the Kukikhels wanted to indulge in some businesses which Mangal Bagh thought were un-Islamic.

In brazen disregard to the law, on March 3 2008, LI militants attacked the Bara Sheikhan village in Peshawar district (not a tribal area) and killed 10 tribesmen and injured about a dozen, over a religious issue. It is hard to deduce that he is sending men to fight for the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. Any connection with the Taliban movement in Afghanistan cannot be ruled out though. According to one report, Taliban leaders from Afghanistan mediated a dispute between LI and their rivals Ansarul Islam (AI) in November 2007. Moreover, even if Mangal Bagh is not sending his men for fighting in Afghanistan, his state within the state does provide another safe haven for like-minded Taliban with whom he can always find mutually complementary interests and aspirations.

Pir Saifurrehman

Pir Saifurrehman (an Afghan who lived in Khyber agency since 1977 to 2006) is the founder of the religious cum militant group Ansar-ul-Islam (AI). Since late 2005, his group has been involved in hate-mongering over illegal FM radio stations and violent clashes with the rival Lashkare Islami, founded by Mufti Munir Shakir.

He was forced to leave the tribal area after the political authorities of Khyber agency detained about 40 of his supporters in the first week of February 2006. He was forced by the Political Administration because of his spread of hate through his illegal FM radio station against Mufti Munir Shakir, which had generated violence in the agency. Pir Saifur Rehman reportedly moved to central Punjab for shelter, where he might be staying at one of the Lashkare Taiba or Jamaatudawa, a Wahabist outfit.

Haji Naamdar

Haji Naamdar, in his early 30s, had founded the Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi Anilmunkir (Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice). Inspired by the Afghan Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar, Naamdar espouses enforcement of Islamic Sharia in Pakistan (just as Mullah Omar wants it for Afghanistan).

Although Naamdar launched his PVPV to cleanse the society of infidels and criminals, he too often talks about the “foreign” occupation of Afghanistan.

“Naamdar does nothing inside Pakistan and is interested only in Afghanistan. He runs his own prisons and his utterances are treated as final, like that of Omar Mullahh, the leader of the Taliban,” a senior government official said after a meeting with Naamdar in late April 2008.¹⁹¹

Naamdar opposes suicide attacks inside Pakistan but justifies them as the “best weapon” against the enemy. “We have to finish our enemy in Afghanistan by any means and suicide bombing is the best weapon.”

Naamdar’s acknowledgement of the presence of Taliban militants and their ‘active participation’ in cross-border anti-US jihad, underscored the fact that even Khyber Agency has begun providing militants for the cross-border anti-US activities.

A day after surviving the suicide attack, Naamdar told media that he was helping to ‘detoxify’ militants staying with him through ‘Islamic classes’ that teach them that attacking Pakistani forces, people or state installations “is no jihad at all” and that rather by “doing so we are strengthening anti-Islamic forces.”¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Personal interviews in Peshawar and Bara, May 2008. details withheld for security reasons.

¹⁹² Daily Times May 3, 2008.

“I am reforming these mujahideen, as Islam does not allow jihad against Muslims”, said Naamdar.

However, what turned Naamdar into a half collaborator of the Pakistani authorities, was his criticism of attacks on Pakistani people; both civilians and government officials.

“These [mujahideen] leaders brainwash teenagers, telling them that each and every Pakistani is their enemy and his or her killing is justified. And it is also jihad that they should keep killing Pakistanis,” said Naamdar regarding militants targeting Pakistani forces.¹⁹³

“We will never wage jihad inside Pakistan. Afghanistan needs mujahideen to liberate that country from US-led foreign occupation. We do attack the US forces across the border and that is what real jihad is all about,” he admitted. “The way [US] President [George W] Bush is waging a crusade against Islam; we will hit the US wherever and whenever it is possible. Our jihad against the US in Afghanistan goes on. Why should mujahideen target Pakistan when this country provides everything for jihad in Afghanistan,” Naamdar was quoted.

Naamdar’s influence is restricted to the Bar Kambarkhel tribe but his admission that he ‘plays host’ to tribal and foreign militants, makes him a potentially influential commander in a region through which food and fuel supply flow to the US and NATO forces based in Afghanistan. Haji Namdar was killed by a TTP militant on August 13, 2008.

Mehbubul Haq

He is the successor to Pir Saifurrehman. He lives a low-profile life in the remote Tirah Valley. He also graduated from a madrassa and is inspired by the philosophy of Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

Maulana Mustamin

He is one of the main leaders of Ansarul Islam (AI). In January 2007, he was reported to have blocked supply route for his rival group at Naree Baba area, which had left ordinary people of the area facing shortage of food supplies and other essentials. Maulana Mustamin was killed by Mangal Bagh in Gagrina Bazaar of Khyber Agency in May 2008.

