

MILITANCY AND PUKHTUNWALI: AN ANALYSIS OF MILITANT TRENDS IN PUKHTUN SOCIETY¹

SABEEHA ATLAS

Department of History, University of Peshawar

Email: Sabeehaatlas@gmail.com

Abstract

The Pakistan-Afghan border region and its inhabited population became the focal point of international concern in the backdrop of the tragic event of September 11 in 2001. It is stated that the local Pukhtuns provided shelter and assistance to the suspects of the attacks, under the obligation of their social code called Pukhtunwali. This assertive media projection and bold academic assertions gave birth to certain apprehensions and negative perceptions about the Pukhtuns and their way of life. The main reason for this lies in opinion makers overwhelming reliance on the colonial literature to learn about the region. As a matter of fact, such sources were written in a particular background, possessing one-sided information based on one's personal experience with the region. An in-depth analysis of the scenario makes it clear that the emergence of militancy in the Pukhtun region is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon, which needs to be studied before making any generalization about the Pukhtun's involvement in the entire process of militancy.

The paper aims to discuss certain factors, which contributed to the militarization of the region. The study mainly focuses on the situation in the former-Tribal Areas, Frontier Region and the adjoining settled zone of Pakistan, however, the question of the emergence of militancy in the region could not be detached from what was going on, on the other side of the border in Afghanistan. Therefore, the discourse at certain junctures slightly discusses the relevant situation in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the exploitation of Pukhtun culture by the outsiders is part of the discussion. The paper has a brief analysis of the colonial knowledge on the region as well.

Keywords: Culture, Exploitation, Militancy, Perception, Pukhtunwali

Introduction

The tragic event of September 11, 2001 was followed by War on Terror, which threatened global peace, in general, and of the Muslim countries, in particular. As compared to the rest of the world, Afghanistan and Pakistan had to pay a heavier price in both physical and economic terms. Though the perpetrators were Arabs, the US hunt for the suspects, proved to be more deadly for the Pukhtuns² and specifically, the local population residing on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghan border. They were accused of giving shelter to Osama bin Laden, the main suspect of the 9/11 attacks, under the obligation of Pukhtun social code, Pukhtunwali. Since then, Pukhtun population has been at the center of international concern. They became the focal point of strategic debates, media commentaries, reports, analyses and discussions on and issues related to the terrorist attacks and the subsequent War on Terror.³ This problematic coverage by the print and electronic media gave birth to certain apprehensions about the region, its inhabitants, and their way of life. As a result, pejorative terms like extremists, fundamentalists, and militants are very conveniently used for the Pukhtuns. According to Farhat Taj, 'Some influential outsiders continue to depict in media that the Pukhtuns and Taliban are one and the same.'⁴ Peter Marsden is of the opinion that 'there are similarities between the Pukhtun social set up and that of the Taliban's ideology; they are the product of Pukhtun areas, and their philosophy is mainly extracted from Pukhtunwali, the Pukhtun code of life.'⁵

Even more, most of the contemporary researchers, writers, historians, and the print and electronic media sources form opinions on the subject without having proper knowledge. Even if they have some information, it is one-sided about the history and culture of the Pukhtuns. They often make their reference to the Colonial British archival record, which in itself needs authenticity, for it has contradictory evaluations of the Pukhtun ethnographic and cultural understandings. For some of the English administrators and military personnel, the highland tribesmen were warlike, cruel, vindictive, bloodthirsty, brutes, uncouth, treacherous, and barbarous,⁶ while to others, the tribal people were men with immense sense of hospitality, bravery, courage, faithfulness and kindness.⁷ As a matter of fact, the English had written about their personal experience of the region and its inhabitants. Moreover, colonial documents were recorded in a particular background and the writers at that time had their own specific personal and corporate interests in mind, overwhelmingly influenced by the existence and survival of the colonial order in the region.⁸ Likewise, the swings in the colonial image of the

Pukhtun character occurred according to the angle of approach dictated by certain circumstances.⁹ Therefore, it is indeed, necessarily important to deal with the colonial writings and ethnographies with great care and objectivity. Superficial evaluations and blind conclusions may lead to a deceptive picture of the whole scenario.

This paper mainly aims to unsettle this quagmire, which problematically links up militancy with that of the Pukhtunwali. The study provides a review of the colonial writings on the Pukhtuns, followed by a brief account of Pukhtunwali with a succeeding evaluation of the factors and conditions, which provided fertile grounds for the emergence and facilitation of the Taliban and other militant groups in the tribal region of Pakistan. The main argument in this paper aims to clarify that not only codes of the militants and Pukhtunwali are different and conflictual but also militancy is not a product of Pukhtunwali. This fallacy needs to be corrected by the writers and researchers, which can be done through making access to people living in the region and interacting with the key stakeholders in Pukhtun society.

Image of the Pukhtuns in the Colonial Writings

Pukhtun culture and the character of Pukhtuns remained a favorite theme amongst the colonial officials, engaged in the region in one capacity or the other. They viewed the tribesmen either as hospitable hosts or as perfidious villains. Such contrary opinions create confusion on the one hand and question Pukhtun identity on the other. Pukhtuns in colonial literature have been generally portrayed as unruly, extremist warriors, and uncivilized semi-savages. For instance, to Richard Temple, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, 'The true Pathan is perhaps the most barbaric of all the races with which we are brought into contact in the Punjab ... he is bloodthirsty, cruel and vindictive in the highest degree; he does not know what truth or faith is, insomuch that the saying *Afghan be iman* (i.e., Afghan unfaithful) has passed into a proverb among his neighbors.'¹⁰ Mr. Elsmie, the Border Commissioner and Judge, speaks of the Pukhtuns as being capable of crime of the worst conceivable kind is a matter of almost daily occurrence; murder in all its phases, unblushing assassination in broad daylight before a crowd of witnesses; the carefully planned secret murder of the sleeping victim at dead of night, murder by robbers, by rioters, by poisoners, by boys, and by women sword in hand.'¹¹ To Macgregor, 'Money could buy their services for the foulest deed; cruelty of the most revolting kind would mark their actions to a wounded or helpless foe, as much as cowardice would stamp

them against determined resistance.¹² Mills while describing and classifying the Pukhtun tribes, writes that the tribes living on the Khyber-Kabul route were the ‘most savage and warlike of the frontier tribesmen.’ For Sir Winston Churchill, the Pukhtun tribes were ‘animal-like,’ and for Lord Curzon, they were ‘child-like species of cat.’¹³

There are cases of colonial write-ups which portray an image, other than the above, of the tribesmen. For instance, Elphinstones’ opinion about the Pukhtuns is, ‘their vices are revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity and obstinacy; on the other hand, they are fond of liberty, faithful to their friends, kind to their dependents, hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent.’¹⁴ Enriquez argued that, ‘their [Pukhtuns] habits are not really much worse than those of various English tribes during the first few centuries after their final settlement. ... When you meet a Pathan, you meet a man like yourself. ... He will never allow you to abuse him, He takes his independence for granted, and very seldom parades it in the garb of rudeness.’ Similarly, Colonel Buster Goodwin remarked about the Pukhtun character as, ‘Our dealings with the [Pukhtuns] was a gentlemen’s game, ... No matter how poor a [Pukhtun] was, he may meet the king of England or the Viceroy of India, but he’d look him straight in the eye and shake hands with him as if to say that I’m as good a man as you are.’¹⁵

In sum, it can be concluded from the above review of colonial literature on the Pukhtuns that colonial knowledge was drawn in a particular environment, pushed by certain political and geo-strategic compulsions and constraints of the Crown in the region which in turn greatly affected the line of perception and portrayal of the local population there. In the words of Hanifi, ‘Colonial knowledge formations are geared for political utility. Similar to other forms of knowledge, colonialism generated some new and important lines of inquiry, in historical linguistics for example. However, because of the political expediencies demanded of colonialism, it tends to be built on simplifications and limited, sometimes inconsistent and contradictory data.’¹⁶ Charles Lindholm, a noted anthropologist, criticized such stereotyped dichotomies exhibited in colonial literature towards the Pukhtuns. He assessed this phenomenon as, ‘The political position of the Raj *viz-a-viz* the tribesmen changed so did the attitude of British. The image of hill men varied according to the vacillation of colonial policy.’ The cultural outlook and the tribe-clan pedigrees in the area were twisted and articulated in such a manner that suited the British interests in the region.¹⁷

