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Explaining Rebellion in a Weak State: A Case Study of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Politics and International Relations

The University of Auckland, 2016

September 2016
For

Ghulam Qadir, my late father
ABSTRACT

There is increasing consensus among insurgency scholars that a weak state is vulnerable to insurgency. However, the weak state rebellion theory has been challenged on empirical grounds because it does not explain why some weak states experience rebellion while states in similar political and economic situations avoid it. Why do some weak states face insurgency while others do not? In addition, some weak states have experienced long periods without facing ethnic rebellion. The weak state theory therefore explains insurgency in some weak states, but tells us little about the timing of an insurgency. Why does insurgency in a weak state occur when it does and not before? This thesis argues that insurgency begins when a weak state disrupts a previous period of status quo to impose order on a particular region. To develop this argument in a rigorous manner, this thesis proposes a three-step theoretical model and applies it to Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to explain the phenomenon of insurgency in a weak state.

The first step of my model argues that weak states can avoid rebellion for a long period of time if they maintain the status quo. By illustration, I will demonstrate that the Pakistani state maintained a weak presence in the FATA for a long period of time, but did not experience insurgency. I explain the absence of insurgency in the FATA by arguing that the Pakistani state maintained a form of modus vivendi with local leaders, and refrained from undermining their authority. This longstanding status quo largely prevented local tribes from rebelling against the Pakistani state despite numerous opportunities to do so. The FATA insurgency only began when the Pakistani state disrupted this status quo by attempting to impose order on the area, simultaneously undermining the authority of local leaders. The second phase of my model asserts that insurgency is more likely to occur when a weak state attempts to assert strong control over a potentially restive remote region, thereby undermining a longstanding status quo. The third step of the model contends that the quality of the government’s counterinsurgency efforts determines the rise and decline of the ensuing insurgency. By way of illustration, I will demonstrate that the Pakistani government's poor counterinsurgency strategy – typical of a weak state – allowed the insurgency to flourish. A more forceful and effective approach by the government and its security forces then largely brought an end to the FATA insurgency. This theoretical model can therefore be pictured as a form of bell curve explaining the time and duration of an insurgency in a weak state.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect back on my PhD journey in the last few years, it has been tough because of being away from family and being alone for long periods of time. However, this time has been equally rewarding as I have emerged much stronger and more resilient than ever, and of course it has enabled me to sharpen the critical and research skills that will help me to contribute knowledge and understanding of the complex social issues around us involving millions of people.

Doctoral study is never a one-person journey. This thesis would not have been possible without the support of many people. It has been a privilege to work with my lead supervisor Associate Professor Stephen Hoadley, whose critical engagement, warm encouragement and insightful advice have been indispensable. I would like to offer special thanks to my co-supervisor Dr. Chris Wilson, whose guidance helped tremendously in developing my understanding of theoretical literature and applying it to my case study. His guidance also helped me a great deal in producing a study of which I feel proud. I strongly believe that without his critical guidance and support, I would not have been able to make it this far.

I would like to thank the many people who assisted me doing field research in Pakistan. I am grateful to Director General ISPR (Inter-services Public Relations) Major General, Asim Bajwa, who organised my visit to the Bajaur Agency, giving me the opportunity to interview a number of tribesmen and military personnel. My special thanks go to Col. (Retd.), Ansar Jamil, for assisting me in reaching out to military people who served in the FATA. I also thank my Pashtun friends, Safdar Dawar, Dr. Faisal Nazeef. Mr Alamgir Khan Afridi, Shakir Hussain Dawar (District Police Officer) and Zahoor Afridi (Superintendent of Police) for their help and support in approaching tribesmen and tribal leaders of the FATA. I am also indebted to Dr. Faheem Muhammad who organised my trip to the Tank District, situated near to South Waziristan Agency, which enabled me to interview a number of civil and military officials as well as tribesmen from South Waziristan Agency. Without the help of these friends, it would have been almost impossible to get access to the tribesmen of the FATA.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my parents whose prayers and support are central to my success. I extend my appreciation and thanks to my wife who waited patiently all the way until the completion of my studies. Her emotional support, encouragement and assurances of my abilities when I had doubts helped me in a great way to achieve my goals successfully. Lastly, I am thankful to Professor Robert G. Patman whose critical feedback helped me significantly in improving my work.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Coalition Support Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>Economic Support Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)</td>
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<td>FC</td>
<td>Frontier Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCR</td>
<td>Frontier Crimes Regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMF</td>
<td>Foreign Military Financing</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISPR</td>
<td>Inter-Services Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPK</td>
<td>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (Pakistan, formerly the NWFP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>North-West Frontier Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNSM</td>
<td>Tanzim Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTP</td>
<td>Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan</td>
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Source: Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP), Islamabad, Pakistan.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, civil wars or rebellions have been a far greater scourge than interstate wars. More wars have now occurred within states than between them. Between 1945 and 1999, around 3.33 million deaths occurred as a result of 25 interstate wars. During the same period, 127 civil wars involving 73 states led to a death toll of 16.2 million people. However, little scholarly attention has previously been paid to the phenomenon of civil war. Only recently have academics come to focus more closely on insurgency and civil wars. This thesis aims to study the dynamics of the Taliban insurgency in the FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas], a region located in Pakistan's North-West.

The Pakistani state has enjoyed only weak control of the FATA since independence in 1947. The FATA has endured socio-economic impoverishment, arguably because of this minimal state presence. Despite this weak state control and strong socio-economic grievances, the FATA did not experience insurgency for several decades after independence. Even after the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants established themselves in the region when they fled Afghanistan as a result of the US invasion in October 2001, there was no insurgency in the FATA. Rebellion against Pakistan by the Pakistani Taliban erupted only at the start of 2004. These Pakistani Taliban were the same people who had been in FATA for years without rebellion. This puzzle is central to this study: why did insurgency erupt at this time and not before?

The seeds of the insurgency emerged in the FATA’s South and North Waziristan agencies in 2003–2004. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, thousands of Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters sought a safe haven in the FATA where they were provided shelter by the tribal groups of the FATA. Militants also assisted the ousted radicals in launching attacks across the border into Afghanistan. Under pressure from the United States during 2002–2003, Pakistan launched military operations in South Waziristan and North Waziristan to capture or kill the foreign militants. The military intervention in the hitherto ‘autonomous’ tribal areas led to a violent confrontations between local militants and the Pakistani troops. As a result, the local militant groups, who were initially focused on fighting in Afghanistan, directed their attention to battling the Pakistani army.  