Maulan Hazrat Nabi

Maulana Hazrat Nabi (also known as Tamanche Mullahh) is the prayer-leader of one of the main mosques Quba Mosque in Landi Kotal. In September 2007, he organized local Taliban and took out their processions condemning obscenity and

¹⁹³ Ibid.

un-Islamic activities. He and his newly-born local Taliban supporters have vowed to eradicate these ills of the society if the political administration won't take due action. In November, there were reports about his followers distributing leaflets in Landi Kotal bazaar, warning people doing CD business and also unaccompanied women in public places.

Farmanullah

He is the purported spokesman of the local Taliban of Landi Kotal. He is the brother of Maulana Hazrat Nabi.

Amir Nawaz

He is the Deputy of Khan Guls and a resident of Chaisen Katch village.

Mohmand Agency

Omar Khalid

The real name of Omar Khalid is Abdul Wali Raghیب. He belongs to the Qandharo sub-tribe of Safi tribe. At present he is considered the top Taliban commander in Mohmand agency. He was the one who lead a group of armed men, who occupied Haji Sahib Turangzai's shrine, in Lakaro Tehsil- July 29–August 1, 2007.

Sangeen Khan Kandahari

Taliban, associated with Sangeen Khan Kandahari, had abducted 10 FC men including a Major (carrying Rs. 260,000 cash salaries of the FC men deployed in the Mohammad Gat area) on September 2, 2007. First he made certain demands for the release of the FC personnel but later released them apparently unconditionally on September 4, 2007.

Shah Khalid

Shah Khalid was a former Kashmir mujahideen who belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba. After the Kashmir front cooled during the ongoing peace process between Pakistan and India, Khalid shifted to Mohmand Agency. He emphasised on jihad in Afghanistan and was against waging fight against Pakistani security forces. Shah Khalid developed differences with Omar Khalid, who attacked him and killed him, in mid-2008 and his deputy, Maulana Obaidullah, and took into possession his training camps and weapons.

Usman Ali

Usman Ali is the purported spokesman of the local Taliban in Mohmand agency.

Orakzai Agency

Akhonzada Mohammad Aslam Farooqi

Akhonzada Mohammad Aslam Farooqi is considered the local Taliban in Orakzai agency by the Shia community of the area.

Maulana Khurram Orakzai

Maulana Khurram Orakzai is considered the second in command of the Taliban in Orakzai agency by the local Shia community.

Profiles of Afghan Militants

Mullah Mohammed Omar

Until the rout of the Taliban regime in December 2001, Mullah Mohammed Omar, the one-eyed supreme leader of the Taliban whirlwind movement, had stayed on top as a hive to which scores of sincere tribal chieftains, clerics, as well as, self-serving and errant warlords remained glued for various reasons. Soon after surrendering his power bastion Kandahar in southern Afghanistan in early December, Omar disappeared – a move that prompted the United States to announce a 10 million dollar head money for him. Omar remains at large, even in June 2008, with little information available on him. But Pakistani and Afghan Taliban claim he is still alive and guiding the "jihad" from inside Afghanistan.

Regardless of what happens to him in the future, Omar's rise to prominence and fall from grace because of playing an adamant and loyal host to Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network, still makes interesting reading.¹⁹⁴

(The following paragraphs –unit the paragraph on Haqqani – on Mullah Omar is taken verbatim taken from Gul: s book “The Unholy Nexus” and it includes excerpts from Mullah Omar's profile as published in Gul: s book).

Chaani is a small village comprising mud homes in the Sangi-Saar neighbourhood, some 36 kilometres to the west of Kandahar, where Mullah Omar rose from. Surrounded in the south by the village, and to the north and west by wheat fields and vineyards, lies a small and modest madrassa.

Nobody could have imagined that this madrassa would one day become the birthplace of a movement that, spearheaded led by the tall and lanky Mullah Mohammed Omar Akhund, would sweep from Kandahar in the south to Mazar-i-Sharif in the north, and from Herat in the west to Jalalabad in the east.

¹⁹⁴ Gul, Imtiaz: The Unholy Nexus.

Across the muddy passage through wheat fields was Omar's home. Adjacent to it was the house of Mullah Haji Bashar, a long time trusted friend of Mullah Omar. Bashar was known to western and Pakistan drugs agencies as the kingpin of drugs trade, but regarded as a member of Mullah Omar's close circle.

