

# War On Terror And The Federally Administered Tribal Areas Of Pakistan

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Terrorism emerged as a major threat to the peace and security of the world immediately after the attacks of 9/11. It is the most controversial topic in the recent era and has been one of the political battles where no country is a victor. It is a tactic and too that has been employed by groups and individuals crossing all ideological boundaries. It is a violent action to promote political objectives and have strategic advantages when they operate in the underground and attack with surprise. So, the terrorist strategy is mainly focused on creating psychological impact and effects. They usually select targets of a high symbolic value thereby provoking event humiliating their opponent or to terrorize the population.

Although Pakistan has been a frontline state in the war on terror since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, there is no doubt that General Musharraf initially cast his lot with the United States mainly as a result of deep fears about what U.S. enmity might imply for Pakistan's long-standing rivalry with India, its efforts at economic revival, its nuclear weapons program, and its equities in the conflict over Kashmir. Desirous of protecting Pakistan's interests in these areas and to avoid it from becoming a target in the campaign against terrorism, Musharraf reluctantly cut loose its ties with the Taliban. The U.S. inauguration of the "global war on terror" soon compelled General Musharraf to make good on his "principled" decision to join the U.S.-led coalition. This inevitably required Musharraf to confront the sources of terrorism that had developed internally in Pakistan, most of which ironically

resulted from his own army's previous decisions to nurture radical Islamist organizations because of their utility to Pakistan's military campaigns in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Although part of Pakistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas functions as a semi-autonomous area. Since the British Raj, the region acted as a buffer zone between the British and Russian empires and operated on its own terms, although various tribes cooperated with the British off and on in return for financial incentives. This traditional pattern of governance continued even



after they came under Pakistani suzerainty in 1947. In the present situational phenomena all the seven agencies of FATA are under war. The Khyber Agency 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 two important tribes-Afridis and Shinwaris. Kurram Agency which comparatively more accessible than other agencies, it has a popu-

lation of about 450,000 and is home to two tribes-Turi and Bangash. A land of gardens and orchards, this agency has often been called pro-Northern Alliance because the Bangash tribe predominantly belongs to the Shiite sect of Islam, which is anti-Taliban in its orientation. Turi tribe (Turkic origin), known for its strong and hardy horsemen, also belongs to the Shiite sect and has been at loggerheads with pro-Taliban, Deobandi elements in the neighbouring area. Some non-Shiite extremists in the area, however, were supportive of the Taliban, although with little effectiveness.

The smallest of all is the Bajaur Agency which is largely inaccessible due to its hilly terrain. 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. There have been some unconfirmed recent media reports about the possibility of Osama bin Laden 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, killing 18 people. Al-Zawahiri was not found among the deads 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. Mohmand Agency takes its name from the Mohmand tribe who resides there and numbers about 350,000. Mohmands are a very powerful and influential tribe and are known as natural guerrilla fighters. Orakzai Agency has a population of about 240,000 and is primarily inhabited by the Orakzai tribe from which it derives its name. The other important tribe in this area is Daulatzai. 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. North Waziristan Agency in terms of area is inhabited by about 375,000 people, mostly belonging to the Wazir and Dawar tribes. The Pakistani army's military operations in this agency started in 2002 and have led to a full-fledged military confrontation with Waziris. Many militant tribal leaders have become legendary figures in the process. South Waziristan is the largest agency in size, it is home to around 425,000 tribesmen from Mehsud and Wazir tribes. 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. Although Pakistan has been a frontline state in the war on terror since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, there is no doubt that General Musharraf initially cast his lot with the United States mainly as a result of deep fears about what U.S. enmity might imply for Pakistan's long-standing rivalry with India

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Pakistan today is confronted with an organized insurrection or civil war like situation on its western borders in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. This insurrection built up momentum in the post 9/11 scenario and has briefly attracted international publicity. The study will focus on the global war on terror in broader perspective and will ultimately point out the implications of this war on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan.

The "Global War on Terror", declared immediately in the aftermath of 9/11 is increasingly under siege. Washington has taken proactive measures against the states harboring terrorists, by which it was meant the bombing of terrorist training centers and bases and even the removal of regime by force. In his address to Congress nine days after the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush declared that "Our War on Terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated". Secretary of State Colin L. Powell in May 2002 declared, "In this global campaign against terrorism, no country has the luxury of

remaining on the sidelines. There are no sidelines. Terrorists respect no limits, geographic or moral. The frontlines are everywhere and the stakes are high. Terrorism not only kills people. It also threatens democratic institutions, undermines economies, and destabilizes regions". In the words of the president and the secretary of state, terror, terrorism, and terrorists become inseparable concepts, coherent entities, efficacious actors, and enemies to be eradicated.

Due to the advent of the Global War on Terror, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda operating in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Area, future foreign policy towards Pakistan will now have to be consistent and enduring to be successful, particularly to combat terrorism in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. It will require a substantial economic development package, especially for the FATA, and military aid that will allow Pakistan to secure its border with Afghanistan and combat internal insurgent activities. With the new democratically-elected government in Pakistan and the new U.S. administration, Pakistan, the U.S. and the International community must seize the moment.