

Afghan Factor in the Rise of Militancy in FATA

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Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan are the focus of world attention once again after the incident of 9/11. FATA has remained in international focus since the turbulent Cold War era due to its geostrategic position and the mode of the tribal society. Rival forces have competed to extend their spheres of influence in the region. Though FATA has remained at the cross-roads of civilization yet it has assumed much more importance after 9/11 due to the rise of militancy there. The situation in FATA is extremely volatile nowadays. It has dangerous repercussions not only for the tribal region but also for the country even for the region and the world at large. However, one should not be surprised for such type of situation in FATA because since ancient times it has always been of critical importance to South Asian and Central Asian states and empires due to its geographical and strategic alignment on the northwest and the character of its inhabitants as well. Yet the understanding of the tribal region, unfortunately, is driven by a lack of awareness of the broader history and deeper cultural knowledge that have shaped this region. In the present context of militant and extremist activities in the tribal region of FATA, besides many other factors, Afghan factor plays an important role in the rise of militancy in the tribal areas. The rise of militancy in FATA is the outcome of the Afghan wars with Soviet Union in the twentieth century and with the United States of America in the twenty first century, and Pak-Afghan relationship plays an important role as well. What is happening in Afghanistan directly affects the Pashtun belt particularly the tribal region of Pakistan. Here an attempt has been made to analyse the role of Afghan factor in the present militant and extremist activities in FATA. In order to argue its case, this paper relies upon published primary and secondary sources as well as the researcher's first hand knowledge by discussion of the topic with many experts on the subject of FATA.

Keywords: Afghanistan, rise, Militancy, FATA, 9/11, Pakistan

British departure as a colonial power from the sub-continent had given birth to two successor states, Pakistan and India. The tribal areas were incorporated as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and placed under the direct administration of the federal government of Pakistan. FATA has been administered through the same old colonial rules and regulations since then. Some changes introduced by PPP government in FCR apart, no basic change of policy and laws regarding the tribal region, etc. took place since then. But despite all these, the tribesmen have not only remained peaceful and calm but have also rendered valuable services to Pakistan.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 70s and 80s directly affected the people of FATA. Due to common ethnic, religious, social and political background, the tribesmen alongside their Afghan brethren fought against the occupation of the Soviets. The Afghan refugees were accommodated by the government of Pakistan in the country, especially in the Pashtun/tribal belt which resulted in the development of matrimonial alliances between them. The withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan did not prove attractive even for the

Afghan refugees, because the whole country was turned into a mess due to a civil war among the various ethnic and Islamist groups.

The emergence of Taliban movement on the political scene of Afghanistan not only attracted the Afghans but also the Pashtuns of Pakistan, particularly the tribesmen. The Taliban were hailed as the forces of God who were created for putting an end to the post-Soviet social and political anarchy in Afghanistan. After the incident of 9/11, Al-Qaida and its supporter Taliban militia was held responsible for the attacks on the US World Trade Center and Pentagon, which caused USA and the NATO forces to attack Afghanistan. As a result, the Taliban regime collapsed. It embittered the Pashtuns of FATA besides the Pashtuns of Afghanistan due to mutual ethnic, historical and religious connections.

The rise of militancy in FATA is the outcome of the Afghan wars with Soviet Union in the twentieth century and with USA in the twenty first century, and turbulent Pak-Afghan relationship played an important role as well. In addition, regional and international factors contributed to the phenomenon of militancy in the tribal region as well.

Militancy like terrorism is an ambiguous term. It is taken in the sense of acts of groups, parties or individuals, who are engaged in violence for religious, political, ideological, economic or social reasons (Research Report, 2011, p. 22-28; Hoffman, 2006, p. 1-42). Nowadays, both of the terms, militant and terrorist, are used synonymously. Militancy is an English word which is used in the sense of using an aggressive and vigorous force to achieve desired objectives, usually political ones. Here, not only physical force is applied but other means like media is also used as a tool for propagating a particular cause (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p. 9; Jackson, Gunning & Smyth, 2009, p. 162; Peloso, 2003, p. 238).