Mullah Omar's elevation as the Ameerul Momineen (commander of the faithful), recommended by a grand assembly of religious clerics at Kandahar in 1995, gave him unrivalled powers, and left little room for an independent high-level system of governance. This is what gave way to stories of a Kabul-Kandahar rivalry as it was either Mullah Omar himself or his appointed twenty odd ministers, mostly from the Kandahar region, who took important decisions. Nothing could move without their consent.

Once during a visit to Chaani in July 2000, local farmers and residents had fanciful stories to tell about Mullah Omar, who used to eat together with his companions and students from a single pot.

"Although he commanded dozens of armed people, Omar used to spend most of his time in the madrassa teaching young boys the Quran or narrating stories of the jihad," recounted one of the local residents, a farmer, who claimed they used to eat together. He recalled that news of robberies or sexual abuse of boys and women pained Mullah Omar but initially, he had no clue as to what to do.

Born in the Uruzgan province north of Kandahar around 1960, Omar lost his father Maulvi Ghulam Nabi Akhund when he was hardly four. Keeping in line with the Afghan tradition, his uncle, Maulvi Mohammed Anwar married the widow – Omar's mother.

Omar had moved into Sangi-Saar to fight Soviet occupation forces in 1984. The aim of the madrassa, which he established in Chaani, was to guide young boys into Qur'anic teachings. He himself, however, never visited a regular high school or madrassa, and did not therefore possess a degree to claim Islamic scholarship. He never completed the ten year mandatory education to qualify for the title of "Mullah" but by virtue of having been declared as the Ameerul Momineen, Omar did prefix his name with Mullah.

The Taliban foreign minister, Mullah Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, had in a meeting at Kandahar in June 2001, described the circumstances that led to Omar's appointment as Ameerul Momineen.

"In late 1995, a great gathering was held in Eidgah Mosque where Mullah Omar showed the Khirka Sharif to the assembled people, followed by a huge assembly in which Mullah Omar was granted the title of Ameerul Momineen," Muttawakil.

Khirka Sharif is Prophet Mohammed's cloak which had been taken to Bukhara but later, Ahmed Shah Abdali brought it back to Kandahar where a special place was built for its preservation. A former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Said Haqqani, had this eyewitness account of the event:

"Thus Taliban called a grand assembly of 3,500 Ulema (scholars) from all over Afghanistan. Their task was to select their Ameer i.e. ruler, to run the Islamic Government in Afghanistan. Muhammed Omar was excluded from this grand assembly of the learned ones as he was only a Mullahh."

After three days of deliberations, the assembly decided that Mullahh Omar was the best among them to lead the Islamic Emirate and to achieve its objective, due to his leadership qualities, boldness, and wisdom and par excellent contribution to Jihad against infidels. Mullah Omar was called in the final session to listen to the judgment of the leaned ones. As they announced his Emirate, he wept bitterly and begged them to spare him of this great responsibility, while pleading that there were many among them who, in his opinion, were far more suitable for this great job. But the grand assembly of learned ones unanimously asked him to accept the responsibility. Thus Mullahh Omar was established as the Ameerul Momineen with the title "Almujahid".

To seal his title as the Ameerul Momineen, Omar was taken to the "Khirka Sharif" – Shrine of the Cloak of the Prophet. His followers brought out the Khirka and laid it across his shoulders.

That an illiterate and a peasant offspring Mullah Omar should have worn the sacred cloak of the Prophet amounted to an affront to many Afghans. They looked at it as an act of desecration of the Khirka Sharif.

When one of the kings Dost Muhammed Khan adopted the title in 1834, he was fighting the British in the areas that now form Pakistan.

Omar's modest offices lay in the middle of the town near the Khirka Sharif complex, and until early 2001, he lived in a cluster of homes at the backyard of the Governor's House before moving to the new residence near the Eidgah, all of which was destroyed in the US aerial raids in October.

Pakistan's Maulana Samiul Haq, the chief of Darul Uloom Haqqania Akora Khattak near Peshawar, nevertheless, had bestowed on Omar an honorary degree of Islamic jurisprudence, which appeared more of a political stint rather than real acknowledgment of Omar as an Islamic scholar.

As a former mujahideen commander known for his brilliance in firing rockets and handling multi-barrel launchers, he had been nicknamed as Mullahh Rackety as well. Omar endured two injuries during his crusade against Soviet Russians; once rocket shrapnel hit him on one of his legs and the second injury deprived him of one of his eyes, after he had remained unconscious for many days in a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan.

As a young Afghan resistance fighter under Mullah Faizullah Akhunzada, Omar too received guerilla training in guerilla warfare in Quetta, Pakistan. His chief instructor was Colonel Sultan Ameer Imam, who told me that it was Omar who

remembered "his teacher when I met him in 1994 to request him the release of a Pakistan goods' caravan."