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Over a period of time these local Taliban militant groups united, and in December 2007 formed the Pakistani Taliban or TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan), under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. The TTP served as an umbrella organisation providing local militant groups with a united platform in their aim of fighting the Pakistani state.\(^4\) Joshua T. White maintained:

This aggregation function served the TTP leadership in Waziristan by amplifying its voice and reach, but also served the local affiliates by providing them with access to resources, and by discouraging local communities from pushing back against outsiders who claimed to be part of the umbrella organisation.\(^5\)

The Pakistani Taliban maintained a separate organisational structure from the Afghan Taliban. Although the Pakistani Taliban swore allegiance to the Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, the two groups differed significantly over targets. The Pakistani Taliban carried out attacks against the Pakistani military and security forces inside Pakistan, while the Afghan Taliban focused on coalition forces in Afghanistan.\(^6\) Although the TTP’s major focus was the state of Pakistan, “sections of the group also provide(d) a rear base for the insurgency in neighbouring Afghanistan.”\(^7\)

The TTP was more closely aligned with Al Qaeda.\(^8\) The TTP’s leader, Baitullah, allowed Al Qaeda to establish its foothold in South Waziristan.\(^9\) In turn, Al Qaeda provided Baitullah with financial and logistical support.\(^10\) As the TTP gained power and developed a close alliance with Al Qaeda, it was better able to fight the Pakistani military. Baitullah Mehsud endorsed Al Qaeda’s global objectives and threatened to attack Western capitals and targets such as the White House, New York, and London. In an interview on 28 January 2008, Baitullah said, “Our main aim is to finish Britain, the US and to crush the pride of the non-Muslims. We pray to God to give us the ability to destroy the White House, New York and London. And we have trust in God. Very soon, we shall be witnessing jihad’s miracles.”\(^11\) The 7/7 bombings in London and thwarted terrorist attacks in Barcelona, Spain in January 2008 were traced back to the TTP-Al Qaeda alliance in the FATA. In an interview in August 2008, Maulvi Umer, the TTP spokesman,

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\(^10\) Ibid.

revealed that “The [terrorist attack] in Barcelona was conducted by twelve of our men. They were under pledge to Baitullah Mehsud. [It is] ... because [of] Spain’s military presence in Afghanistan.”

The TTP’s declared objectives were to “enforce Sharia [in Pakistan] and to unite against the NATO forces in Afghanistan and do defensive jihad against the Pakistani army.”

Explaining the motivation for war against the Pakistani security forces, the TTP’s spokesman contended that “The main objective of TTP is to fight NATO and US forces in Afghanistan. However, due to the wrong policies of the Pakistani government, we were forced to resort to a defensive jihad in our country.”

Encouraged by its initial successes in the FATA, the TTP announced their intention to extend their influence and reach across Pakistan. Hakilullah Mehsud, who became the TTP head after Baitullah’s death in 2009, said, “If the Pakistan government continues with its policy of following American dictates, [someday] we can try to capture Peshawar, Hangu and even Islamabad.”

Intelligence sources estimated in 2008 that the TTP chief Baitullah had a force of 20,000 to 25,000 highly trained fighters. The fighters were considered highly adept at mountain warfare because of their origins in mountainous territory. The TTP also claimed to have huge stockpiles of weapons in the FATA region. Maulvi Omer, the then TTP spokesperson said, “We have enough weapons to continue jihad against the Americans till doomsday.” The TTP is believed to have benefitted from the weapons pumped into the region in order to fight the Afghan Jihad during the 1980s. The TTP militants also seized weapons from the Pakistani security forces. Again, Maulvi Omar claimed, “We have huge stocks of G3S and mortar shells. We have arrested 300 army men in Waziristan and seized a large amount of weapons from their custody, and with that, we can fight against the Pakistani security forces for 10 years.”

The TTP adopted suicide bombing as a strategy to put pressure on the government. The main targets of the suicide bombings were security forces and law-enforcement agencies involved in carrying out the operations in tribal areas. The TTP established training centres in the FATA region to train new recruits in guerrilla warfare, bomb-making, and suicide attacks. The TTP also attempted high-profile terrorist attacks targeting the national level political leadership. The TTP was alleged to have been

14 Cited in ibid.
15 Cited in ibid., 46.
16 Cited in ibid., 69.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 70.
involved in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. They were also blamed for carrying out the suicide attacks on Pakistan's former Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao, Asfand Yar Wali and Bashir Bilor of the Awami National Party, and many others. The then Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani escaped a targeted attack by the TTP on September 3, 2008.21

The Pakistani Taliban used terror tactics extensively to convince the civilian population not to resist their control over the FATA.22 Hundreds of pro-government tribal elders were killed by the TTP, with numerous incidents of shooting, kidnapping and beheading.23 In one attack on an anti-Taliban jirga in Salarzai Tehsil, Bajaur Agency on 6 November 2008, the TTP killed more than 20 tribal elders including the head of the tribal lashkar, named Malik Fazal Karim Baro.24 In another incident in November 2008, the Taliban abducted 11 elders of a tribal lashkar from Chamarkand Tehsil in the Bajaur Agency. Some of them were decapitated and their dead bodies discarded on the main road.25 By committing these acts, the TTP sent a clear message to the community that people involved in any activity aimed against the Taliban would meet the same fate. The TTP’s decline started around 2009. The TTP was eventually dislodged from its strongholds in Bajaur, South Waziristan and North Waziristan and ultimately lost its effectiveness as an organisation and disintegrated into a number of factions. The main leadership fled across the border into Afghanistan, although continuing to conduct occasional terrorist attacks on soft targets in Pakistan.

The extent and ferocity of the TTP’s insurgency raises several important empirical puzzles. After decades of quiescence why did the rebellion erupt so suddenly at the beginning of 2004? The influx of Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda cannot explain this timing because the region avoided rebellion for more than a year after their arrival. As I will show, the timing of the rebellion had more to do with the response of the Pakistani government (although responsibility for the conflict and its atrocities lies with the TTP alone). Second, what factors facilitated the escalation of the conflict into an insurgency which threatened many areas of Pakistan? And what changed from 2009, leading to the decline of the rebellion? Why the Taliban insurgency started, how it became so powerful and what explains its ultimate demise are the subjects of this thesis.

The existing theoretical literature on insurgency indicates divided opinion on the main causes of insurgency. A particularly vigorous debate has occurred between those who explain such conflict between the state and an ethnic community primarily in terms of

22 Gunaratna and Iqbal, Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero, 70.
23 Ibid., 71.
24 Ibid.
grievances held by the latter, and those who contend that grievances are too ubiquitous to be an adequate explanation. This second group of scholars focus more on the existence of opportunities to rebel. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin have claimed that the main factors determining rebellion “are not...broadly held grievances but, rather, conditions that favour insurgency.” To them, the main source of opportunity is provided by a weak state. The weak state increases the perceived probability of the success of a rebellion, thereby making it more likely to happen.

There is now almost consensus among insurgency scholars that a weak state is perhaps the best predictor of rebellion, providing both incentive and opportunity.

However, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the weak state contention does not explain why some weak states experience civil war while other such states manage to avoid it. Nor does it explain why some regions within a state rebel while others remain quiescent. Perhaps most importantly, however, given that state strength is most commonly a static phenomenon, with only minor variation over time, it cannot explain the timing of an insurgency. Why do some regions remain seemingly content for long periods and then suddenly erupt in rebellion, despite state involvement being little changed in terms of economic strength or political stability? With reference to the specific case addressed here, that of the FATA, why did the region remain relatively peaceful for decades only to see the onset of a highly violent and destructive insurgency in 2003?

In this thesis, I propose a three-step theoretical model of the timing and duration of insurgency which I believe goes some way to answering these questions, thereby building on the theory of insurgency. The first step of the model postulates that an insurgency might not occur in a weak state if the central government maintains a form of *modus vivendi* with a restive region. If the government allows local power holders – potential rebel leaders – a form of autonomy in terms of retaining traditional power structures, then rebellion is unlikely. This means that as long as the state continues with this *status quo*, it is unlikely to experience an insurgency despite its weakness along a number of political, military and economic dimensions.