FATA is that tribal region of Pakistan which is in the eye of the storm since the incident of 9/11. It is adjacent to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan along the western border with Afghanistan. It is a direct legacy of the British Empire and the laws, through which FATA is governed, the Frontier Crime Regulations (FCR), were enacted by the Colonial Raj in 1901. It has assumed much more importance after 9/11 due to the rise of militant activities which serves as a menace for the governments, militaries and civilians of Pakistan, Afghanistan, US and others.

After the lapse of 66 years of independence, all governments in Pakistan have been exercising the same notorious British model of administration and retaining FCR. So, the people of FATA have been subjected to the old and outdated colonial laws that deny them the basic fundamental civil-cum-political rights, and equal economic opportunities, on a par with the rest of Pakistan. Despite its isolation, this region had generally remained a peaceful region and never posed a threat to the rest of the country. Unfortunately, due to the inability of the Pakistani authorities to acknowledge it as a significant and integral part of Pakistan, the tribal region has over a period of time, fallen into the hands of militant and extremist groups.

Afghan factor plays an important role in the rise of militancy in the tribal areas. Afghanistan was put on the tract of modernization in all fields of life by its government before World War II. Due to foreign influences, an assertive middle class was generated in the post-World War II era. The middle class increased with the strengthening of the modern state apparatus and development of the bureaucratic infrastructure and military during 1950s (Kakar, 1974; Dupree, 1974). Educational facilities were noticeably increased. The number of schools and students increased by 400% from 1950-1965 (Magnus, 1970, p. 60). The educated middle class was critical of the Afghan society in the field of political, economic, and social conditions. Moreover, the monarchy was thought to be the root of all evils and a hopeless institution (Kakar, 1978, pp. 195-216).

During the constitutional period from 1963-1973, four major ideological groups flourished: (1) the conservatives such as the business elites and religious elements, who wanted to maintain the status quo; (2) the liberals who were in favor of reformist approach and pleaded for mixed economy; (3) the leftists, who were in favour of a socialist revolution; (4) the fourth one was the fundamentalist group, who were in favour of an Islamic revivalism (Newell and Newell, 1981, pp. 48-55, 77).

The Soviet influence started to increase in Afghanistan in 1955. The Muslim scholars and intellectuals

started to worry about the Soviet influence and communism. To counter this influence, the first nucleus of a fundamentalist movement was formed by a group of professors in 1957, among them the most prominent were Professor Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, Professor Ghulam M. Niazi, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani and Dr. Saeed M. Musa Tawana. The group asserted limited influence because its activities were mainly confined to intellectual discussions. The concept of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Jammāt-i-Islami in Pakistan deeply influenced some of its members (Amin, 1984, p. 377). The first serious attempt in political sphere was made by a student Abul Rahim Niazi in 1968. He organized and formed student union, the Jawanan-i-Musalman (Muslim Youth) in Kabul University (Rehman & Qureshi, 1981, pp. 48-58). This group was a reactionary movement against both the increasing influence of communist groups in Afghanistan and the supportive and conservative elite of King Zahir Shah's government. The objective of this group was to reconstruct Afghan society according to the norms of Islamic traditions (Yousafzai, 1974, p. 175; Dupree, 1974). It sought the help of the detribalized middle class across ethnic lines. A lot of urban middle class and the rural classes' ulemas (religious scholars) joined this fundamentalist movement as well.

The students were influenced much by the fundamentalists. In a short span of time, the fundamentalists got two-third majority of the seats in the Kabul University Students Union elections of 1973 (Nations, 1980). But the situation took a turn at once after Sardar Daoud's coup d'état in 1973. The government started a joint attack on the fundamentalists. In the period from 1973-78, according to one estimate, more than 600 active members of the movement were killed by the communists in support of Daoud's regime (Amin, 1984, p. 377). The fundamentalists were persecuted because they were considered a serious rival for power and were planning to remove the government by joining the army. The active leaders and followers of the movement fled to Pakistan in 1974-75 for their safety and so, the movement became silent for a time being in Afghanistan.