He also knew and had been wary of the ruthless rule of his fellow commanders; many of whom used to insult and rob men and women of their belongings and honour on the Kandahar-Heart Highway, some two kilometres off Mullah Omar's village – Chaani. "Omar would really get upset, whenever he would hear of a fresh robbery at the Yahya Zanzeer, or when he heard of mujahideen assaulting women," said Abdul Hameed during our visit to the dusty village.

The so-called mujahideen – mainly belonging to the Jamiati Isalmi of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, and the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan of Pir Afandi Gillani – didn't spare even young village boys; they would pick them up and sodomise them, villagers said. Fathers imploring for the return of their sons would be strung close to dogs as a punishment, Habibullah said; something which is not very unusual for an ultra-conservative society like that of Afghanistan or most western and south-western parts of Pakistan.

Yahya Zanzeer was one of the most dreaded highway check posts, guarded by local commanders a few kilometres off this village. People travelling to or from Kandahar would pray loudly to God to save them from the wrath of these wily commanders; Hameed recalled.

"But the news of molestation and eventual murder of two women from Herat really enraged us all," said Habibullah, a farmer who claims to have been a close friend of Omar. He also recalled how they shared the food and the space in Chaani when the Ameer settled down here. Mullah Omar (6.2 feet tall) was present in his madrassa when desperate relatives of the murdered women approached us for help. Omar gathered other clerics and friends and asked for their advice. Everybody, Habibullah said, agreed that it was time to do something and entrusted Omar with the leadership. What happened thereafter is common knowledge; meanwhile, led by Omar, his students cleared one post after the other and eventually reached Kandahar to establish the Taliban writ.

Since his rise to prominence in 1994, Omar was often seen as a symbol of scare for criminals because his rule had become synonymous with amputations, lashes and other severe punishments for those found guilty of crimes.

Mullah Omar's piety, simplicity, his aversion to worldly inducements and the determination to rid the country of thugs, endeared him with lots of Afghans, recalled Waheedullah, a vegetable vendor in Kandahar. "His appearance explains the simplicity in him", recalled a foreign diplomat who met him twice. "He eats simple food, sits and sleeps on the ground, and hardly attaches importance to what he should wear" explained one of the Pakistani diplomats who had met Omar a few times. Omar did not bother about clothing even when high-ranking visitors from abroad called on him, and his long beard at times flew wild because he rarely combed it.

His living room in the residence of governor of Kandahar, where he lived for about six years, however, had gradually changed, a Pakistani diplomat said. Omar used to sit on the floor with his guests but a few months before moving to his new abode at the bottom of hills in the north near the Eidgah (a massive place for the Eid prayers), sofas and chairs gradually replaced the rug in the visitors' room.

Omar was not averse to public appearance, nor did he like foreign visitors. Just a couple of journalists including RahiMullah Yousafzai, have had the privilege to see him on several occasions.

"Do they think I have nothing else to do but attend conferences," was how he had responded when one of his aides informed him of the invitation he had gotten from Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, the chief of his faction of the Jamiat Ulmai Islam (JUI-I), for a conference in Peshawar to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Deoband Seminary in April 2001.

Traders, in particular, felt indebted to him because the advent of Taliban abolished dozens of check posts on main highways where individual Kalashnikov-totting commanders used to mint money.

"Between Kandahar-Chaman (Pakistani border town) alone there were close to 40 check posts set up by various faction," recalled a truck driver, Aminulla. But under the Taliban, only two roadblocks were left, where all traders paid a kind of toll tax and passed through without fear of any extortion on their way to and from Iran or Pakistan.

The Taliban supremo lived mostly in mystery. For his devout disciples, Omar was "mashar Mullah" (the senior Mullah). One of the Afghan leaders since the royal family was overthrown – Zahir Shah; and subsequently President Daud, his brother-in-law, by the communists in 1978 – he had in fact commanded greater authority and respect across most of the country such as Mullah Omar; at least until the war on terrorism forced him to flee.

One reason for unusual vigilance and barricading of the approaches to his residence was a massive blast on August 24 1999 that devastated most parts of the guest house adjacent to Omar's home and severely damaged the front of his modestly built house. The explosion had killed as many as 40 people, among them, one of Omar's four wives and two brothers-in-law. Omar himself narrowly survived. After that Omar rarely stepped out of his residence and cut on his public appearances, becoming inaccessible even for some of the most powerful aides. Nor did anybody see him in his small office next to that of the Mayor's in the heart of the town. Few people had any inkling as to the whereabouts of bin Laden until the US struck, because he used to move after 10 p.m. when common citizens retreated into homes because of curfew until six in the morning.