The stream of colonial knowledge on the geography, flora, fauna, economy, system of governance, psychological and cultural understanding of the Pukhtuns flows from the influential British envoy Mountstuart Elphinstone. His private correspondence with the East India Company and his renowned work '*An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies*' (1815) proved to be the 'hegemonic text' on Pukhtun character for all to come, from Burnes to Caroe. Elphinstone thoroughly discussed his experience of the life of the tribesmen. However, his evaluations proved to be flawed to an extent, partly for his analogical generalization of the Indian tribal society in the Scottish tribal context which he had on his back and partly because Elphinstone based his thesis on the local anecdotal narrative and hearsay. His inclination for comparing the Scottish clan system with Pukhtunwali, the Pukhtun code of life, was highly flawed, carried beyond common characteristics of tribal societies. Moreover, his calculations of the region and its inhabitants were drawn in a different environment and capacity than his colonial successors.¹⁸ He saw at the region, in the words of Sir Olaf Caroe, '... the contrast of mountain and desert, of sand and verdure, of climate and season, as only a man who loves that land can see. King or noble, tradesman or merchant, priest or peasant- all seem to him men deserving of appraisal, even their faults are worth a smile and lovable. He met these men before they had become embittered by wars and expeditions, and he felt intuitively that there was a bond to be forged between them and us.'¹⁹ Later on, the long series of the Frontier wars changed the perception, conceived by Elphinstone as the British viewed the tribesmen love for independence in a negative light; of stubbornness and disorderliness.²⁰ Moreover, with the passage of time, colonial knowledge turned into a political instrument to control the highland tribes and to use the area as a defense line against any encroachment through Afghanistan, rather to learn about an expected ally in the rugged mountains, who could be used as police for the British imperialist agenda in an unknown region. The new generation of the British bureaucratic class was sophisticatedly trained in the art of war and diplomacy. They were well aware of the power and use of knowledge in politics. The main focus of knowledge under them shifted to its application in framing of policy, aimed at a systematic control of the region and its inhabitants through the rationalization of colonial prestige in the garb of local customs and traditions.²¹

The Colonial trends in knowledge were criticized and taken into account by Post-colonial scholars to an extent, however, the colonial legacy of stereotyping Pukhtuns continued with and 'weaponized' by

political strategists to look into the Pukhtuns through the undefined colonial lenses. The persistence of a similar tendency of cultural interpretation by both the national and international writers during the Afghan Jihad of 1970s lent an aura of authority to the colonial perceptions of the region which in turn encouraged certain contemporary writers to judge the Frontier, emerged in the wake of War on Terror, in terms of colonial literature. David J. Kilcullen's *The Accidental Guerrilla* (2011), is one such instance, which was highly influenced by Sir Winston Churchill's antagonistic definition of the Pukhtun character in terms of violence and extremism.²²

Besides other reasons, defining Pukhtun culture in the light of the blurred colonial colors is largely due to the absence of a local voice in academia, therefore, the excessive reliance on colonial literature resulted in a constant controversial depiction of the Pukhtuns. The momentous year of 2001, particularly, brought the colonial discourse, on the cross-border region, back into life. The trend can be clearly noticed in contemporary academic research work. Hanifi's assertion in this regard is of value, he states, 'In terms of intellectual progress after 2001, the surge in attention on Pashtuns and Pashto evident in the US academy and government, mainly as reified colonial British essentialization of Afghanistan, reproduced a colonial tendency to militarize and weaponize knowledge about other cultures.'²³

To sum up the discussion, the emerging misperceptions about the Pukhtun culture in the wake of 9/11 incident is of grave concern and direly demanded a genuine investigation of the subject, because the prevailing generalization under the outdated colonial aegis is adversely damaging the image of Pukhtun as a dignified member of the larger human community.

Pukhtunwali

Wherever the Pukhtuns live—in settled districts or in the tribal areas or anywhere in the world—their way of living is governed by certain traditional norms, called Pakhtunwali,²⁴ Pukhtunwali,²⁵ or Pashtunwali²⁶. The term translates into English as 'the way of the Pathans'. James W. Spain says that it is a law, a custom, manners and a mindset. He calls it as a criminal, civil and social code, which is known to, and observed by every Pukhtun, who never deviates from it.²⁷ It is the unwritten constitution of the Pukhtun people, which is transmitted from generation to generation in oral and practical form.²⁸ Pukhtunwali has numerous components. *Melmastya* (Hospitality), *Nang* (Honor), *Nanawatai*

(Repentance), *Badal*, (Exchange/Retaliation) *Turah* (Bravery), *Panah* (Asylum), *Sabat* (Loyalty), *Badragga* (Tribal Escort), *Tarborwali* (Cousin Rivalry), *Paighor* (Taunt), *Walwar* (Bride Price) etc., are some of the tenets of Pukhtunwali. Besides, the institution of *Jarga* (Council of Elders) and the importance of *Hujra* (Guest House/Village Council Hall) was valued more than anything else in the life of a Pukhtun.²⁹ All these components came into existence to regulate tribal life. With the passage of time, these traditions became the unwritten constitution, not less than a set of legal laws for the Pukhtuns.

Pukhtun culture has been developed in a particular style. The rough and tough physical environment played a vital role in the evolution of the tribal life in the manner it is. The highland tribesmen are no doubt a martial race. Traditions like *Badal* (revenge), *Dushman/Trabgany* (cousin/family rivalry), *Paighor* (taunt, that leads to prolonged warfare), exists in Pukhtun society. Tribal feuds are frequently found in the tribal life. But it does not provide a logical explanation that the Pukhtun community has a natural bent for militancy and terrorism. In other words, this 'war of every man against every man,' shows a credible but an incomplete picture of Pukhtun society. Such customs can be frequently found in the tribal societies around the globe. There are instances in history, among the Bedouins of Arabian desert life,³⁰ and Mongols of the desert Gobi.³¹

Besides other cataclysms of the September 11 tragedy, for humanity in general, it has been proved more disastrous for the local people of the Pakistan-Afghan borderland. The perceived presence of Osama Bin Laden in the tribal areas has been defined in terms of the obligation of certain tenets of Pukhtunwali. It has been argued that the tribal people provided hideouts to Bin Laden due to the Pukhtun traditions of *Panah* (Asylum) and *Melmastya* (Hospitality). Followers of the theory refer to Mulla Umar's words in this regard. He, while responding to the US demands for handing Bin Laden over to the US authorities said 'We will never hand Osama over to anyone and will protect him with our blood at all cost'.³² As a matter of fact, Mulla Omar had demanded evidence, and offered to negotiate but the United States turned this offer down. Pukhtun provided *Panah* to anyone, who asks for, even to his enemy and offers *Melmastya* to his guest, even to a stranger, and serves him well with the best of possessions he has. There exist many instances in the history of the region. Even the colonial officials and administrators often experienced and appreciated Pukhtun hospitality. Similarly, *Badal* (revenge) has been widely criticized for persuading the Mujahedeen to fight against the Soviet Union army during the Afghan Jihad.³³ Moreover,

the high esteem, in which religion and religious clerics are held in Pukhtun society has also been in academic debates in terms of fundamentalism and eventually, of terrorism.

Such partial perceptions and calculations raised certain questions which need to be answered in order to evaluate any relationship between Pukhtun culture and militancy as well as the spread of terrorism at large. The following discussion aims to deal with the question from different angles.