The underground phase of the fundamentalist movement started at that time. The PPP government under Bhutto worried about Sardar Daoud's anti-Pakistan activities, particularly his Pushtoonistan campaign. As a counter strategy, Pakistan welcomed the fundamentalist leaders from Afghanistan and started providing them all types of help to fight against the Daoud government (Lifschultz, 1981, pp. 32-33; Rubin, 1995, p. 100; Hussain, 2005, p. 78; Abbas, 2005, pp. 81-82). The fundamentalist movement, with the secret support of the Pakistani establishment, started an insurgency movement in Afghanistan which shook the complacency of many power elite in Kabul (Rigby, 1982, p. 72). Daoud's government sensing the situation was willing to come to terms with Pakistan in 1976. After the agreement, both Pakistan and Afghanistan stopped interfering in each other's internal affairs.

After the Saur Revolution 1978

A widespread mass revolt started against the Khalqi regime in April 26, 1978. To avoid the communist labe, Taraki called the policy of the new regime as Afghan nationalism, economic and social justice as enunciated by Islam, and nonalignment policy. They claimed to be the followers of King Amanullah's reform programs (Dupree, 1979). Nevertheless, the communist character of the new regime was clear to the Afghan intelligentsia from the Soviet communist bloc extension, recognition, economic aid to the new regime and by replacing English with Russian as the required foreign language for secondary school students, and adoption of a national flag modeled after those of several Soviet Republics. The reforms were taken as communist character of the regime, which precipitated the revolt. The communist regime was unacceptable to nearly all layers of Afghan society except a small portion of urban middle class. Resistance movement was started at four fronts, the traditional elite, the religious class, the fundamentalist and nationalist groups in the rural regions. In this resistance movement, a considerable number of Russian advisors and their families and hundreds of Parchamis and Khalqis were brutally murdered. On the eve of the Soviet intervention, the resisting factions controlled 23 out of 28 provinces in Afghanistan (Amin, 1984, p. 380).

Mujahideen Groups and Their Social Bases

After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Kabul also rose against the puppet and Marxist government of Babrak Karmal. Only in the last quarter of the month of February 1980, more than 350 people were killed in Kabul, and more wounded and misplaced. More than 3000 people were officially admitted by Babrak Karmal to be arrested (Nations, 1980).

The organized resistance was started from the land of Pakistan after the Afghan refugees came in the middle of 1978. By the end of October 1979, more than 385000 registered Afghan refugees crossed border to

Pakistan. Before the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, on the average, 60,000 Afghans left their country every month but after the Soviet invasion a flow of refugees started migrating to Pakistan (Report on Afghan Refugees, 1982). Pakistan recognized six influential groups of Mujahideen, which had merged into two major alliances: traditionalists and fundamentalists. The traditionalist groups were: (1) Jabha Nijat-i-Milli (Sibghat- Ullah Mujaddidi); (2) Harakat-i-Islami (Nabi Mohammad Mohammadi), (3) Milli Islami Mahaz (Pir Ahmad Gilani). The fundamentalist groups were: (1) Jamiat-i-Islami (Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani); (2) Hizb-i-Islami (Younus Khalis group). (3) Hizb-i-Islami (Engineer Gulbadeen Hikmatyar); (4) Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan (Sayyaf). The fundamentalists played a very important and crucial role in various anti-government movements during the constitutional period (1963-73).

After the Saur Revolution, the traditionalist groups were formed. Their main hubs of support were the conservative religious elite, tribal chiefs, landlords, Pirs and Salifis. They pleaded for status quo in Afghanistan and supported the leadership of King Zahir Shah.

The monarchical government was overthrown in Afghanistan in 1973 and was replaced by national parliament. The moderate faction of the communist PDPA party dominated the parliament. Muhammad Daoud became its head as president. In the same way, here in Pakistan, a lot of changes took place with the loss of its eastern wing, Bangladesh.