"It will be against the teachings of Islam and the Afghan traditions to betray a fellow Muslim guest who had sought refuge with Afghans" Omar would tell his visitors.

Omar did keep his word but not before the US and British air power blew his "Islamic Emirate" apart and began destroying the Al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan.

Jalaluddin Haqqani

Jalaluddin Haqqani is a veteran of the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and commanded mujahideen troops in the eastern Paktia and Paktika provinces. Saudi Arabian intelligence Agency also extended considerable support to Haqqani. He later joined the Taliban and was made the supreme commander of the Taliban for the same region. After the fall of Taliban, Haqqani practically went underground. He also had visited Islamabad and Peshawar after the US-led coalition began bombing Taliban targets in Afghanistan in October 2001.

Haqqani's whereabouts are not known but a video CD dispatched to Pakistani newspaper offices in Peshawar in March 2007 shows him in bad health. Looking pale and frail, Haqqani reiterated his commitment to the anti-American Jihad in Afghanistan and urged people to support the "mujahedeen."

In October 2001, Haqqani was named Taliban's military commander. Four Guantanamo detainees were captured and held because US intelligence officers received a report that one of them had briefly hosted Haqqani after the fall of Taliban. It is claimed that Haqqani has since been offered positions of authority by President Karzai's government, including the offer of the post of PM.

Currently, the eldest son Sirajuddin Haqqani is actively pursuing the goals that father Haqqani had set for himself under the banner of his group "Amarate Islami Afghanistan", which is also an umbrella organization for warlords like Mullahh Sangeen, Maulvi Bakht Jan, Baitullah Mehsud, etc. Like his father, Sirajuddin Haqqani is believed to have close ties with ISI and Al-Qaeda¹⁹⁵.

Sirajuddin is suspected of close relations with Pakistani intelligence agencies, which provide his group financial support.¹⁹⁶

A report, compiled by the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the Pentagon titled 'Defense Intelligence Assessment; Osama bin Laden/Al-Qaeda Information Operations, described Jalaluddin Haqqani as "the Jadran tribal leader

¹⁹⁵ The close connections between the Haqqanis, the Taliban (of both Pakistan and Afghanistan) and foreign Islamists, is still considered a problem for the coalition. A problem big enough to attack them in their homes in Pakistan. On September 8 missiles from US drones destroyed the compound of Sirajuddin Haqqani. Apparently neither Haqqani was killed. IHT, September 9, 2008.

¹⁹⁶ CRSS interviews in Mirali and Miranshah, North Waziristan.

most exploited by (Pakistan's prime intelligence agency) ISI during the Soviet-Afghan war, to facilitate the introduction of Arab mercenaries" and the Taliban as "the handy clock woven by Pakistan to shroud their progress."¹⁹⁷

Bin Laden also hooked up with Haqqani when he arrived in Khost in eastern Afghanistan in early 1998 to set up his Zawar camp, which was ruined by American Tomahawk missiles in August the same year.

Haqqani, apparently sick and frail, as evidenced in one of the videos transported out of the tribal areas in March 2008, is counted as one of the most influential and conservative commanders. He too served as a CIA client, primarily because of his role as a mujahideen leader who fought fiercely against the Soviet-Russian forces in eastern Afghanistan with the help of weapons and money that the US intelligence funnelled to him through Maulvi Yunus Khalis, the head of his own faction of the fundamentalist Hezbe Islami.

When Taliban took the country by storm, Haqqani joined them as defence minister. After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, Haqqani visited Peshawar and Islamabad and following a week-long stay in these cities, probably for the last time, in October 2001, retreated in to the tribal area of North Waziristan from where he declared Jihad against Pakistan and influenced scores of Pakistani Jihadists.

Amarate Islami Afghanistan maintains very good relationship with a cross-section of Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives including Gul Bahader, Mullah Saungeen, Sadiq Noor, Maulvi Bukhat Jaan, Ahsanullah, as well as rivals Baitullah Mehsud and Mullah Nazir. Pakistani outfits Harkatul Mujahideen, and Jaishe Muhammad, as well as, Al-Qaeda, Uzbekistan's IMU, Arabs, Jaishe Mehdi and a Turkish militant organization also count as Haqqani's allies and friends.

All these groups operate independently, yet close consultations are carried out, whenever a contingency arises.⁴² This way, the Amarate Islami Afghanistan is considered as a shelter and cover for many militant groups, active and hiding in Waziristan.