Pukhtun Homeland: A Buffer Zone between Empires

Strategically positioned between Central Asia and South Asia, Pukhtun land has always remained a buffer zone during the ancient, medieval and modern times. The region served as a gateway to the invasions of Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Kushans, Huns, Mongols, Mughuls, Sikhs, and the British.³⁴ It has been an epicenter of conflicts for centuries due to the expansionist designs of imperialist powers to date. The tribes always resisted invaders. They let nobody to rule over them peacefully. Alexander the Great's own stay on the frontier was for less than twelve months, during which he had to face stiff resistance of the Pukhtuns.³⁵ In the medieval period, Akbar the Great, during his fifty years long kingship, was hardly able to establish a real grip over the Pukhtuns.³⁶ The British with a view to have an active control of the region sent approximately 58 armed expeditions, between 1849 and 1939.³⁷

Since long, the region held great strategic importance, serving as a buffer zone first between the British colonial government of India and Tsarist Russia in the 19th century Great Game³⁸ and with the British withdrawal from the sub-continent in 1947, the region was caught by the shadows of Cold War between the United States of America and the former Soviet Union in the 20th century. The Saur Revolution in 1978 and the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979, and the consequent US-supported Afghan Jihad brought the Pukhtuns directly into the 'war game' between the major powers³⁹ in the 1980s and later on with the emergence of 'War on Terror' since 2001. The Pukhtun traits exploited by the United States during 1979 to 1989 were the same that they decried between 2001 and 2021 when their ally had become their adversary.

The Pukhtun homeland has been used as a hosting station for the Afghan refugees of war as well as served as a war base to the Afghan mujahidin. With the Soviet withdrawal from Afghan territory, United States and her allies left Afghanistan, without making any future planning to restore peace and order in the tribal areas, to manage the safe return of

the Afghan Muhajireen (war refugees) to their homes, and most importantly, the recovery of US weapons and missiles from the Mujahidin groups.⁴⁰ They left cadres of well trained and well-equipped Arabs, Asians, and Afghan fighters behind, who were in a good form to wage a new war.⁴¹ Majority of the foreign fighters did not go back to their native lands. They stayed and settled down in the tribal villages across Pak-Afghan border. Many of them got married in the local Pukhtun families and started merging in the local cultural life. These Mujahideen, later on, played an important role in the next phase of war which started with September 11. They hosted the new militant groups who came to the mountains with the purpose of Jihad. It was an opportunity for which they were ever ready to avail. These 'old Mujahideen' facilitated their ideological brethren with men and material.⁴²

The age-long wars and militant activities in the tribal belt catastrophically played its role in destabilizing the region and molding the local life into a pugnacious and rigorous mode. The geo-strategic location of the land of the Pukhtuns has always put them into conflicts and wars. To be very precise with the history of the region during the last two centuries, the tribal belt has remained either as a line of defense or as training camps for the super powers. The region saw fierce wars, fought for power and prestige. The local population had no option but to fight on either side in a conflict between the super powers. However, none ever, thought of the people or area. The destabilized conditions have played enormously in making the region an ideal place for the extremist mind set, which came to exploit the deteriorated conditions of the locals for their malicious ends.

National and Global Interests in the Tribal Areas and Militancy

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the tribal areas joined Pakistan. Under M. A. Jinnah, the new state envisioned the policy of a gradual integration of the tribal areas into the mainstream system. He continued with the British Maliki system for the time being,⁴³ as any major change in the existing traditional tribal administration might have resulted in problems for the newly created state. Moreover, any administratively bold move in the tribal region was unaffordable for a newly created state with low resources and unstable administrative structure. However, Jinnah's successors failed to understand his vision⁴⁴ of the gradual integration of the tribal Pukhtuns into the mainstream politics of the country. Thus, they allowed the system to be permanently in practice in these areas, which resulted in loosening of the central government's

authority over the region and strengthening of the local Maliks. This was politically misconstrued on the part of Pakistan's policy makers, as besides other, the situation encouraged the Afghan rulers to create problems on the western borders by raising the Pashtunistan issue.⁴⁵ In fact, the rulers of the land-locked Afghanistan, in order to get an access to the Indian Ocean through Pakistan's territory, instigated the cross border Pukhtun tribes for the creation of Pashtunistan.⁴⁶ The Afghan government with the help of Pukhtun nationalist leaders in the then North West Frontier Province encouraged the locals to raise the standard of rebellion against the government. The situation in the tribal belt remained troubled for a long time due to the Pashtunistan issue.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Afghan propaganda against the One Unit Plan, by popularizing the Plan as an intentional endeavor of the political intelligentsia to suppress the individual identity of various groups by merging them in One Unit caused deterioration in the situation to a greater extent in the Province. The relations between the two neighboring Muslim states remained tense during the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁸ The comeback of Daud in 1973 restored Pakistan's apprehensions on her Western border. Pakistan was already suffering from the separation of its Eastern part, Bengal which became Bangladesh in 1971, mainly because of India's support to the Bengali nationalists. Z.A. Bhutto sensed the danger of the secession of another part of Pakistan in the shape of Pukhtunistan. He, in order to give a tough time to Daud, extended his support to the anti-Daud Islamist elements in Afghanistan and sheltered the Islamic leaders, who escaped to Pakistan after a failed military coup against Daud.⁴⁹ Internally, Bhutto gave enough space to religious identity to curb the divergent waves of ethnicity in the country. His anti-Daud's stance led Bhutto to provide shelter and give training to the Afghan Islamists in the then North West Frontier Province under the supervision of his trusted fellow Naseerullah Khan Babar, the Inspector General of Frontier Force. A number of 5000 Afghan fighters were provided with weapons and secret guerrilla training in secret camps, established in Peshawar. Ahmed Shah Masud, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbadin Hikmatyar, were well cared for by Z.A. Bhutto.⁵⁰ However, Bhutto's policy of supporting and replacing Pukhtun nationalism with orthodox Islamism both externally and internally bore unexpected fruits, as his policy of supporting certain Islamist elements proved ill-omened for Pakistan in years to come. In other words, his policy of suppressing Pukhtun nationalism through Islamism is greatly responsible for bringing Islamic militancy in Pukhtun region.⁵¹

His Islamic moves were furthered by his newly appointed army chief, General Zia ul-Haq. Zia went steps ahead in using Islam as a political tool.⁵² He brought drastic social, ethical, and political changes under his state-led Islamization.⁵³ The United States stopped military and economic aid to Pakistan as sanctions for its nuclear policy.⁵⁴ Pakistan had already been suffering from sanctions imposed on Pakistan's nuclear program in the 1970s. The reason was that for Pakistan was being accused of attempting to smuggle Uranium technology. However, these strained relations between the two soon converted into close friendship. It was the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 that provided opportunity to both Zia and the United States to dine on one table. Soviet expansionist moves compelled US think tanks to get a new start with Zia. Zia on the other hand welcomed US friendly move, as he, too, was in difficult times and US friendship was the most desired thing, could be done to him.⁵⁵

Soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, General Zia held a meeting with his newly appointed chief of the ISI, General Akhtar Abdul Rahman Khan to discuss the matter. General Akhtar told Zia that this is a golden opportunity for Pakistan to take advantage of it to protect Pakistani borders against any future Communist expansion in the tribal region of Pakistan as well as his position at home.⁵⁶ Zia had a twofold policy in his mind, he wanted to consolidate his position at home as well as to get American favor, and the Soviet invasion provided him with this opportunity.⁵⁷ At home, he got the favor of his 'innocent countrymen' by exploiting their religious feelings through the introduction of his policy of Islamization,⁵⁸ as well as by supporting the Afghan Jihad across the border. This policy fulfilled both of his needs.