In between 1963-1980, religion was steadily regularized in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of the religious leaders were marginalized during the constitutional development from 1963-1978. It was attempted to bring most of the religious centers under state control (Edwards, 2002, p. 196). Religious law was started as an independent subject in government universities with the purpose to bring traditional education in line with modern education. Most of the religious scholars started to seek religious education in state owned faculties in Pakistan, India, Cairo, etc. (Roy, 1988, pp. 106-112).

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 to support the pro-communist regime and advance its interests in the region. The Afghans were provided with arms within two weeks of the invasion to fight against the Soviet forces (Kuperman, 1999, pp. 219-263). When Pakistan felt its own insecurity, it joined hands with US and the Afghan Mujahideen against the Soviet Union. The CIA and ISI exploited to the full the socio-cultural inclination of Pashtuns on both sides across the border (Ziring, 2005, p. 127).

So, talking about the issue of militancy, extremism and terrorism in the tribal areas of FATA, one must have to take into account the developments occurring in the neighbouring Afghanistan. Whatever has happened in Afghanistan has had its direct impact on Pakistan in general and the Pashtuns and tribal areas particularly and vice versa.

The Rise of Militancy in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan

After inception of Pakistan, a lot of national and provincial organizations were formed for promoting the idea of a national religious curriculum and Sunni thoughts. Similarly, the religious parties were stressing for the enforcement of Islamic Sharia (Zaman, 2002, pp. 102-110). The ulema of Pakistan were active for strengthening the religious centers, masjids and madrassas. The madrassas of Deoband school of thought were established in all parts of Pakistan. The Deobandi madrassas established in KPK and Baluchistan particularly FATA trained a considerable number of Afghan ulemas as well (Haq, 1993, pp. 658-681; Dorronsoro, 2005).

After Saur Revolution, pro-Soviet military government under Nur Mohammad Tarakai was established in Afghanistan. Tarakai's communist influenced reforms in the socio-economic field made him unpopular. A widespread anti-Tarakai's government demonstrations started but were suppressed with Soviet assistance. However, the political demonstrations once again started in all parts of the country and anti-government tribal lashkars were formed who attacked military outfits and soon they would disperse and mingle in the local population to be traced (Edwards, 1988, pp. 22-50; Dawn, March-October, 1979).

Under pressure from the public, Tarakai was removed and his deputy Hafiz Ullah Amin became the head of the state. But the situation could not be controlled by him and so the Soviet army intervened and occupied Afghanistan in December 27, 1979. Amin was removed and replaced by Babrak Karmal. To cut the roots of the tribal lashkars, Karmal's government started a depopulation campaign along the eastern border. It led to the migration of the anti-Soviet groups and Afghan eastern Pakhtun population to Pakistan.

Likewise, a lot of changes took place in Pakistan as well. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was overthrown in a coup d'état by General Zia-ul-Haq. The narrow and bigoted religiosity plainly became a state policy of the General Zia's military regime (Alvi, 2003, p.37). Zia conceived a social order in which he sought all spheres of life to be regulated in accordance with Islamic injunctions. So, Zia began a radicalization of society which was referred to as Islamization process (Ahmad, 2009, p. 54). In the light of Zia's radicalized policies, the Pakistani society became more conservative over the last three decades (Aftab, 2008; Rashid, 1999). The Islamization process led to sectarian violence. A paradigm shift took place in the sectarian violence from occasional local disputes about customs and religious beliefs in the pre-Zia era to attacks on individuals and institutions of other sects in the post-Zia era.