The second step of the model turns to the question of the timing of an insurgency. I hypothesise that insurgency is more likely to erupt when a weak state disrupts this *status quo*, particularly by undermining the authority of local leaders. Therefore it is not

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28 Ibid.
state weakness itself that precipitates conflict, but an attempt by the state to impose control on a region which has long enjoyed some level of autonomy.

The third step of the model posits that the quality of the state’s counterinsurgency is an influential variable in terms of whether the rebellion grows or declines over time. I contend that a poor counterinsurgency campaign – characterised by the over-zealous use of force and a failure to win the support of local communities – allows an insurgency to grow. In contrast, I contend that a strong and smarter counterinsurgency may bring an insurgency to an end. While the use of a determined and powerful force is certainly important, the targeted nature of this force and attempts to gain the trust and support of local communities are what distinguishes an effective campaign from a weak counterinsurgency, which can allow the challenge to grow. My model therefore presents a bell curve conception of the timing and duration of insurgency. This model is developed both deductively and inductively from the theoretical literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency, and by examining the case of insurgency by the Pakistani Taliban in the FATA.

There are of course numerous other phenomena which help explain the Taliban’s insurgency against the Pakistani state. Most notably, the military intervention in Afghanistan led by the United States, and the subsequent overthrow of the (Afghan) Taliban, led to great disruption in the FATA and the influx of thousands of foreign fighters and militants. These events played an important part in what followed. Yet as I will demonstrate in the thesis, it was the response of the Pakistani government to these events which explains the timing of the rebellion.

1.1 Research methodology

This thesis follows a case study methodology. The case study approach allows for a close analysis of the various phases of escalation in the FATA conflict. The case study approach is a common methodological tool in qualitative research used to generate contingent hypotheses about the causal mechanisms that produce particular outcomes.\(^{31}\) Hence, the aim of this research is to produce ‘thick’ within-case analysis of the disruption of the *status quo* in the FATA and its hypothesised cause of the onset of the FATA insurgency.\(^{32}\)


For the case analysis, process tracing is the primary methodological tool for qualitative analysis applied in the empirical chapters that follow.\textsuperscript{33} Process tracing can be defined as “the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case.”\textsuperscript{34} Among the different varieties of process-tracing such as ‘detailed narrative’, ‘general explanation’, and the ‘use of hypothesis and generalisation’, this study will use ‘analytical explanation’. The analytical explanation form of the process-tracing approach “transforms a historical narrative into an analytical causal explanation couched in the explicit theoretical forms.”\textsuperscript{35}

The process tracing method “attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.”\textsuperscript{36} Therefore, the use of process tracing requires a detailed within-case analysis of linking events to explain the causal mechanism under examination. To do the analysis, different sources commonly used in qualitative studies, such as “histories, archival documents, [and] interview transcripts” have been used.\textsuperscript{37}

This study is also comparative, including inter-temporal comparisons to deepen analysis of the absence, onset, rise and decline of the FATA insurgency. The comparative method is used to establish the empirical relationship among two or more variables.\textsuperscript{38} The comparative method consists of “comparing instances in which [a] phenomenon does occur, with instances in other respects similar in which it does not.”\textsuperscript{39} For temporal comparison, Pakistan’s pre-2002 and post-2002 approaches to the FATA are analysed to isolate the impact of the Pakistani military intervention in the FATA on changes in the relationship between the region and the national government. This comparison is particularly valuable in understanding the absence and onset of the FATA insurgency. In addition, a comparison of two subsequent time periods, characterised by poor and strong counterinsurgency policies executed by Pakistan, is carried out. This second temporal comparison helps to understand when an insurgency grows and when it comes to an end.


\textsuperscript{35} Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, \textit{Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences} (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 211.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 206.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 687.
1.2 Methods of data collection

A case study qualitative approach allows the use of information from varied sources to produce an in-depth analysis of a complex social inquiry. This section discusses the methods and sources of data collection, and the techniques used for conducting interviews in this thesis. This thesis uses both primary and secondary sources of information. As an important part of primary data collection, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in different parts of Pakistan including the Islamabad, Peshawar, Tank district and Bajaur Agency.

I collected data by accessing newspaper archives and by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with people from diverse backgrounds ranging from civil and military officials, and scholars and researchers working in Pakistani think tanks, to tribal leaders and informed local inhabitants of the FATA, especially from the South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur agencies. Before starting the fieldwork, I compiled a list of nearly 50 prospective interviewees, including all the categories of participants. The range of interviews was quite flexible because the number of interviews depended on the variety of information coming from different participants. After conducting 60 interviews, more than my initial list of 50, it became evident that further interviews would be redundant, as the informants began to repeat information already obtained. These face to face interviews in the field lasted approximately one hour or longer, in some cases, as interviewees elaborated freely on their views.

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee guidelines were followed in their entirety while conducting the interviews. Prior to conducting interviews, the participants were provided with details of the research project and asked for informed consent. In addition, the privacy and confidentiality of the interviewees has been maintained properly at all stages of the research and pseudonyms used to hide the identity of the interview participants. I transcribed the recorded interviews myself. These interviews were conducted during approximately eight months of fieldwork in Pakistan from October 2013 to May 2014.

In accordance with ethical requirements, a significant majority of the interviewees did not agree to recording primarily because of the sensitive nature of the insurgency issue, although some of the interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents. My hand written notes taken at the time were relied on in the case of unrecorded interviews. These notes were rewritten on the same day to reconstruct the details of the interview. Interview participants were given significant freedom to elaborate on the questions asked. In addition, some 10 to 12 selected interviewees were followed-up by

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40 Sharan B. Merriam, Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis (Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).
telephone during the writing and analysis phase. This avoided as much as possible erroneous interpretation, as well as allowing newly emerging information to be gathered on the changing dynamics of the FATA insurgency.\textsuperscript{41}

The selection of the interview participants was made in line with the goals of the research inquiry. Government as well as the FATA inhabitants’ perspectives were included, in addition to the perspectives of independent observers like scholars, researchers and journalists. My sample of participants was designed to gain as much information from as broad a spectrum of views as possible.\textsuperscript{42} A prudent sampling method helped to achieve this objective because it allowed selection of participants who could provide detailed and specific information from varying perspectives. Setting appropriate a priori criteria for choosing interview participants made this possible.\textsuperscript{43} A snowballing technique was used as part of the interviewee selection strategy. In accordance with this technique, a person who met the selection criteria was asked to provide information about other persons who could provide detailed and appropriate information.\textsuperscript{44}

However, access to the interviewees especially the tribal leaders and the informed local residents of the FATA, proved to be the biggest challenge during the research phase. This was partly due to my non-Pashtun ethnic background as the FATA is populated mainly by the Pashtun, and partly due to the volatile security situation in the region where there was ongoing fighting between the military and the insurgents. An atmosphere of uncertainty prevailed and local people were reluctant to talk about the insurgency until I gained their confidence.