Zia, in return for US friendship, presented the demanded tribal region to America that served as a base for the US war against the Red army in Afghanistan. Zia got financial aid from United States to offer shelter to the Afghan Muhajireen, who migrated to the Pakistani border region of the then NWFP, renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010. The aid was increased gradually.⁵⁹ It consisted of cash money, food and shelter for the Afghan refugees, arms and ammunition to the Afghan fighters, commonly known as the Mujahedeen or the holy warriors. It was also decided that all these supplies would be provided through Pakistan and not directly by the American Intelligence agency, the CIA. US aid was channelized by the ISI, the Inter-Services Intelligence.⁶⁰ The aid was channelized through different Mujahedeen groups. They were the Islamists who fled to Pakistan in 1974 and formed the 'Peshawar Seven' anti Soviet war groups under the patronage of ISI.⁶¹ They had been used

to have full control over the aid, coming to Pakistan for the Afghan refugees, residing on the Pakistan-Afghan border. It was made compulsory for the refugees to register themselves with any of these seven groups to get assistance from the government.

On the other side, Afghan Refugee Camps were established in the border areas of Pakistan. These refugee camps were supplied with food, clothing, and cash.⁶² Madrasahs, the religious seminaries, numbered more than 1000 between 1982 and 1988. These were established jointly by Pakistan and United States in the Afghan refugee villages.⁶³ Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries provided funds for these schools on the Pak-Afghan border.⁶⁴ These schools were supervised by Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP) and Jamiat-i-Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUIP) led by Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Maulana Fazl-ur-Rahman respectively. Both of these schools followed the Deobandi School of Thought, which is based on the literal interpretation of Islamic law.⁶⁵ Teachers of these *Madaris* were conservative in their approach towards Islam and followed the traditionalist interpretation of Islamic Jurisprudence as per the Deobandi line of interpretation. The syllabus, taught in these schools, was based on conservative and traditional thoughts.⁶⁶ Special literature was published by the University of Nebraska-Omaha in Dari and Pashtu, the languages of most of the Afghan refugee students of these religious seminaries. The reading material of these textbooks was written in such a way that would easily brain wash its readers and promoted jihadist values and attracted the students towards war and militancy. Most of these books have found to be read and taught in the madrasahs under Taliban, who were raised to power in the 1990s.⁶⁷ As most of these refugees came from Afghanistan's rural areas, having conservative views, they did not question the literature, taught in the refugee camp schools. They willingly admitted their children in the schools.⁶⁸ Moreover, the free of cost registration, provision of food supplies and a monthly stipend, given to the pupils made the admission process more tempting for the people.

Shortly after getting Afghan favor through aid and assistance, United States then took a step towards its basic motive behind her "rescue operation" of the Afghan Muhajireen. The religious seminaries had now been converted into military training camps. Pakistan-US intelligence agencies started giving military training to the students of religious seminaries "under the garb of jihad" to free their Muslim homeland from the atheist forces of the Soviet Union and to restore an Islamic government over there. The spirit of Jihad coupled with the tribal concept of *Badal* (revenge) played an unavoidable role in encouraging the youngsters to fight against the *kafirs* (infidels) and even to sacrifice their

life for the sacred purpose of Jihad that would not only give them an identity of either a *ghazi* (a victorious soldier fought the holy war) or a *Shaheed* (a martyr) but their endeavors would provide them with an opportunity to take revenge (*badal*) and restore the honor of their family and homeland. The tribal psyche of an uncompromising sensitivity for religion and tribal norms had been tactfully exploited by the master minds of the 'game.' The role played by religious clerics (*Mullas*) in this concern is of vital importance. The esteem, *Mullas* enjoyed in tribal society had been wisely utilized in raising cadres of 'loyal' Mujahedeen for war. The whole training operation was delegated to the ISI. The ISI gained even a more overwhelming position in the politics of Pakistan. Michael Rubin termed it as "a state within a state". Aid and arms were provided by ISI to religious based groups only ⁶⁹Graduates of these madrassas became trained militant activists, and many of them even formed their groups inside Afghanistan. Many joined JIP and JUIP in Pakistan and largely influenced Pakistan's political life in the following years.⁷⁰

It was in this way that militancy was promoted in the border areas during the Afghan war through the misuse of religious *Madaris* by the United States and Pakistan for nothing else but to achieve their respective strategic goals.⁷¹

By the 1980s sensing the situation suitable for them, foreign resistance fighters started moving to the Pakistan tribal areas to take part in the Afghan jihad. Some of the Afghan leaders were allowed to establish religious seminaries at high level to train the foreign fighters. One such school was established by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf on the Pakistan-Afghan border. Students from different countries and nationalities got military training in these areas and moved to other parts of the world to launch the so-called militant jihad against the 'infidels. They set up the Abu Sayyaf group in Philippines, Jama'ah Islamiya in Indonesia and al-Gumm'a al Islamiyya in Egypt. These groups were exposed to militant and extremist ideology.⁷² It was during this time that a Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, a teacher of Osama bin Laden, came with Arab recruits to participate in the jihad, already in full swing in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Osama bin Laden was also with him, who organized the Service Center in Pakistan. Both of them were issued Pakistani passports by General Zia. They visited the tribal belt frequently.⁷³

The Soviet-Afghan war continued till the late 1980s. During this time America as well as Saudi Arabia along with other Gulf countries aid program supplied these Muhajir camps, and schools in the tribal areas of Pakistan-Afghan border with food, clothing, and cash. Number of recruits

increased and became more accomplished under the US supported training program. USA pumped more of its advanced weapons, such as Stinger missiles to the Afghan Mujahidin against the Red army.⁷⁴ By the late 1980s, political situation in Pakistan took a turn and Zia died in a plane crash in 1988, and the governing seat was taken over by Benazir Bhutto, the young daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. On the other side, the Soviets were now exhausted by the decade-long war in Afghanistan and started planning to go back. The last battle, fought in 1989 was supported by the ISI under ISI chief General Hamid Gul. Osama bin Laden was also there. The Red army left Afghanistan in 1989 leaving a pro-Soviet government in Kabul behind.⁷⁵

The next two decades following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan saw Islamists influence in the domestic as well as foreign policy making of Pakistan. Keeping in view the successful experiment of 'Islamic socialism and Islamization', Pakistani policy makers gave good place to the Islamists in their planning internally, and extended their support to the newly emerged Taliban government in Afghanistan. Benazir Bhutto's foreign policy was highly influenced by the Taliban question. She, even, propagated the Taliban cause during her election campaign. Benazir's policy of supporting the Taliban government in Afghanistan was championed by her loyal Pukhtun colleague Naseerullah Babar, who had served the cause of supporting the religious extremist in Afghanistan, in his military capacity, since long.⁷⁶ During Benazir's reign Babar, as interior minister, played a key role in patronizing the Taliban in Afghanistan. He enjoyed great reputation among the Taliban. To some, he was the 'Taliban architect.' Keeping in view the strategic importance of Afghanistan as country's 'strategic depth,' Babar took the Taliban's friendship as strategic ally of Pakistan. Babar left no stone unturned to achieve his Afghan policy targets. It was under his patronage that the Islamist militants gained deep access in the tribal region of Pakistan.⁷⁷

It was a time when JUIP (Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan) emerged, for the first time, as a coalition party of the PPP (Pakistan People Party) second term government. Benazir Bhutto gave sizeable space to JUIP leadership in her government. She did so first to make political friendship with JUIP to compete with the Muslim League under Nawaz Sharif and Jamaat-i-Islami, the opposition parties, as well as to establish good alliances with the Taliban government in Kabul. JUIP and the Taliban were old friends since 1980s. Benazir appointed Maulana Fazlur Rahman, JUIP leader, as the Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee. Maulana was now in a position to have say in Pakistan's foreign policy. He visited Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States as

well as Washington to get financial support for the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was mainly due to his efforts that the Arab princes came in 1995 to Afghanistan to meet the Taliban's leadership and agreed to back up their Islamic government in Afghanistan. On the other hand JUIP, in order to precede their Jihad in Kashmir and other Muslim countries, used the Taliban training camps for the training of the Arabs and other foreign fighters, inside Afghanistan. It was during this time that Fazlur Rahman Khalil of the Harkat-al-Ansar, a Jamiat Ulema-i- Islam ally, arranged and sent lashkars to Kashmir, Chechnya and Yugoslavia for Jihad.⁷⁸ JUIP continued with the same pace even after the fall of Benazir government. Their power had become so grounded that they pressurized the new Prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, to extend his patronage to the Taliban's government in Kabul.⁷⁹ To please the Islamists, Nawaz introduced the Shariya Bill in the parliament, though it was turned down by the Senate.⁸⁰