However, these groups stick around Haqqanis out of compulsion and not choice. They know that they will become preys to the US-led coalition if the umbrella of Amarate Islami Afghanistan were not available to them.¹⁹⁸

Dependence of external groups on Haqqanis makes the Amarate Islami quite a lethal character in the ongoing anti-US insurgency in Afghanistan, as well as, Pakistan's tribal lands.

¹⁹⁷ DIA Report, September 1999, declassified in Sept 2002.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/index.htm>

¹⁹⁸ CRSS interviews in Mirali and Miranshah, North Waziristan. Details withheld.

Maulvi Nabi Mohammedi

Maulvi Nabi Muhammedi, an Afghan by origin, started as a Mullahh imparting religious education. In 1947, he was part of Qadiria Methodism due to the insistence of Ulema in the region. Later on, he got in touch with several ulema and joined hands with religious scholars against the Soviet propaganda. He was an Afghan politician who served as a Vice President of Afghanistan under the Mujahedeen from 1992 to 1996. Later, he started a movement against the socialist school thought and it was only after the socialist "Saur Revolutions" in Afghanistan that he migrated to Baluchistan in Pakistan. It was only then that Harkate Inqilabe Islami was founded, which according to a key intelligence officer, bred 90% of Taliban.

He maintained a good relationship with Taliban, recognizing that they brought peace in Afghanistan. He at times advised them to soften their policy regarding individual rights, female education etc. After Taliban's ouster from power, most of his followers went back to Nabi Mohammedi – the leader of the movement to date. Based on their findings, Afghan and Pakistani intelligence officials had concluded that almost 80 percent of the Taliban originally were followers of Nabi Mohammedi. He passed away in Pakistan in 2002 at the age of 81.

Qari Ziaur Rehman

Qari Ziaur Rehman is an Afghan Taliban commander operating in Kunar province of Afghanistan. However, he maintains a close liaison with the Pakistani Taliban led by Maulana Faqir Muhammad in Bajaur Agency. During the recent military operations by Pakistani security forces in Bajaur Agency (August–November 2008), Ziaur Rehman led his fighters into Pakistan and fought against Pakistani security forces.

Ustad Yasir

Ustad Yasir is a prominent Afghan Taliban commander who is active in Ningarhar Province and adjoining Khyber Agency of FATA. Yasir was in custody in Bagram base and was released in 2007 under a hostage exchange agreement. Soon after his release, he was appointed to target the ISAF-NATO and US supply lines passing through Khyber Pass in Khyber Agency. The most spectacular strike so far by Yassir was on the night of March 23, 2007, when he blew up a convoy of some 40 loaded fuel tankers at a Pakistani border post. Yasir is assisted by Anwar ul-Haq Mujahid, who is the son of Afghan mujahid leader, Maulvi Younas Khalis and who has formed the Tora Bora Military Front to attack foreign troops in Ningarhar.

Appendix 2. CRSS Survey of FATA

SURVEY

CRSS conducted a non-scientific survey in order to collect quantitative information from residents of FATA. The survey was as close to a structured interview of individuals as was possible in conditions prevalent in FATA. The questions were standardized and as structured as were possible. The sample for the survey comprised 427 men, representing a cross-section of various age, income and other socio-economic backgrounds. The survey was based on an all-male, non-probability sampling and was conducted between 8 March 2008 and 15 May 2008. It was a personal intercept survey where no financial or other non-monetary incentives were provided. The survey only covered those respondents who were available and willing. There exists the potential for interviewer bias.

Tables

Table 1. Is it fair to blow up CD shops?

Is it fair to blow up CD shops?

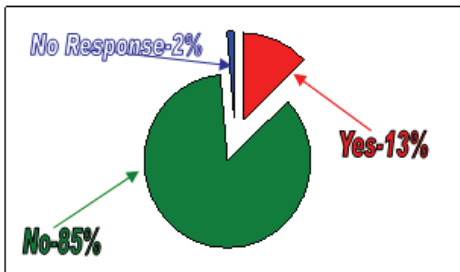


Table 2. Should girls be educated?

Should girls be educated?

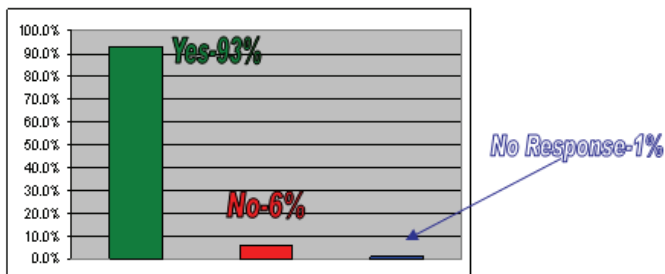


Table 3. Does Sharia ensure justice?