The difficulty in accessing local people was overcome with the help of Pashtun friendships made during my university days. My graduate university, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, is a federal university that attracts a large number of students from Pashtun areas, including the tribal areas. My Pashtun friends provided me with some contacts so I could start with the interviews. This helped significantly in developing trust with the Pashtun community. The interviewees selected initially proved a useful source for gaining access to other interviewees via the snowball technique. Furthermore, the government organisations dealing with the FATA, such as the FATA Secretariat and the FATA Development Authority, situated in the city of Peshawar, provided information about government officers who had served in the FATA and could

\textsuperscript{41} Adam Lindgreen and Micheal B. Beverland, Research Quality in Qualitative Case Studies (Research Memorandum 79) (UK: University of Hull, 2009).

\textsuperscript{42} Merriam, Qualitative Research in Practice : Examples for Discussion and Analysis.

\textsuperscript{43} Michael Quinn Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (California: Sage Publications, 1990), 169.

\textsuperscript{44} Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook (California: Sage, 1994), 28.
provide useful information. I stayed for four months in Peshawar to interview tribal leaders and other local residents who had settled there, seeking security from the ongoing war in the FATA. I also stayed briefly in the Bajaur Agency of the FATA and in the Tank district situated close to the South Waziristan Agency.

The National Archive in Peshawar provided a wealth of information from secondary sources. The small library in the FATA Secretariat also provided useful background information on historical state control of the tribes. Rich accounts of the Pashtun tribes and their society by imperial officers dating as far back as the era of British rule, and official District Gazetteers, were a treasure trove of secondary data on the traditional autonomy of the tribes and their social and cultural practices. Locally published literature on customs and traditions of the region was also very helpful in developing an understanding of Pashtun traditions and norms, and their evolution through time and space. In addition, secondary information was gleaned from books and journal articles published on the subject and surveys and reports by government and non-government organisations, including various think tanks focusing on the region. The most important of these sources are cited in the Bibliography below.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

The thesis proceeds as follows. The second chapter lays out the three-step theoretical model that explains the absence, onset, expansion and decline of an insurgency. The first step of the model shows that a weak state that maintains the status quo with local leaders may prevent the onset of an insurgency. This leads to the second step of the model that suggests that insurgency erupts in a weak state when the central government disrupts the status quo by attempting to impose an order. Finally, the third step of the model proposes that a poor counterinsurgency strategy allows the insurgency to survive and even to grow, while a strong counterinsurgency can lead to a decline of or end to an insurgency.

The third chapter of the thesis elaborates on the first step of the theoretical model by applying it to the FATA. The FATA has remained an independent entity for centuries. The FATA tribes have offered severe resistance whenever any foreign power has attempted to control them. During the 19th century, the British colonial government in India attempted to take control of the tribal areas but they were largely unsuccessful. Finally, the British government developed a modus vivendi that enabled the colonial authorities to exercise some degree of influence in the tribal areas; it did so by allowing the tribal leaders autonomy in FATA internal affairs. The FATA tribes guarded their independence fiercely and preserved their traditional way of life based on Pashtunwali
throughout the era of British rule in India. After 1947 the newly independent state of Pakistan continued to be largely content with the FATA's semiautonomous status. The government appeased the tribes to offset Afghanistan’s irredentist claims to Pakistan’s Pashtun territories, including the tribal areas. Due to the persistent security threats from its western borders, Pakistan largely acquiesced to the status quo and did not attempt to exert full control over the tribal areas. The semiautonomous status of the tribal areas left FATA inhabitants disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic development and the region languished as a seriously impoverished area. Pakistan maintained this status quo until 2003. This thesis contends that this tolerance of the FATA’s semiautonomous status largely explains why there was no rebellion against the state.

The fourth chapter details the arrival of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants after they were routed by the US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. The FATA tribes provided protection to the Afghan and Al Qaeda militants; partly because they were of the same ethnicity and Islamic brotherhood, and partly because of their Pashtunwali tribal traditions. Compelled by its strategic vulnerability, Pakistan became an ally of the United States in the War against Terror and helped foreign forces in overthrowing the Afghan Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan also deployed its forces on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to apprehend the foreign militants. However, due to the long porous border, hundreds of the foreign militants ended up in the tribal areas. However, there was no immediate insurgency in the FATA despite the presence of a large number of Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants in the region. The United States, however, exerted pressure on the Pakistani government to take action against the Afghan and Al Qaeda militants hiding in the tribal areas. Under pressure from the United States, the Pakistani government held consultations with the tribes and pressured them during 2002 and 2003 to hand over or expel the foreign militants. During this time, Pakistani political administrators were aggressive in dealing with the tribes and inflicted some punishments on the tribal leaders and their followers. Small-scale search operations were also carried out by the Frontier Corps (FC) forces that created resentment among the tribes. However, the tribes did not rebel against the government because the status quo remained largely intact during this time period.

The fifth chapter describes and accounts for the onset of the FATA insurgency. The second step of the model, showing that disruption of the status quo leads to the eruption of insurgency, explains the case of the FATA insurgency. This chapter demonstrates that disruption of the status quo by the Pakistan government, in the form of increasing military operations against the tribes, led to the insurgency. Due to the increasing pressure from the United States, the Pakistani military carried out a number of military operations that dishonoured the tribal process and undermined the local
authority of the tribal leaders. The use of indiscriminate force aggravated the grievances of the local population. It was at this point that insurgency erupted in the tribal areas. First, the military launched operations in the Wazir-dominated areas of South Waziristan and provoked insurgency there. Later on, the military moved to the Mehsud-inhabited areas of South Waziristan and North Waziristan where the tribes responded with severe resistance and attacked the military forces. Similarly, the insurgency in Bajaur also started after the military operations began and tribal authority was undermined.

The sixth and the seventh chapters explain the escalation and decline of the FATA insurgency. These two chapters elaborate the third step of the theoretical model: a weak counterinsurgency may allow an insurgency to grow while a more effective campaign may cause the insurgency’s decline. The empirical discussion of the FATA rebellion in Chapter Six illustrates how the Pakistani government initially exercised weak counterinsurgency policies in the FATA, allowing the insurgency to survive and grow stronger. A reluctant participant in the US-led War on Terror, the Pakistani government lacked the necessary political will to take the threat of insurgency seriously. Half-hearted and under-resourced military operations were launched that were largely unsuccessful in controlling the insurgency. Inappropriate approaches and lack of counterinsurgency training also hampered operations. Pakistani military forces were trained to fight a conventional war, presumably against India, and lacked proper counterinsurgency skills. Moreover, the use of indiscriminate force causing civilian deaths, injury and damage alienated local tribesmen and helped the insurgents to gain recruits from the local population. In addition, due to the insufficient and incompetent local security forces, the local population could not be provided with protection from the insurgents’ coercive tactics. In this situation, the local population was forced to submit to the insurgents’ control. A weak counterinsurgency by the Pakistani government was thus responsible for empowering the insurgency.

The seventh chapter demonstrates that a subsequent stronger counterinsurgency effort by the Pakistani government weakened the FATA insurgency. After the insurgent organisation TTP had made significant gains in the FATA and threatened government control in the settled parts of the country adjacent to the FATA, the Pakistani government began to take the threat more seriously and the political will to defeat the insurgency grew accordingly. The conventional forces were trained and reconfigured into counterinsurgency forces and provided with the necessary counterinsurgency weapons and equipment. A more discriminate use of force was prescribed to avoid collateral damage. Capable troops were employed in sufficient numbers and necessary force was used to destroy the insurgents’ infrastructure. After destroying the militants’ military capability and dismantling their control over the territory and the population, the
Pakistani military forces were stationed there to deny any space to insurgents to continue their activities. The government of Pakistan has also made some efforts to win the hearts and minds of the FATA population by undertaking some development projects. However, these measures have so far proved to be too little and ineffective. Significant development cannot be undertaken without the political and economic integration of the tribal areas into the mainstream Pakistani political, administrative and economic systems. Regrettably, the government has not yet paid serious attention to this recommended policy initiative. Without adequately addressing the grievances of the FATA population, a permanent end to insurgency cannot be achieved.