Besides the Federal government, the provincial governments of the then North West Frontier Province (presently Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan for their own political interests, played a very important role in disturbing peace in the tribal areas and enriched the government as well as the Islamists to promote their agenda of Jihad. Aftab Sherpao of the PPP, the then Chief Minister of NWFP, in order to strengthen his position, allowed the local tribal Maliks to supply food to the warring groups in Afghanistan, which promoted smuggling and other illegal activities in the border areas.⁸¹ This easiest source of income attracted the jobless youth in the tribal villages towards smuggling. They used to go to Afghanistan, where they have interaction with the fighting groups, who share their philosophy of holy wars and convinced them to join them, as taking part in the Jihad would give them double advantage, their reward as a Ghazi (the Muslim warrior who battled infidels and remained alive from the battlefield after a successful holy war) or a Shaheed (a martyr who was killed in the battlefield while fighting against the infidels), and to support their families by providing them money which they have to receive from the fighting commanders in Afghanistan. This further encouraged militancy, gun-culture and terrorism in the tribal areas. The emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan further deteriorated the situation. Militant trends had been more strengthened among the tribal people. Thousands of the tribal youth joined the Taliban's ranks in the name of Jihad and Islam.⁸² The political situation in Baluchistan was confused due the political tussle between PPP government and the then Chief Minister of the province, Zulfiqar Ali Magsi over the permit system. Taliban took advantage of this situation and instigated one party against the other. In

this way they got maximum advantage of the permit system. This excessive supply of foodstuff to Afghanistan resulted in inflation in Pakistan. Provincial governments, for the attainment of their party and group vested interests played an important role in compelling Pakistani policy makers to provide maximum support to the Taliban.⁸³

The ISI played a major role in the military training and in the provision of logistic support first to the Afghan Mujahidin and later to the Taliban. They even continued helping out the Afghan Jihad fighters in the post 1980s.

The fundamentalist Islamic trends gained more momentum during the earlier years of Pervez Musharraf's military rule. He was fully convinced due to his predecessor's experiments of the use of Islam as a tool for strengthening his position. He raised the slogan of Enlightened Islam. He 'modernized' the *Madaris*, provided computers and appointed teachers there to teach the students software programming. He also got assistance from the western countries in this regard. These *Madaris* have been supervised by fundamentalist Islamic groups like JUIP who have been patrons of the Afghan Mujahidin and Taliban. Providing such facilities to them empowered these institutions to fulfill their objectives in a more sophisticated way. Their basic objective was still the propagation of their 'jihad philosophy' in the *Madaris*. Most of the religious schools in the tribal areas, have been the cheapest source of education for the children in these remote areas, and provided a good number of fighters to the Taliban and Al-Qaida, who are more skilled than the former batches, not only in military training but also in the use of modern technology.⁸⁴

During the first years of his military rule, Musharraf followed a pro-Taliban policy. He not only extended his support to the Taliban but tried to convince the world to recognize the Taliban rule and remove the sanctions imposed against them. Musharraf gave enough space to the Islamic political alliance, the MMA (Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal) in their election campaign. As a result of which MMA successfully formed government the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan after the general elections held in October 2002. This success emboldened the fundamentalists to influence Pakistan's domestic as well as foreign policy. The main objective of Musharraf was to legitimize his military intervention by creating the perception of rescuing Pakistan from a possible fundamentalist and militant take over.⁸⁵ It was the result of Musharraf's policies that the hard line Islamist Pakistani politicians got access to Provincial as well as National Assembly. They were now in a position to influence domestic and foreign policy alike.⁸⁶

On the whole, these political interests and strategies of Pakistani politicians and policy planners, led Pakistani cultural life in general and of the Pukhtun's in particular towards Islamic radicalism, extremism and terrorism. Islamic fundamentalism that was being introduced to the people of Pakistan in the garb of Islamic Socialism and Islamization by Bhutto and Zia respectively, led the nation towards constant devastation. Zia policies brought drugs and Kalashnikov culture and Musharraf's policies gave the gift of suicide attacks and drones to his people.⁸⁷

Structural Flaws and the Rise of Militancy in the Pukhtun Region

FATA has recently been merged into the settled districts. However, it remained isolated for quite a long time. The administrative set up of the region was based on the century old Frontier Crimes Regulation 1901 (FCR).⁸⁸ The system was devised by the British in 1901, to control the locals and to utilize the area as British line of defense against any aggression through Afghanistan. Their policies had nothing to do with developmental work in the tribal areas, which could be beneficial for the local population.⁸⁹

After independence, Pakistan inherited FATA and its colonial administrative set up, which was based on FCR. The FCR was far away from formal constitutional framework. Administratively, the area was then divided into different administrative units, called Tribal Agencies. Each of the unit was headed by a Political Agent. Every Political Agent administered his respective unit with the help of tribal chieftains called Maliks, and other tribal elders termed as *Spin gireh* (Pashtu word used for white bearded or an aged person) through a system of indirect administration. Jarga remained the main local institution that makes decisions in accordance with the local customary laws called Pukhtu or *Rivaj*.⁹⁰ The Political Agent, who was a Federal civil servant, enjoyed certain political powers in his respective unit. He used to act as an executive, a judge and a revenue collector in his area. The Political Agent keeps a link with the Maliks or Lungi holders, who receive allowances (Mojib) from the Political Agent, to maintain peace and order in his respective area.⁹¹

The region had been administered through the FCR. It was basically a set of laws consisting of collective punishments and arbitrary detention. The FCR has often been termed as "a bad law nobody can defend" by the Independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.⁹² The social and legal judicial set up in FATA remained different from the rest of the country. The Political Agent used to act as a Judge in accordance with the

FCR. The legal procedure practiced throughout the country has no role in decision making in the tribal area.⁹³ The primary purpose of a Jarga, in the western sense, is not to dispense justice, but to resolve conflict. Prof. Qibla Ayaz asserts that ‘the purpose of Jarga is to resolve the situation, not to go to the root of the problem’. The tribal system of governance as a whole has not been as per modern democratic rules. The Political Agent used to perform his duty as a government servant but not as a representative of the local population. He used to receive funds from the government but hardly bothered to use these funds on developmental projects in the area. The Maliks, also misused their authority. They never enjoyed popular support among the local population of FATA.⁹⁴ The institution of Jarga has also been corrupted. The Jarga in most cases favored the richer and more influential party. Moreover, because of its financial requirements, it became unaffordable for the poor to convene a Jarga.⁹⁵

With the emergence of militant activities in the region, in the backdrop of the Afghan Jihad during 80s, and then onward September 11 incident, the tribal belt has been in the limelight for both national and international policy makers. The Afghan Mujahedeen and later the Taliban were housed and trained in the region under the US and Pakistan’s official patronage. Everything regarding the area remained unnoticed at all except the cultural norms, which fitted into the war strategy (i.e., to shelter and shield the militant cadres under Pukhtunwali with the locals). The militant organizations, under such circumstances got footings in the area.⁹⁶ The militants stimulated the locals with the *Shariah* courts of justice, seemingly more reliable and quick in the dispensation of justice than the local Jarga. The vacuum created by the archaic structure of governance was tactfully filled up by the militants. They introduced *Shura* (religious consultative council) that served many of the purposes of a tribal Jarga, more conveniently than a traditional Jarga. The local population unable to get justice and security through any other means welcomed the militants and their system of governance. The gaps in the local system and the ‘deliberate negligence’ of the government towards the administrative uplift of the area led the region towards militancy and extremism.⁹⁷

The region has been used as a safe haven by certain local and international militant groups. These groups include the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. It is partly due to state’s strategic policies and partly due to loopholes in the traditional tribal structure. However, certain recent developments in national and international politics led the government to re-think its stance over the tribal region. It was in 2018

that a major breakthrough came from the government to mainstream the region by passing the bill for the merger of FATA into the KP province. Yet, the plan failed to pacify the feelings and aspirations of the local population. They considered it an ill-planned and poorly conducted move by the government that fell much shorter of the traditional spirit of the region.⁹⁸ Moreover, the implementation process and the uncertain mechanism regarding the power distribution invoked criticism from the opinion holders, which was quite alarming on the other side.