Does Sharia ensure justice?

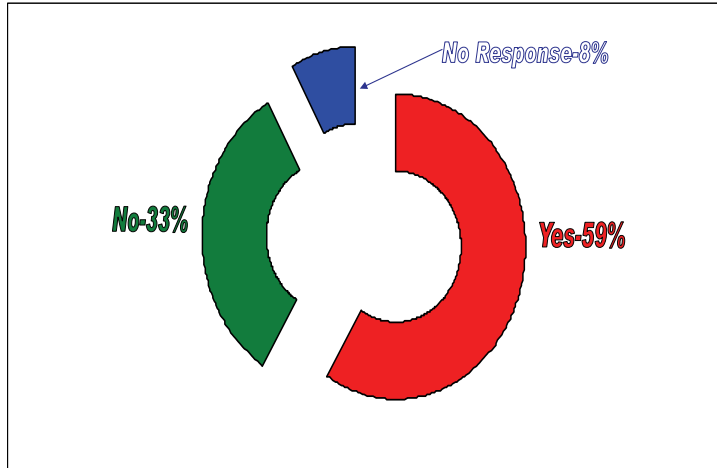


Table 4. Does Sharia ensure economic prosperity?

Does Sharia ensure economic prosperity?

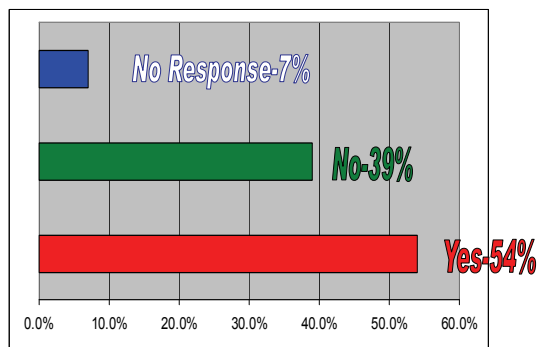


Table 5. Do Taliban and Fazlullah represent true Islam?

Do Taliban and Fazlullah represent true Islam?

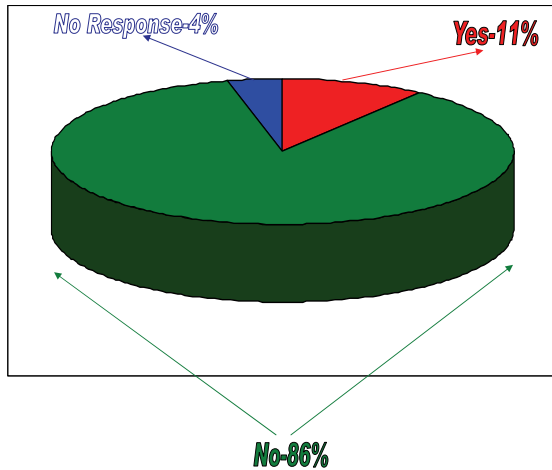
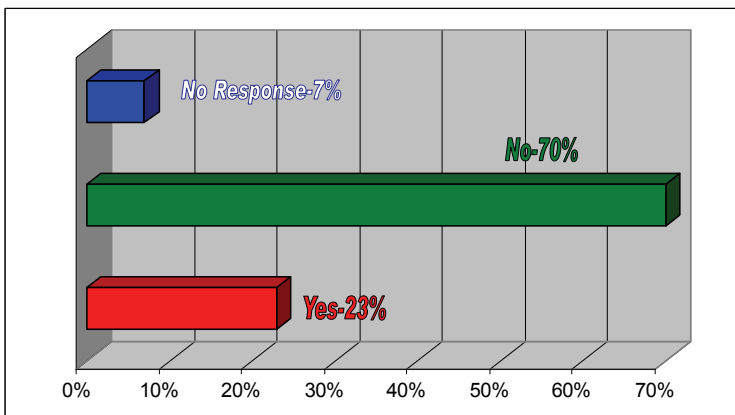


Table 6. Wouldn't Taliban be encouraged if Army goes back?

Wouldn't Taliban be encouraged if Army goes back?



8 Terminology

Fatwā

Fatwā, in the Islamic faith is a religious opinion on Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar. In Sunni Islam any fatwa is non-binding, whereas in Shia Islam it could be, depending on the status of the scholar.

Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA).

FANA consist of two provinces, Gilgit and Baltistan.

Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

FATA consist of seven Agencies, namely Khyber, Kurram, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, North and South Waziristan and six FRs (Frontier Regions) namely FR Peshawar, FR Kohat, FR Tank, FR Banuu, FR Lakki and FR Dera Ismail Khan.