The concluding chapter summarises the findings of this research and discusses its broader implications. This research provides an in-depth case study of one of the most violent insurgencies and also builds on existing knowledge about why such conflicts start, why they start when they do, and when they are likely to rise and fall.
CHAPTER TWO: BUILDING A THEORETICAL MODEL OF INSURGENCY

2.1 Introduction

The existing scholarship on insurgency has largely accepted the proposition that the weaker the capacity of a state, the more susceptible it is to civil war. Despite this consensus, however, there are clear explanatory shortcomings in this theoretical foundation. For example, this contention does not explain why some weak states experience civil war while some other such states manage to avoid it. It also fails to address why weak states continue to exist for the long periods without facing an insurgency. The literature has done an admirable job of highlighting that weak states are vulnerable to civil war, but it falls short in accounting for instances where the weak state persists but insurgency does not follow. It also fails to take into account the timing of an insurgency. The weak state argument certainly helps to identify which states are susceptible to civil war, but it does not explain when a weak state can fall into a civil war. Nor does the existing scholarship answer the question of the timing of insurgency in a weak state. To fill this gap, I contend that insurgency erupts when a weak state disrupts the status quo and tries to impose order. Further, to explain the eruption of insurgency in a weak state, I propose a three-step model to account for the absence, onset, rise and decline of an insurgency and apply the model to the case of the FATA insurgency.

This chapter begins with the existing theoretical explanations for the phenomenon of insurgency, including theories based on grievances and the availability of opportunities such as physical terrain and weak state control. I then highlight the weaknesses of these approaches, particularly the weak state argument and its inability to explain the timing of an insurgency. The chapter then articulates a three-step model that aims to explain the absence and onset of insurgency in a weak state, which will later be elaborated on in reference to the FATA case. The theoretical model also discusses how a weak counterinsurgency allows an insurgency to grow and how an effective counterinsurgency leads to the end of an insurgency.

2.2 Theory of insurgency and its weaknesses

For much of the post-World War Two II period, social scientists have traced rebellion to unresolved frustrations and grievances against the state. Scholars have variously found
economic inequality’, the rapid economic modernisation affecting negatively traditional rural systems, and the frustrations arising from the failure to gain the expected benefits of economic modernisation to be the main drivers of protest and conflict. Theorists of insurgency see conflict as a direct outcome of a certain level of frustration: “Rebellion occurs when grievances are sufficiently acute that people want to engage in violent protest.” Political violence and civil war are primarily the outcome of grievances that have developed from unrealised expectations. Grievances can also be caused by high economic inequality, a lack of political rights, or the exclusion of certain religious or ethnic groups from political power, potentially leading to rebellion or civil war. Grievances cause anger and anxiety that make people vulnerable to aggression and rebellion. Such arguments revolving around the importance of a “frustration-aggression” response have found a great deal of resonance in explanations of rebellions in Muslim societies.

Rebellion in Muslim societies is often explained by socio-economic impoverishment and psychological alienation, which in turn are the result of failed modernisation and excessive Westernisation. The economic modernisation seen in the postcolonial era has failed to deliver benefits to the majority of people, fomenting grievances that have made them susceptible to Islamist radicalism and militancy. Nazih Ayubi asserted that such “frustrated” and “shattered” development expectations have propelled Muslims into militant Islamist organisations. Similarly, Gilles Keppel argued in relation to Egypt, that “in the ramshackle dwellings of the suburbs ringing the large Egyptian cities, people bypassed by progress and development turned towards other, [and] more radical tendencies of the Islamicist movement.” A similar view was expressed by Cassandra, who claimed that the “youths most negatively affected by Egypt’s faltering economy are the ones most likely to be Islamist insurgents.” In other words, the underlying

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47 Gurr, Why Men Rebel.
49 Gurr, Why Men Rebel.
52 Ayubi, Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World, 176.
54 Casandra, “Impending Crisis in Egypt,” 20.
conditions such as poverty, deprivation, and alienation are mainly considered responsible for spawning rebellion in the Muslim world.

Along with economic deprivation, psychological alienation has been considered an equally important factor in germinating the grievances that ultimately contribute to rebellion. Hamied N. Ansari highlighted that Islamist militancy is generated by the collapse of traditional solidarity as a result of “rapid urbanisation and rural migration.”\(^{55}\) Hrair Dekmejian described ordinary Muslims who “tend to lose their psychosocial bearings as they are bombarded with the values of an alien environment.”\(^{56}\) These explanations largely see Islamist rebellion as resulting from grievances caused by either economic deprivation or psychological alienation, or both.

These explanations suggest policy prescriptions such as introducing rapid economic and social development in order to minimise support for Islamist militancy or rebellion. Ayubi maintained that “most analysts agree that the challenge of such [radical] groups cannot be removed unless something radical is done to solve the socio-economic problems of the recently urbanised and formally educated youth, from among whom the religious militants tend to draw their cadres.”\(^{57}\) Emmanuel Sivan even went so far as to argue that “a measurable success of the economic system and/or the lowering of the level of expectations through deliberate acts of the powers-that-be, would no doubt tend to diminish the appeal of the new radicalism.”\(^{58}\)

Theoretical approaches based on the importance of marginalisation or grievances have been contested mainly because they do not explain how these grievances transform into rebellion.\(^{59}\) Nor do they explain why rebellion emerges in some areas of marginalisation and not in others. For example, some Muslim countries such as Jordan and Morocco have not experienced rebellion despite struggling economies. Conversely, Iran experienced revolution despite having an annual growth rate of almost 9.6 percent, which was approximately double the average of developing countries at the time.\(^{60}\) Socioeconomic deprivation and cultural alienation certainly constitute structural conditions that generate grievances but they do not provide sufficient – nor seemingly necessary – conditions for rebellion.\(^{61}\) The author of *Why Muslim Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, Mohammed M. Hafiz, argued that “The mere existence of poverty and deprivation is not sufficient to explain levels of Islamist

\(^{55}\) Ansari, “The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics,” 140–41.


\(^{60}\) Ibid., 14.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 19.
rebellion." Some other empirical studies have also suggested that proxies for grievance have little explanatory power for predicting commencement of civil war. As Leon Trotsky observed, “The mere existence of privations is not enough to cause an insurrection; if it were, the masses would be always in revolt.”

As a result, a group of scholars contend that given grievances are always present in some form, they cannot explain the occurrence of civil war. Instead, rebellion is most likely to occur when there is an opportunity such as the availability of finance, the availability of recruits and military advantage for insurgents. In perhaps its strongest formulation, this argument contends that “where a rebellion is financially and militarily feasible it will occur.” Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner noted further that “What is critical is not whether people actually have reason to commit violence, but what enables them to carry it out in particular circumstances ... feasibility is a rare phenomenon.” All states have populations who feel marginalised and aggrieved, but “the incidence of rebellion is not explained by motive, but by the atypical circumstances that generate profitable opportunities.”