The dubious status of law-and-order situation in the newly merged areas needs urgent solution. Delay may escalate tension if things continue the way they are. Furthermore, the long standing grievances of the locals and the PTM's (Pashtun Tahafuz Movement) demands for justice and accountability should be given enough room as any ignorance may lead the situation to the worst of its kind.

Religious Clergy and its Religio-Cultural Strategy in Pukhtun Society

Religion plays an important role in Pukhtun society. They conflated both their culture and religion and joined them together. In most cases, concerns of Pukhtunwali overlap with Islamic principles. Likewise, the religious leadership enjoys an unmatched position in Pukhtun society. The Pukhtuns respect the religious clergy, which they usually call *Mullas*. The 'charismatic' personality of *Mullas* has always been considered a source of peace and guidance in segmentary-lineage societies, particularly in times of social distress and conflict. It was partly due to the low literacy rate in the Pukhtun society that they always considered *Mullas* as the custodians of religion and righteous path. However, the religious class cognizant of their position in society seemed to utilize the ignorance and blind trust of their devotees for their personal power and prestige. The role of *Mullas* is quite evident in exploiting the religious feelings of the tribesmen in the Frontier belt.⁹⁹ The region has a historical background of such religious uprisings in different periods with the central role played by their religious leadership. The uprisings under Haddah Mulla (1897) and the Faqir of Ipi (1897-1960) are such kind of endeavors that happened in the region.¹⁰⁰

The same tactics were employed by both the Islamists and the state of Pakistan, during the Afghan Jihad and after. The Taliban leader, Mulla Umar, in order to legitimize his position, went so far that he had reportedly put on a sacred cloak believed by many to be the original garment worn by the Prophet Mohammed the Last prophet upon whom,

his Progeny and Companions be peace This move of Mulla Umar gave him the expected audience for his cause not only in Afghanistan but beyond the borders. Similarly, the emergence and success of Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) under Maulana Sufi Muhammad, in the Dir region, Swat and Malakand in 1992 could be accredited to the religio-culture complex phenomenon.¹⁰¹ On the contrary, the government of Pakistan during the Afghan Jihad utilized the charisma of the Mulla by installing the orthodox Deobandi Mullas in the tribal areas to popularize the cause for the so called 'Jihad' among the Pukhtuns. (Discussed thoroughly in the preceding section)¹⁰² Each of the 'actors,' in the 'power-prestige game' tactfully manipulated the religious sentiments of the locals and pushed the region into an endless extremism and militancy in the name of religion.

Deplorable Economic Conditions of the Pukhtun Region and Militancy

The socio-economic condition of the Pukhtun region is deplorable. The living standards of the local population are poor. About 60 % of the people live below the national poverty line. The per capita income is as low as half of the national average, whereas per capita developmental expenditure is reportedly only 33% of the national average. The literacy rate, according to the FATA Census Report 1998, is 17.42% of the total population.¹⁰³ Moreover, people being poor, prefer to send their children to seminaries, where they are provided with free religious education. Most of these seminaries were established during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s. The financial aid to these seminaries came from international donors including Saudi Arabia. The syllabus of these seminaries is mainly based on Salafi and Deobandi version of Islam.¹⁰⁴

The health sector is also in abysmal condition. The number of hospitals, dispensaries, Rural Health Clinics, T.B Clinics, Basic Health Units, Leprosy Centers and Sub Health Centers are not sufficient to fulfill the needs of the area.¹⁰⁵ Most of these health units are not provided with trained paramedical staff and medicines. Doctors and paramedical staff at state-run hospitals do not show up for duty due to security concerns.¹⁰⁶

The Census Report of 1998 stated that less than 10 % of the land is arable. Out of 450, 792 arable hectares only 184, 825 hectares are under irrigation. The lack of roads and cold storage affected the proper marketing of farm production.¹⁰⁷ Due to poor condition of roads and other required facilities, the industrial activities are weak in the area. There are small industrial units like stone processing, textile weaving, furniture

manufacture, and light engineering units producing fire arms. These are mainly owner financed units, operating without government support. But as a matter of fact, these are far lower than required to provide employment to the jobless local population.¹⁰⁸ Natural resources of the area are either under-exploited or in control of timber mafia like in Swat.¹⁰⁹

For survival, these poor conditions compelled the local population to turn and depend on other non-agricultural activities such as transport, arms manufacturing, trade, drug trafficking, and cross border trade (smuggling).¹¹⁰ In addition, the tribes also continued to kidnap people for ransom.¹¹¹

The stated poor socio-economic conditions provided golden opportunity to the militants to exploit the local population and to use the region for their terrorist activities. Soon after entering into Pakistan, in the post 9/11 scenario, they instantly started encouraging the unemployed tribesmen particularly the youth to join their cadres by offering financial incentives to them.¹¹² The poverty ridden youth of the area readily joined the militants and started working for them even at the cost of their own lives. It was an opportunity for them to serve the rest of their family members and save them from dying of starvation.¹¹³

Conclusion

As a frontline state in the US led war on terror, Pakistan in general and its North-Western areas, in particular, suffered enormous social and economic losses. Political and socio-cultural instability were other negative fallouts. Due to these changes, the erstwhile FATA remained under the media and researcher's radar screen. The tribal culture of the region across the border is known as Pukhtunwali. It guides the life world of the Pukhtuns. It has been termed as having close similarities to the militants' code of conduct. Such negative portrayals of the Pukhtuns are the cause of misrepresentations of Pukhtunwali in the media. Terms coined included militants, fundamentalists and terrorists. The Pukhtun culture has been tagged as a breeding ground for the growth of such negative activities. It has been argued that the tribal people provided hideouts to the terrorists, who crossed over into the tribal areas of Pakistan, as a gesture of good will on their part to the ideology of the militants. Certain components of Pukhtunwali (i.e., *Melmasty* or hospitality, *Panah* or asylum and *Badal* or revenge) have been cited in this context.

The provision of shelter to a seeker by the Pukhtuns is a practical demonstration of their way of life. They provide *Panah* to anyone who asks for it, even if by an enemy. Likewise, the Pukhtuns offer *Melmastya* to all guests, even to a stranger. Added to this, the support of tribal *Aman Lashkar* to the Pakistan army during military operations for the elimination of the insurgents rejects certain misperceptions. Moreover, the Pukhtun institution of *Jarga* has several times been targeted by the militants. Deadly sufferings of the tribal people at the hands of militant groups in tribal areas added to the inhumane chain of bomb blasts across the Pukhtun region testify to the preceding statement.

In a nutshell, it is neither the Pukhtuns nor their culture that patronized militants or nourished militancy at their home. The rise of militancy and the presence of certain militant groups in the tribal areas of Pakistan is a multidimensional and multifaceted issue. In fact, various factors played a deadly role in their respective spheres in creating, grooming, patronizing and spreading militancy and terrorism in the tribal areas. A historical account of the region shows that it has always remained an epicenter of conflicts for centuries to the expansionist designs of imperialist powers. The situation turned more troublesome during the Afghan War in the 1980s. The end of the Afghan War resulted into the creation of Taliban and the rise of militancy in the region as well as across the globe. Moreover, the weak structure of the government institutions, the uncertain condition of law and order and the ineffective and unjustifiable system of justice, added to the low literacy rate, high rate of unemployment and the miserable condition of health sector provided the opportunity to the militant, who came and filled up the space, created since long by different national, international and regional actors for their personal gains. Besides, the Taliban and Al Qaeda and other militant organizations, the political and strategic leadership of Pakistan along with their Western and Arab tallies, too, exploited the socio-cultural conditions of the tribal people for their respective interests and aspirations.