In addition to Zia's Islamization process, the 'Jihadi' sentiments during anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan radicalized the Pashtuns/tribal society. The religious seminaries and refugee camps became the breeding grounds of Jihadi recruits in Pakistan and were trained and sent to Afghanistan for Jihad against the Soviet forces. Media played its due role as well for promoting the cause and message of Jihad. Pro-Jihad publications were printed in different languages from Peshawar, Karachi and Quetta in Pakistan. (Bedar Digest, 1989; Din, 2009; Khan, 2009). The Islamic parties in Pakistan like Jamat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) published their pro-Jihad publications and rendered support to their favourite Jihadi groups (Rana, 2008). In addition to the state-led ideological induction, the religious leaders and seminaries at societal level were also active in imparting religious education to the masses (Azam, 2009, p. 58). Like ulema, the religious seminaries were not confined to a sole purpose of imparting religious education but they had political affiliations as well (Rana, 2009, p. 31; Malik, 1996, pp. 208-209). All these developments had negatively impacted the region of FATA and radicalized its society.

The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and FATA

Pashtuns are mostly followers of the Deobandi school of thought. To get their support, the Madrassas established during the Soviet-Afghan war followed mostly Deobandi teachings. The number of Mujahideen was more than 1.6 million who were trained in Pakistan from 1982-1988 by the ISI and CIA. The total number of Mujahideen training camps established in Pakistan was 92, among forty only in Pashtun/tribal region (Hilali, 2005, pp. 121-122). Similarly in this period, about \$3.5 billion in aid and 65,000 tons of weapons were provided to the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviets. Majority of the Mujahideen and that of Islamic guerrilla groups were from Pashtun tribal race (Rubin, 1995, pp. 223-224). More than 2.5 million Afghan refugees migrated to Pakistan during the war and the subsequent civil war, of whom 62% resided in the tribal region and KPK (UNHCR Report, 2005).

Though Pakistan welcomed the Afghan refugees yet the government did not encourage direct attacks on Soviet forces. The government thought of the tribal areas as good place to be used for the said purpose were used as war fronts forward point for the Afghan Jihad. From the tribal regions the Mujahideen launched strikes on the Afghan and Soviet forces (Grau & Gress 2002, p. 62). Afghan forces, in response, made aerial bombardments on the tribal regions of Pakistan (Dawn, 1980).

The migration of the refugees continued and they kept settling the eastern border of Pakistan (Dawn, 1980). A symbiotic relationship developed between the Pakistani tribesmen and the refugees. The refugees provided a cheap labour to the local tribals. In return the tribals provided a safe shelter to the refugees (Haroon, 2007, p. 202). Pakistani tribesmen, encouraged by the Mujahideen leaders, started cultivating poppy crops. By 1980s, the production of poppy doubled and a large number of heroin refineries were established in the tribal region of Pakistan (Haq, 1996, p. 954). Besides, Darra Adam Khel Bazar became the main hub of selling of Russian arms captured by the Mujahideen and American and Chinese arms given as assistance to the Mujahideen (Amin, 1984, p. 390).

Since the Soviets invasion of Afghanistan, the Mujahideen used the tribal region of Pakistan as their front line against the Soviet occupation forces. Accordingly, a considerable number of Afghan refugees migrated to the tribal region of Pakistan. By 1986, up to 350 refugee villages were established by the Pakistani government in three provinces along the borderline. The registered villages in KPK were approximately 72% of the total (Dupree, 1988, p. 846).

After 1984, the Mujahideen were strong enough and they took over positions on the Afghan side of the frontier. They only came to Pakistan for supplies and treatment. The refugees in Pakistan frequently visited Afghanistan for cultivation of their lands (Dupree, 1988, p. 848). The Afghan war enhanced the economic status of the tribesmen which made them independent of the government of Pakistan.

The independent position of the tribal region is evident from the fact that Pashtuns on the Pakistani side of the border, with the lenient support of the government, were constantly trained and educated by madrassas for Afghan Jihad (Zahab & Roy, 2004, p. 27). Jihadi camps were established mostly in the tribal areas of Pakistan (Jamal, 2004). By the year 1986, Arabs also came to Afghanistan for Jihad and settled in the border area of Khost (Edwards, 2002, p. 18). These Mujahideen considered themselves as one ummah (Nation) and helped Afghan Mujahideen both economically and in human resource (Rubin & Rubin, 2002, p. 30).