These theorists argue that opportunities for rebellion are created when rebels have ample resources to exploit such as diamonds, oil, or some other valuable natural resource. The cost of rebellion is an important factor in offering opportunity for rebellion. Collier and Hoeffler asserted that “Civil war occurs if the incentive for rebellion is sufficiently large relative to the costs.” The opportunities for rebellion are maximised “when foregone income is unusually low.” The availability of finances is mainly determined by opportunities for primary commodity exports and for extortion. An opportunity for rebellion is also offered when there is profit involved. Such rebellions have occasionally been categorised in the literature as motivated by greed.

In one of the most cited articles on the topic of insurgency, Fearon and Laitin also claimed that “The main factors determining both the secular trend and the cross-sectional variation in civil violence...are not...broadly held grievances but, rather, conditions that favor insurgency.” For Fearon and Laitin, the main source of opportunity is provided by a weak state. A weak state increases the perceived

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62 Ibid., 14.
68 Paul Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” 564.
70 Paul Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 569.
71 Ibid.
72 Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 75.
probability of the success of a rebellion which makes it more likely to happen.\textsuperscript{73} State institutional capacity and strength is therefore the main factor acting to deter and defeat insurgencies. Fearon and Laitin, echoing Hobbes’ insight that the state of nature is a “war of all against all”, contended that in the absence of a strong state capable of controlling its territory, “both fears and opportunities encourage the rise of would-be rulers who supply a rough local justice while arrogating the power to ‘tax’ for themselves and, often, for a larger cause.”\textsuperscript{74} Weak security forces, insurgents’ better knowledge of the local population and terrain than the government, and weak governance are some of the elements of a weak state that can potentially drive rebellion.\textsuperscript{75}

A strong state has the financial, institutional and military resources to preclude the formation of rebel organisations, whereas a poverty-stricken state or financially and bureaucratically weak state has a governance ‘vacuum’ which makes it possible for insurgency to grow.\textsuperscript{76} Fearon and Laitin saw the availability of financial resources as the most crucial predictor of state strength. Accordingly, higher state resources per capita “should be associated with a lower risk of civil war onset because...it is a proxy for a state’s overall financial, administrative, police, and military capabilities.”\textsuperscript{77} States with enough financial resources are better able to monitor their citizens because of their deep penetration of society. Resources allow states to engage in activities such as building roads, increasing police capacity, which in turn enable them to increase their vigilance.

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler identified military capabilities as an important element of state capacity, allowing civil war to occur or precluding it. They contended that insurgents are most likely to be motivated to launch insurgency if they are faced with weak security forces\textsuperscript{78} and that “atypical weak government military capability”\textsuperscript{79} provides rebels with considerable opportunity to initiate civil war. States with weak military capabilities are therefore more prone to rebellion. In a similar vein, Fearon and Laitin also advocated that weak states “render insurgency more feasible and attractive due to weak local policing.”\textsuperscript{80} They further maintained that “brutal and indiscriminate retaliation...helps drive noncombatant locals into rebel forces.”\textsuperscript{81}

The presence of strong government security forces, better able to establish law and order and to provide security to the population, tends to deprive rebels of local

\begin{footnotes}
\item[73] Jakobsen, Soysa, and Jakobsen, “Why Do Poor Countries Suffer Costly Conflict?,” 143.
\item[74] Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 76.
\item[75] Ibid.
\item[76] Jakobsen, Soysa, and Jakobsen, “Why Do Poor Countries Suffer Costly Conflict?,” 143.
\item[77] Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 80.
\item[78] Seth G. Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 15.
\item[79] Paul Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” 569.
\item[80] Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 75–76.
\item[81] Ibid., 76.
\end{footnotes}
support. This kind of strong control by security forces significantly undermines the chances of a rebellion occurring. This argument is supported by a study conducted by the RAND Corporation that put special emphasis on the competence and capability of security forces in preventing the rise of insurgent forces. Poor budget and equipment, organisational incompetence, political division, and lack of adequate local information are some of the features of weak security forces. Strong and capable security forces embody certain characteristics such as “a high level of initiative, good intelligence, integration across units and services, quality leadership, motivated soldiers, and the ability to learn and adapt during combat”, both at the tactical and operational levels. The above discussion suggests that well-equipped and well-trained security forces are more likely to prevent the rise of an insurgency than security forces lacking these required skills.

State weakness also allows an insurgent group to gain greater comparative knowledge of the population in the region it hopes to control. This informational advantage enables insurgents to leverage this knowledge as a weapon to threaten and inflict harsh sanctions on ‘their own’ people. This enables insurgents to “credibly threaten inhabitants with retaliation for denunciation.” The fear of retribution effectively prevents the local population from castigating rebels. Better local information also empowers insurgents to force the local populations to provide them with refuge, better allowing the organisation to establish itself. Insurgencies in their early years are weak in their comparative military strength, but gaining refuge within moderate forces helps insurgents hide from the national forces and evade aerial attacks, allowing the relatively free movement of fighters and arms.

Strong government control and robust capacity to deliver services will therefore potentially discourage insurgency in most cases. The strength of the government and its governance capacity to provide services to its people deprive the insurgent forces of popular support. Governance includes the delivery of vital services to the population

82 Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, 15.
which hinges on factors such as the level of corruption and the capability of the justice system.\textsuperscript{91} Insurgents are very likely to benefit from any kind of weakness present. The foremost prerequisite for an insurgent group is a popular purpose. As David Galula maintained, “The best cause for the insurgent’s purpose is one that, by definition, can attract the largest number of supporters and repel the minimum of opponents.”\textsuperscript{92} There is evidence that insurgents have successfully used weaknesses of governance, such as the exploitation of one class by the other. Such class abuse drove several Marxist-Leninist insurgencies in Latin America, Africa and Asia during the Cold War. Similarly, the Chinese Communists took advantage of the economic downgrading of Chinese farmers who were exploited by local usurers and government authorities.\textsuperscript{93}

Poor governance can easily translate into popular support for the insurgents.\textsuperscript{94} The insurgents’ organisation needs recruits to build its fighting capability and recruits are readily available in areas under weak state control. A poorly governed state effectively provides an insurgent organisation with easy recruitment.\textsuperscript{95} Walter asserted, “Civil wars will have little chance to get off the ground unless individual farmers, shopkeepers, and workers voluntarily choose to man the rebel armies.”\textsuperscript{96}

There is therefore almost a consensus in the existing scholarship that a weak state is the best predictor of civil war. As shown above, the current academic position suggests the weaker the capacity of the state the more susceptible it is to civil war.\textsuperscript{97} Data from the United Nations gives some empirical backing to these claims: among the 50 countries in the world with the lowest GDP, almost 60% of them witnessed civil war with varied levels of intensity and duration during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{98}

However, while the argument that weak states motivate rebellion appears plausible, the theory leaves several puzzles unexplained. Firstly, this argument insufficiently explains why there are many regions in the world with weak state control but without insurgencies. In the UN data mentioned above, for example, the remaining 40% of


\textsuperscript{93} Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan}, 19.