It is, thus, highly imperative to keep these facts in mind, while studying the phenomenon of terrorism and its connection to Pukhtun region and its culture. For an informed analysis, the researchers on the issue need to physically visit the area, meet the opinion makers, and gain first-hand information about the Pukhtun way of life. In the research process, the researchers may keep in mind certain realities, while labeling the Pukhtuns as extremists. Likewise, the historical background of the Pukhtun nation should also be considered. The comparatively rigid and conservative culture of Pukhtun society has strong reasons. Their land

has an extreme and unfriendly environment; they inhabit dry plains with severe heat; their terrain is rugged; the high unsympathetic mountains, the desolate deserts, the extreme weather and the scantily resourced valleys, have shaped their socio-cultural outlook and the significant but vulnerable location of their homeland trained them as warriors to defend their country against aggressors. Furthermore, the unique geographical location of the region as well as the strategic interests and political ambitions of the great powers left the Pukhtuns at the crossroad of history, where they have always been seen either at a defensive fight against the aggressors or as being a prey, black mailed in the name of their culture and traditions, to the ambitious designs of the great powers in the region.

It is thus through a vigilant and impartial insight into the whole phenomenon, the dilemma of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Pukhtun region, history, and culture could only be resolved, and the stigma of terrorism and radicalization could be removed from the name of Pukhtun and Pukhtunwali.

Notes and References

¹ An abridgement of the paper was presented in the 26th **International Pakistan History Conference “State and Society in South Asia: Historical Perspective”**, held at the Department of History, University of Peshawar on 9th-11th October, 2017, jointly organized by the Department of History, University of Peshawar and Hamdard Foundation Pakistan.

² Pukhtuns, Pukhtuns, Pashtuns and Pathans are among the ancient people of the world. The origin of the Pukhtuns has been a subject of intense debate in the last two hundred years. There are three schools of thought with three different theories explaining the origin of the Pukhtuns. These are The Bani Israelite Theory, The Aryan, Theory and The Mixed-Race Theory. Geographically, Pukhtuns constitutes the major ethnic group of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), and Baluchistan. Besides these areas, they live almost throughout the country. Afghanistan is the country, where Pukhtuns inhabit the major ethnic group of the populace. They are also scattered in other parts of the world like, Gulf countries, United Kingdom, United States of America, Indonesia, Malaysia etc. For a detailed account of the origin of the Pukhtuns please read, Syed Abdul Quddus, *The North-West Frontier of Pakistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1990), 66. Henceforth Quaddus, *The North-West Frontier of Pakistan*. Sayyed Bahadur Shah Zafar Kaka Khel, *Puhktana Da Tareekh Pa Ranra Key* (Pashtu) (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1961), 14-18. There is a brief account of the Bani Israelite Theory in Sahibzada Masudul Hasan Khan Sabri Afghani, *The Culture and Society of Pakistan* (Lahore: Publishers Emporium, 1994), 143-151. A critical narration is given in Khan Roshan Khan, *Afganon Ki Nasli Tareekh* (Urdu) (Karachi: Roshan Khan and Company, 1981), 11-40. Allah Bakhsh Yusufi, *Yususzai Pathan* (Urdu) (Karachi:

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¹⁰ H. C. Wylly, *The Borderland: The Country of the Pathans* (Karachi: Indus Publications, 1998), 6.

¹¹ Edward E. Oliver, *Across the Border or Pathan and Biloch* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2000), 228.

¹² Wylly, *The Borderland: The Country of the Pathans*, 5-6.

¹³ Farooq Yousaf, "Pakistan's Tribal Pashtuns, Their Violent Representation, and the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement," *SAGE Open* January-March, 2019, 3. URL: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244019829546>, accessed on 18.6.2021.

¹⁴ Brandon Marsh, *Ramparts of Empire: British Imperialism and India's Afghan Frontier, 1918–1948* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13.

¹⁵ Bangash, *The Frontier Tribal Belt: Genesis and Purpose under the Raj*, 20-21.

¹⁶ Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "The Pashtun Counter-Narrative," *Middle East Critique* · July 2016, 11. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305414293_The_Pashtun_Counter_Narrative/link/5eecf0c7458515814a6b5229/, accessed on 19.6.2021.

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³⁴ Alexander the Great invaded India in 327 BC. His army under the command of his General Seleucus, had to face stiff resistance from the Pukhtun tribesmen, but ultimately conquered the area and included it to his Macedonian Empire. Naveed Ahmad Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas* (Islamabad: Community Appraisal & Motivation Programme (CAMP), 2010). Henceforth Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas*. The Mauryans held the region from BC 321 to BC 250. The death of Ashok, the great Mauryan emperor was followed by the rise of the Greco—Bactrian monarchy. Between BC 130 to BC 100, the Sakas, a Scythian race from Central Asia ruled over the country with an extended rule over North Western India (the present-day Khyber Pukhtunkhwa). The Scythians were displaced by Yueh—Chi, a Mongolian race from North Western China. They laid the foundations of the Kushan dynasty. The Kushans were followed by another Mongolian race, the Huns in 500 AD. They establish their rule over Northern India. India was then ruled over by the Hindu rulers. In the ninth and tenth centuries AD the region was under the control of the Rajputs. The Rajput Raja was the last Hindu to rule over the Pukhtuns. He was defeated by Mehmud of Ghazna in Peshawar. The mighty invasions of Mehmud Ghaznavi were followed Muhammad of Ghur, another Afghan invader from Afghanistan in 1186 AD. Both of these Afghans followed used the traditional invading route from Central Asia through the Khyber Pass. The same route was first followed by Chengiz Khan in 1212 AD and then by Amir Timur in 1398. Amir Timur brought miserable destruction for the region. In 1525 the Mughuls came by defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the historic battle of Panipat and laid the foundations of the mighty Mughul Empire in the

Indian sub-Continent. The Mughal rule came to an end in 1764. The British now became the masters of Indian sub-Continent. The English ruled over the land till the mid of the 20th century. They had to face stiff resistance from the Pukhtun tribes throughout their rule over India. The English, time to time, sent military campaigns to bring the Pukhtun area under their control, as these areas had great strategic importance for the British rule in India, against Russians, who are also trying to get control of this strategic part of sub-continent to defeat The English and have an access to the warm water of Arabian Sea. The British followed policy of persecutions, peace agreements and armed interventions in the tribal region, but they failed to subdue the Pukhtuns permanently. Today the region serves a battle field for the US led European army and that of the Afghani Taliban. The region thus remained a buffer zone between the ancient as well as the modern states. Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 3-4.

³⁵ Caroe, *The Pathans 550 BC—AD 1957*, 44.

³⁶ Khan, *The Tribal Areas of Pakistan*, 98.

³⁷ Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 3-4.

³⁸ *FATA Sustainable Development Plan 2007-2015*. Peshawar: Civil Secretariat FATA, 5. URL: http://urban.unhabitat.org.pk/_Portals/0/Portal_Contents/FATA/Landi%20Kotal/FATA%20Sustainable%20Dev%20Plan%202007-2015.pdf, accessed on September 12, 2011.

³⁹ Hassan Abbas, *Militancy in Pakistan's Borderlands: Implications for the Nations and for Afghan Policy* (New York: The Century Foundation, 2010), 12-13. URL: <http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/hassan-abbas-militancy-in-pakistan-s-borderlands-implications-for-the-nation-and-for-afghan-policy.pdf>, accessed on July 6, 2012.

⁴⁰ Michael Rubin, "Who is Responsible for the Taliban," *MERIA (Middle East Review of International Affairs)*, vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2002), 7-8. URL: <http://www.gloria-center.org/meria/2002/03/mrubin.pdf>, accessed on July 23, 2012.