Frontier Corps (FC)

The FC is a federal paramilitary force recruited mostly by people from the tribal areas and officered by officers from the Pakistan Army. The FC Stationed in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan Province, are known as FC NWFP and FC Balochistan, respectively. Both distinct provincial groups are run traditionally by an "inspector general" who is a regular Pakistani Army officer of at least major-general rank, although the force itself is part of the Interior Ministry, not the army.

Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR)

The FCR comprises a set of laws enforced by the British Raj in the Pashtun-inhabited tribal areas at the Northwest British India. They were specially devised to counter the fierce opposition of the Pashtuns to British rule, and their main objective was to protect the interests of the British Empire. The FCR dates back to the occupation of the six Pashtun-inhabited frontier districts by the British in 1848. The regulation was re-enacted in 1873 and again in 1876, with minor modifications. With the passage of time, the regulation was found to be inadequate and new acts and offences were added to it to extend its scope. This was done through promulgation of the Frontier Crimes Regulation 1901. The FCR advocates collective punishment, and many human rights activists argue it is against the most basic Human rights abuse. According to the FCR despite the presence of popularly elected tribal representatives, parliament can play no role in the affairs of the area.

Jahiliyyah

Jahiliyyah, al-Jahiliyah or jahalia is an Islamic concept of "ignorance of divine guidance" or "the state of ignorance of the guidance from God" or "Days of Ignorance" referring to the condition Arabs found themselves in pre-Islamic Arabia, i.e. prior to the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. By extension it means the state of anyone not following Islam and the Qur'an.

Jihad

Jihad, an Islamic term, is a religious duty of Muslims. In Arabic, the word *jihad* is a noun meaning "the struggle." Jihad appears frequently in the Qur'an and common usage as the idiomatic expression "striving in the way of Allah (*al-jihad fi sabil Allah*)" A person engaged in jihad is called a mujahid, the plural is mujahideen.

Jirga

Jirga (occasionally jirgah) is a tribal assembly of elders which takes decisions by consensus, particularly among the Pashtun but also in other ethnic groups near them. They are most common in Afghanistan and among the Pashtun in Pakistan near its border with Afghanistan.

Lashkar

Lashkar are tribal militias that are used by the tribes for local protection and internal security.

Malik

The term is used in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan, especially among Pashtuns, for a tribal leader or a chieftain. Maliks serve as *de facto* arbiters in local conflicts, interlocutors in state policy-making, tax-collectors, heads of village and town councils and delegates to provincial and national *jirgas* as well as to Parliament.

Pashtuns

Pashtuns (also rendered as Pushtuns, Pakhtuns, Pukhtuns), also called Pathans, ethnic Afghans, are an Eastern Iranian ethno-linguistic group with populations primarily in Afghanistan and in the North-West Frontier Province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan provinces of western Pakistan. The Pashtuns are typically characterized by their usage of the Pashto language and practice of Pashtunwali, which is a traditional code of conduct and honor.

Political Agent (PA)

The PA is the representative of the Federal Government in FATA. The position and the very strong mandate, give the Agent in place much leeway and freedom in conducting his job.

Sharia

Sharia is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means "way" or "path to the water source"; it is the legal framework within which the public and private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. Sharia deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues.

Takfir

The term *takfir* derives from the word kafir (impiety) and is described as when

"...one who is, or claims to be, a Muslim is declared impure." Those to whom Takfir is applied are considered excommunicated in the eyes of the Muslim community. According to Islamic or Sharia law, they can no longer benefit from the protection of the law, and as such are condemned to death. The severe implications of such punishment have resulted in a rigorous set of rules being formulated under orthodox Islam to determine whether an accused party is guilty of apostasy or not. In principle the only group authorised to declare a Muslim a kafir are the ulema, and this only once all the prescribed legal precautions have been taken. However a growing number of splinter Salafist groups – labelled by some scholars as Salafi-Takfiris – have split from the orthodox method of establishing takfir through the processes of the law, and have reserved the right to declare apostasy themselves.

Takfiri

Takfiri is a Muslim who practices Takfir, which is to accuse other Muslims of apostasy.

Ulema

Ulema, (transliteration: ‘Ulamā’, ‘Ālim, "scholar") refers to the educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies. They are best known as the arbiters of shari‘a law. While the ulema are well versed in legal jurisprudence being Islamic lawyers, some of them also go on to specialize in other sciences, such as philosophy, dialectical theology or Quranic hermeneutics or explanation. The fields studied, and the importance given them, will vary from tradition to tradition, or even from seminary to seminary.