\textsuperscript{95} Oyefusi, “Oil and the Probability of Rebel Participation among Youths in the Niger Delta of Nigeria,” 543–44.


these weak states did not experience insurgency, which indicates that weak states can potentially exist for quite some time without facing an insurgency. Secondly, those weak states which have faced insurgencies, have done so in only one (in some cases two) regions. Given state weakness is generally uniform across the entire country, why then do other regions within it remain peaceful? Thirdly, the weak state model also fails to account for the timing of insurgency in a weak state. With state weakness invariably a static phenomenon, why does insurgency occur at a particular moment in time, and fail to occur over preceding decades of similar state weakness?

The contrasting outcomes for El Salvador and Bhutan, two states which would be characterised as weak according to the literature above, reveal that state weakness alone does not provide a sufficient condition for rebellion. Both of these states are generally regarded as weak; but only one has experienced a severe and protracted civil war, while the other has been relatively peaceful. El Salvador had a per capita national income of approximately US$ 2000 during the 1970s. It also possesses inaccessible terrain, making state control of remote regions difficult. During the mid-1970s, repression was used in El Salvador by the then military leaders to preclude any protest, which in turn produced more protest by the people. This resulted in heightened grievances and a full-fledged civil war by 1979. This conflict continued for almost a decade resulting in the loss of 50,000 lives.99

Bhutan can also be characterised as a weak state, with a lower GDP than El Salvador of between $400 and $1,000 US dollars between 1988 and 2005. Despite this financial situation, and having a rough mountainous terrain, in contrast with El Salvador Bhutan has avoided civil war.100 These are not unique examples. There are many other examples of weak states experiencing civil war such as Rwanda, Cambodia, Angola, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone. However, some other weak states such as Cameroon, Ecuador and Burkina Faso have avoided civil wars. States such as Cameroon and Ecuador enjoy only weak control of certain areas but have not faced rebellion.

Many regions with weak state control – areas which James C. Scott refers to as ‘Zomia’ – exist in Asia, but have not faced insurgency. Although state governments exercise a certain degree of local political influence, many areas remain largely ungoverned. These areas are defined as: “the largest remaining region of the world whose peoples have not yet been fully incorporated into nation-states.”101 An understanding of these areas and its peoples reveals that they have consciously chosen to avoid assimilation by a state. This shows that a state’s weak control of certain areas does not make it

100 Young, “Repression, Dissent, and the Onset of Civil War.”
certain there will be a rebellion there. A cursory look at these areas would certainly make it easier to understand this contention.

Weak state control therefore does not necessarily stimulate rebellion. Grievances are always present in some form everywhere but there is no omnipresent incidence of rebellion. As discussed, opportunity alone also cannot explain the timing of rebellion. A more nuanced view of motive and opportunity is required for a better understanding of the onset, timing and rise of insurgency.\footnote{The presence of a weak state and grievances are not mutually exclusive, of course. There are some elements of a weak state that provide sources of grievances such as poor governance, corruption, weak-law enforcement agencies causing ineffective law and order.}

Accordingly, in the sections following, I develop a three-step model for the absence, onset, rise and decline of insurgency. I contend that a rebellion is more likely when a weak state disrupts the \textit{status quo} in a potentially restive region. Although a state may possess limited political and economic control in a potentially restive region, a form of \textit{modus vivendi} can exist between local power holders and the state. Insurgency becomes far more likely if the state attempts to impose order on the region, disrupting longstanding local power structures. The third step of my model hypothesises that the insurgency will rise and decline with the quality of the state’s counterinsurgency efforts.

2.3 A three step model of Insurgency absence, onset, and escalation and decline

This section outlines the theoretical model based on both deductive and inductive reasoning, using the theoretical literature and the case study of the FATA insurgency.

2.3.1 Step One: The absence of insurgency in a weak state

The first step of the model posits that state weakness in some of its territory does not necessarily induce rebellion. Some weak states such as Cameron and Ecuador have only weak control over certain regions but have not faced rebellion. In addition, there are certain areas in Asia known as ‘\textit{Zomia}’ that are beyond the control of any state. The neighbouring states exercise a certain degree of political influence there, but the Zomia are largely ungoverned. Looking at these areas reveals that the people have consciously chosen to avoid encapsulation by a state.

The name ‘\textit{Zomia}’ was first coined in 2002 by the Dutch social scientist Willem van Schendel, who used it to describe the area known as the highlands of Asia, running from the western Himalayan Range through the Tibetan Plateau and all the way to the
lower end of the peninsular Southeast Asian highlands. These areas are significantly different from the usual sub-regional divisions of Asia: Central (Inner), South, East, and Southeast. Schendel marked Zomia as “a neglected – an invisible – transnational area, which overlapped segments of all four sub-regions without truly belonging to any of them.” He added further that Zomia is “an area marked by a sparse population, historical isolation, political domination by powerful surrounding states, marginality of all kinds, and huge linguistic and religious diversity.” In 2007, Schendel chose to extend Zomia further westward and northward, including southern Qinghai and Xinjiang within China, as well as a reasonable portion of Central Asia, including the highlands of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Another scholar, James Scott, differed slightly from Schendel’s proposition in defining Zomia. He asserted:

Zomia is a new name for virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly three hundred meters all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to northeastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and parts of Sichuan). It is an expanse of 2.5 million square kilometers containing about one hundred million minority peoples of truly bewildering ethnic and linguistic variety. Geographically, it is also known as the Southeast Asian mainland massif.

The people residing in the Zomia areas have consciously chosen to live beyond any state control. Instead of describing the people of these areas as “primitive pre-state barbarians”, Scott contended, “Far from being ‘left behind’ by the progress of civilisation in the valleys, they have, over long periods of time, chosen to place themselves out of the reach of the state.” The people of these areas have consciously evaded the state’s approaches because, as Scott put it, “Living within the state meant, virtually by definition, taxes, conscription, corvee labor, and for most, a condition of servitude.” Rothbard made an almost similar kind of argument while writing about states generally: “The State habitually commits mass murder, which it calls ‘war,’... the State engages in enslavement into its military forces, which it calls ‘conscription’; and it lives and has its

106 Ibid., 188.
107 Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed, ix.
109 Ibid.
being in the practice of forcible theft, which it calls ‘taxation.’ It is therefore not surprising if some people opt to live beyond state control.

The people living in Zomia areas have deliberately chosen to stay away from state control because of certain ills attached to it. Scott noted that “Virtually everything about these people's livelihoods, social organization, ideologies, and (more controversially) even their largely oral cultures, can be read as strategic positioning designed to keep the state at arm's length.” Scott claimed that these areas will eventually be integrated by the neighbouring states. He argued that “Zomia is the largest remaining region of the world whose peoples have not yet been fully incorporated into nation-states. Its days are numbered.”

The above discussion shows that state weakness has been a common feature throughout much of Asia's post-colonial era, but insurgency has not. Clearly, weak state control over certain areas does not necessarily mean that it will face a rebellion there. This step of the model explains that a weak state can continue to exist without undergoing an insurgency, as long as the state maintains a modus vivendi with local power holders. Maintaining the status quo most likely deters potential rebellion because it works to the satisfaction of the state, the social elites, and the people of these areas.