⁴¹ Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan in the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.), 3.

⁴² Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2007), 143.

⁴³ Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, "Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA): Will it End the Current Militancy." *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, No. 64 (January 2012), 7. URL: http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/13063/1/Heidelberg_Papers_64_Ali_Shah.pdf, accessed on June 13, 2012.

⁴⁴ "I am glad to note that you have pledged your loyalty to Pakistan. ... I am fully aware of the part that you played in the establishment of Pakistan ... and I am thankful to you for all the sympathy and support, you gave in my struggle and fight for the establishment of Pakistan. Keeping in view your loyalty, help, assurances and declarations, we ordered, as you know, the withdrawal of troops from Waziristan as a concrete and dignified gesture on our part, that we treat you

with absolute confidence and trust. ... Pakistan has no desire to unduly interfere with your internal freedom. Pakistan wants to help you and make you, as far as it lies in our power, self-reliant and self-sufficient and help in your educational, social and economic uplift, and not to be left, as you are dependent on annual doles, as has been the practice hitherto which meant that at the end of the year you were no better off than beggars asking for allowances, if possible a little more. We want to put you on your legs as self-respecting citizens who have the opportunities of fully developing and producing what is best in you and your land. ... I agree with you that education is absolutely essential, and I am glad that you appreciate the value of it. It will certainly be my constant solicitude and indeed that of my Government to try to help you to educate your children. ... Your desire for entering the Pakistan service in the Civil and Military will receive my full consideration and that of my Government. ... You have also expressed your desire that the benefits, such as your allowances and *khassadari*, that you have had in the past and are receiving, should continue. Neither my Government nor I have any desire to modify the existing arrangement except, in consultation with you, so long as you remain loyal and faithful to Pakistan.” (Jinnah's speech to the tribal Jirga at Peshawar on 17 April 1948) Abid Mazhar, *Federally Administered Tribal Areas: a Need for Graduated Approach*. Master Thesis, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2010, 9-17. URL: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA603030.pdf> , accessed on September, 26, 2021.

⁴⁵ After the 1947 Partition of India, the government of Afghanistan found an opportunity to reclaim the lands lost to British India as a result of the Durand Line Agreement in 1893. These lands, known as Pashtunistan, were annexed to Pakistan. The area stretches from Afghanistan to the areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan in Pakistan. It remained the backbone in the Afghan foreign policy, particularly under Daud. The cause was strongly supported by the ANP leadership in Pakistan. The issue has been resolved at least in Pakistan in 2010, by renaming the NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 15, 2010.

⁴⁶ Ty L. Groh, “*Ungoverned Spaces: The Challenges of Governing Tribal Societies*.” Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California, 2006, 51. URL: http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/docs/pubs/06jun_groh.pdf, accessed on July 11, 2012.

⁴⁷ Rubin, Who is Responsible for the Taliban, 4.

⁴⁸ Groh, “*Ungoverned Spaces: The Challenges of Governing Tribal Societies*, 57.

⁴⁹ Rubin, Who is Responsible for the Taliban, 4-5.

⁵⁰ Hanif-ur-Rahman, “Pak-Afghan Relations during Z. A. Bhutto Era: The Dynamics of Cold War,” *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol. XXXIII, No.2 (2012), 31-34. URL: <http://docshare01.docshare.tips/files/29051/290510606.pdf> , accessed on 26.6.2021.

⁵¹ Syed Rashid Ali, et al., “Other Side of the Picture: Suppression of Pakhtun Nationalist Political Force and its Relation with Terrorism in Pakistan,” *International Journal of Learning and Development*, vol. 2, No. 1 (2012), 266-

267. URL: <http://www.macrotink.org/journal/index.php/ijld/article/view/1322/1085>, accessed on June 20, 2013.

⁵² , Kathy Gannon, *I is for Infidel: From Holy War to Holy Terror (18 Years inside Afghanistan)* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 138.

⁵³ Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan between Mosque and Military* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005), 317.

⁵⁴ Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 138.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 138-139.

⁵⁶ John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 54.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁸ Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 141.

⁵⁹ Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 139.

⁶⁰ Cooley, *Unholy Wars*, 55.

⁶¹ Rubin, Who is Responsible for the Taliban, 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶³ Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*, 80.

⁶⁴ The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 opened up the first wave of foreign funding for *Madradas* in Pakistan. Fearful of growing Iranian influence and the spread of Revolution Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and some other oil rich Muslim countries started pumping money into hardline Pakistani Sunni religious organizations willing to counter the supposed Shia threat. Millions of dollars were poured into setting up madrasas across the country, particularly in Baluchistan province, bordering Iran. *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁵ Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 119.

⁶⁶ M. J. Gohri, *The Taliban Ascent to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 32-36.

⁶⁷ Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*, 80.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁹ Rubin, Who is Responsible for the Taliban, 6-7.

⁷⁰ Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, 120.

⁷¹ Khan, *The Tribal Areas of Pakistan*, 90.

⁷² Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 142.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁷⁴ Rubin, Who is Responsible for the Taliban, 7.

⁷⁵ Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 143.

⁷⁶ Ijaz Ahmad Khan, "Understanding Pakistan's Pro-Taliban Afghan Policy." *Pakistan Horizon*, April 2007, Vol. 60, No. 2, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy Analysis* (April, 2007), 151. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261980000_Understanding_Pakistan's_ProTaliban_Afghan_Policy/link/570e133808ae3199889cda13/download, accessed on May 28, 2021.

⁷⁷ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/101748/naseerullah-babar-passes-away> , accessed on 28.5.2021.

⁷⁸ Ahmad Rasheed, "Pakistan and the Taliban," in *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, ed. William Maley (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2002), 74-75.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁰Razia Sultana, "A Study of Talibanization in Pakistan." *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* vol. XXIX, No. 2 (July-December 2008), 125.

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⁸²Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*, 147.

⁸³Rasheed, *Pakistan and the Taliban*, 82-84.

⁸⁴Gannon, *I is for Infidel*, 143.

⁸⁵Haqqani, *Pakistan Between Mosque and Military*, 318-322.

⁸⁶Wang Lian, "Talibanization in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan," *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* vol. 4, no. (2010), 19. URL: <http://mideast.shisu.edu.cn/picture/article/33/f6/91/1c67de2f4f80bc2016e87091b9f3/d9994fcc-939f-4992-922b-5d98bef78dec.pdf> , accessed on August 9, 2012.

⁸⁷Ali, "Other Side of the Picture, 269.

⁸⁸Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial and Abdul Basit, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, 2010), 149.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰Khan, *The Tribal Areas of Pakistan*, 93.

⁹¹Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 6-7.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁹³Khan, *The Tribal Areas of Pakistan*, 94.

⁹⁴Amin Tarzi and Robert D. Lamb, Measuring Perceptions about the Pashtun People (Washington: Center for Strategic Studies, March, 2011), 4-5. URL: http://csis.org/files/publication/110316_Lamb_PashtunPerceptions_web.pdf, accessed on January 4, 2012.

⁹⁵*FATA: A Profile of Socio-Economic Development, IPRI Fact file, 2008*, 20.

⁹⁶Rana, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA*, 149-151.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 151.

⁹⁸ <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/11/14/faltering-prospects-for-peace-in-pakistans-newly-merged-pashtun-tribal-districts/> accessed on July 27, 2021.

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¹⁰⁰Kriti M. Shah, "The Pashtuns, the Taliban, and America's Longest War," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 57, No. 6 (November/December, 2017). URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26367791.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A141336ab37e03449d52417659bf4e41e> , accessed on July 26, 2021.

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¹⁰³ Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Rana, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA*, 151.

¹⁰⁵ Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Rana, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA*, 190.

¹⁰⁷ Shinwari, *Understanding FATA: Attitude towards Governance, Religion & Society in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas*, 27.

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¹¹³ Habib-ur-Rahman, "Rising Trends of Terrorism: Causes, Dynamics and Remedies," *The Dialogue*, vol. 4, no. 3 (July-September, 2009), 422.