The religious parties in Pakistan strongly supported the Afghan Jihad. The ulema announced the Afghan Jihad as the safety of Islam and Pakistan's borders (Haqqani, 1990, p. 290). The Jamiat-ul-Ulama Islam got its support for the Afghan Jihad through the ulemas and their religious seminaries (Haqqani, 1990, pp. 358-406). The Mujahideen of both Pakistani and Arab origin contributed their support to Afghan Jihad through the Afghan Mujahideen leaders.

Aftermath of the Soviet Withdrawal

The resistance movement completely drained out the Soviet energies. In his speech to the Communist Party meeting, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev admitted that external interference of the states and counter revolutionaries had made Afghanistan for Soviet as bleeding wound. It had brought heavy human, material and military losses for them (Tareen, 1990, p. 30). So, in order to save Soviet from complete collapse, they decided to withdraw after the Geneva Accord. But the Mujahideen rejected the accord. Gulbadin refuted the accord completely and announced that they would continue their resistance movement against the infidel regime in Afghanistan (The Muslim, 1988). Though the accord provided the way for the withdrawal of Soviets yet the future of Afghanistan remained undecided.

This situation turned Afghanistan into lawlessness and anarchy. A bloody war started between the Afghan regime in Kabul and the Afghan Mujahideen groups. It deteriorated the situation and jeopardized the socio-political system in Afghanistan. Due to total insecurity, the Afghan refugees were unwilling to return to their country. That's why, the tribal areas continued to be the home of millions of Afghan refugees as well as most of the Afghan commanders run their groups from the tribal region. It badly affected the tribal areas, further worsened security and law and order situation in the said area. Dr. Najib tried his best to calm the resistance against his government, nothing improved (Naseem, 1989, p. 60).

The Mujahideen continued their resistance struggle till the establishment of an Islamic government and refused any settlement with the Najib's regime. In spite of the fact of different factions of Mujahideen, they agreed to establish an Afghan interim government in Pakistan. So, they all agreed upon a formula and an interim government was established by seven different factions based in Pakistan (Frontier Post, 1992). Mujadaddi became the head of the Interim Government and Abdul Rab Rasul sayyaf as the Prime Minister.

Failure of Najib and especially of the Mujahideen government led to the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan. Taliban were expected to ensure the security of Afghanistan and to stop the civil war (Burns, 1995, p. 3). Kabul fell into the hands of the Taliban on 27 September 1996. Pakistan considered Taliban the most reliable pro-Pakistan elements. That's why, Pakistan provided all type of assistance to the Taliban (Rashid, 2000, p. 29). By

late 1997 a huge number of recruits from the training camps and religious madrassas joined the Taliban (Hussain, 2005, p. 204).

At the time of Soviet withdrawal, the administrative setup of the Pashtun areas remained unaffected. The validity of Durand Line and non-administration of the Pashtun areas in the north-western frontier was maintained by Pakistan. But economically, demographically and socially everything changed. The Afghan Jihad not only disrupted the social insularity of the tribal region but also transformed it into the hub of arms and heroine industry. The socio-political containment and economic control of the region was abandoned by the Pakistani government for strategic reasons.

Before the incident of 9/11 2001, the groups of Taliban in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the al-Qaida had united into one unit. They had become one block with little differences of key objectives.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has put pressure on Pakistan to do more for eliminating the al-Qaida network in the tribal region of Pakistan. In response, one division army was deployed in FATA in June 2002 to block al-Qaida and other terrorists crossing the border to Pakistan. But in spite of this, most of the top militant commanders grew and spread in FATA and KPK.

The role of Army had a negative impact on the system of administration in the tribal areas (Khan, 2014). The Army superseded the governor of KPK and the Political Agent, the governor's agent. In addition, the military did not have knowledge of the tribal dynamics that exacerbated the problem. The military used stick rather than the diplomacy which undermined their local standing (Crisis Group Interview, 2006, p. 11). When the tribal system of control weakened, it provided space for the religious elements in FATA to extend their support to the Taliban. Similarly, the nature of the tribal areas also provided space for the foreign militants to mushroom there. Some of the tribal areas has become the breeding ground of Islamist militants who undertook fresh operations from here and gradually imposed their writ on the tribal region. By 2007 the militants had become so powerful that they expanded their will and field of operation to the settled districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Akhlaque, 2004; Khan, 2006). The success of the Taliban in the tribal areas attracted banned militant groups like the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), etc (Mehsud, 2006; Crisis Group Report, 2005). Corrupt administration and strange laws in addition to fear of the militants have played its due role in the people's acceptance of Taliban-style rule. The ability of the Taliban to prosecute criminals, restore order and provision of speedy justice was welcomed by many tribesmen who were fed up with insecurity and violence (International Crisis Group Asia Report, 2006). The US drones from Afghanistan led to the rise of hatred among the tribesmen against the Pakistani and the US and ISAF forces which stimulated the rise of militancy in the tribal areas. This situation created space for al-Qaida. It provided them safe havens for conducting their militant activities in Afghanistan which ultimately increased the rate of radicalization of Pakistani society particularly in the tribal areas.

Before the incident of 9/11, al-Qaida, Taliban and Kashmir Jihadi groups were being trained in the training camps in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida supported both the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani Kashmiri Jihadist groups materially and in human resource during the Afghan Jihad. So, it is no surprise for the close linkage between the Taliban and the Kashmiri Jihadists (Rashid, 1999, p. 88) which embarrassed the Pakistan establishment. It has also come to the notice that Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), Sipah-e-Suhaba and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) cadres have extended their influence to the war zones in FATA, KPK, Pashtun areas of Baluchistan and eastern Afghanistan, and now even to Punjab as well.

The use of force against the militants further strengthened their ranks and resulted in the growth of militancy (Aziz, 2008). When it was realized that force was not the solution of the issue, both the federal and provincial governments resorted to peace talks with the militants. The political parties also realized as a political compulsion to end the hostilities. So, the government signed agreements with local militants in order to split the Islamists and get the better results. It led to achieve some success but not in the long run.

The relationship between Taliban and Pakistan was a symbiotic relationship since long ago which continued

until 9/11 and afterwards. But this relationship got a setback when the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden and his followers to the US. The tribesmen enjoy freedom of interaction with their fellow Pashtuns across the border since the British Raj. It continued even after the US attack against the Taliban. At the same time, many Tajik, Arab, Chechen and Afghan militants migrated in large number into the tribal areas of Pakistan (Rashid, 2002, p. 31). The process of Talibanization in Pakistan mainly began in 2004 and spread not only to the tribal region but also got support even from the settled areas (Yusufzai, 2008).

Conclusion

In fact, the conflict that keeps FATA stewing has various ways to be known but it is basically due to government's policy of negligence towards the tribal region and its foreign policy especially vis-a-vis Afghanistan. It is important for the US to keep a close eye on the relationship between Islamabad and Afghanistan. Pakistan's strategic culture is traditionally inclined to dominate Afghanistan. Similarly, Afghanistan take stand opposite to Pakistan every time. Pakistani interests in the region dates back to the times before the Soviet occupation and in recent times Islamabad has been a determinant actor either supporting the Jihadists against USSR or promoting Taliban during the civil war in Afghanistan. It is need of the time that Afghanistan should mend its ways vis-a-vis Pakistan. It is important as well that the international community should assist Pakistan to crush the militancy. It is urgently needed to develop the areas to put FATA on the fast tract of peace and prosperity like other parts of the country. The old and obsolete black laws of Frontier Crimes Regulations must be repealed and equal national laws must be enforced into the region. The region needs to be economically prosperous and equal educational opportunities should be provided. The foreign players need to pay due heed to the development of the tribal region. The tribal region needs humanitarian strategies to alleviate poverty and illiteracy so that to prevent the tribal areas from being used by terrorist, extremist and fundamentalist groups.

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Received: March 25th, 2016
 Revisions Received: December 15th, 2016