As will be seen, for most of its existence during the colonial and postcolonial eras, the FATA has enjoyed a largely autonomous status. For most of that time too, the area has been free of insurgency. First the British and then the Pakistani government adopted an indirect method of administration and a policy of minimal interference in the affairs of tribal people in the FATA. This modus vivendi between government officials and local elites worked smoothly for a long time. The FATA case shows that the Pakistani government’s maintenance of the status quo established under the British Administration largely explains why the area faced no insurgency. Even the initial influx of Al Qaeda militants and Afghan Taliban into the area in 2001 did not stimulate an insurgency. I contend that one explanation of the timing of rebellion is the disruption of such a longstanding modus vivendi between a national government and a potentially restive region.

### 2.3.2 Step Two: Disruption of status quo and onset of insurgency

The second step of the model suggests that insurgency is triggered when the state disrupts the status quo, especially through indiscriminate and ineffective military

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intervention. This explains the timing of insurgency, a question which has gone widely ignored in much of the literature on insurgency, as noted above.

Undermining the status quo invariably entails the breaking down of long-standing agreements between the state and local leaders and communities. This results in the erosion of long-established autonomy enjoyed by the relatively ungoverned regions. This also subverts time-honoured traditions and norms which serve to run day-to-day affairs smoothly. The disruption of the status quo also involves the disruption of local authority and the patronage networks provided by the state. The patronage networks and the local authority are essential to exhibiting the writ of state, though as a façade. When the status quo is disrupted, local elites tend to lose the privileges and status enjoyed under the previous arrangement. The loyalty of these local leaders to the state will be quick to dissipate. The disruption of the local status quo may also create fear among the locals, principally over the elimination of a highly revered culture and deep-rooted traditions developed over centuries. The state’s sudden encroachment on their land, culture and rights may potentially end up provoking a severe backlash from local people.

Furthermore, the use of coercion or repression is also believed to trigger insurgency. Mohammed Hafez, in a seminal study Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World, argued that reactive and indiscriminate repression by the state is most likely to lead to rebellion. Repression motivates the formation of militant organisations which can withstand the onslaught and also monitor the local population for betrayal. If state repression is total, then little political opportunity is left for potential rebels. If it is half-hearted and tentative, then ethnic entrepreneurs have the space to mobilise and recruit. Hafez’s study is supported by many other scholars who maintain that repression generates grievances that stimulate mobilisation to oppose an ‘unjust’ opponent. Conversely, some experts have asserted that repression increases the cost of collective action, making it less likely to occur. I suggest that these seemingly contradictory outcomes can be explained by the form of government repression.

Insurgency is likely to be sparked when state coercion attempts to change a long-established status quo. Insurgency is unlikely to occur in the face of targeted and effective military intervention, but the disruption of the status quo through indiscriminate

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113 Hafez, Why Muslim Rebel, 200.
and ineffective military intervention is most likely to prompt rebellion. It not only undermines the *modus vivendi* with local leaders, but also leaves enough opportunity for potential rebels to rise up.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate that this concept brings a great deal of insight to the FATA case. The Pakistani government’s intervention to change the long-established *status quo* discussed above, through the indiscriminate and ineffective use of force, ignited insurgency in the FATA. This process can be seen when comparing the sequence of events in the sub-regional areas (known as agencies) within the FATA. At first, military intervention destabilised the *status quo* in South and North Waziristan agencies and triggered the outburst of rebellion in these areas. Subsequently, the same series of events occurred in the Bajaur Agency.

### 2.3.3 Step Three: Quality of counterinsurgency; escalation and decline of insurgency

The previous two steps of the model account for the absence of insurgency in a weak state, and the timing of any conflict that does break out. What remains to be understood are the phenomena which explain whether the rebellion grows into a large-scale and widespread movement, or is quickly disrupted and crushed. The third step of the model therefore explains the escalation and decline of an insurgency. I contend that the effectiveness of the military intervention or counterinsurgency – rather than simply the amount of force used by the state – plays a major role in whether insurgency grows or does not. Insurgency becomes stronger and harder to defeat if weak and ineffective counterinsurgency measures are used. Conversely, stronger and more effective counterinsurgency approaches will prevent the escalation of the movement, or cause its decline.

There are two broadly accepted approaches to counterinsurgency according to existing theory: a population-centric and an enemy-centric approach. Mark Moyar noted that these ‘two schools of thought have dominated the study of counterinsurgency warfare in the English-speaking world’ since ‘the Vietnam War’. The population-centric approach maintains that insurgencies are viewed as a contest between the insurgents and the counterinsurgents to win over the local population. Therefore, the aim of a counterinsurgency campaign should be to secure the support of local population. According to enemy-centric logic, insurgencies are commonly viewed as a military

struggle between insurgents and counterinsurgents, and the leading objective of the counterinsurgency is to defeat the insurgents. Moreover, the existing theoretical literature presents some counterinsurgency practices that play an important role in determining the success or failure of a counterinsurgency campaign. The following section reviews the larger counterinsurgency literature.

Success or failure in counterinsurgency missions is mostly dependent on political will. A lack of political will is likely to render a counterinsurgency campaign ineffective, whereas a strong political will will play a crucial role in making a counterinsurgency campaign successful. Political will is demonstrated by how the government deals with insurgency at strategic and operational levels consistent with the campaign’s requirements and challenges. This requires the appropriation of sufficient resources both at the operational and tactical levels. Galula maintained that counterinsurgency operations “require a large concentration of efforts, resources, and personnel.”

A lack of political will may lead to a weak and ineffective government response that in turn provides insurgents with sufficient time to build their strength. A deferred response to insurgency in its initial phase will make counterinsurgency much more difficult. A counterinsurgency scholar, Paul Melshen, suggested that insurgency should be dealt with by full force from its very inception. Employing the necessary force in the beginning of an insurgency precludes insurgents from developing military and financial strength.

A display of strong will by the government to defeat insurgents may also help to gain support among local populations for the counterinsurgency campaign. The local population’s impression of the imminent defeat of insurgents tends to discourage them from supporting the rebels against the government. A local perception of an ultimate victory of government tends to turn them away from the insurgent’s cause. David Galula contended that counterinsurgency operations must be able to “relieve the

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119 Ibid.
123 Ibid., 16.
124 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 55.
128 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 55.
130 Ibid.
population from the insurgent’s threat and to convince it that the counterinsurgent will ultimately win.”

Apart from political will, the nature of military forces is also a very important factor in determining the outcome of a counterinsurgency campaign. Fighting an insurgency by conventional means is most likely to be counterproductive. Counterinsurgency departs significantly from conventional warfare because it deals with a distinct military problem. Moreover, counterinsurgency differs from conventional warfare in its objectives. A conventional war pursues decisive strategic goals, whereas counterinsurgency aims more at overt political objectives. Writing in the mid-80s, Eliot Cohen highlighted that counterinsurgency campaigns are “not ‘half’ a war, but rather a completely different kind of conflict.” Counterinsurgencies are undertaken for what Rupert Smith has called “softer, more malleable, complex, sub-strategic objectives,” where the objective is not to take and hold a territory but to establish legitimacy of a state. This makes counterinsurgency a different kind of battle with its own specific rules.

Success in counterinsurgency operations necessitates a conventional force to adapt its organisational structure and strategy to the requirements of counterinsurgency. Specific training is required to meet the needs of counterinsurgency warfare. General Sir George Erskine achieved success against Mau Mau insurgents only by adapting his forces according to the needs of counterinsurgency warfare. For example, to fight in the mountainous forests of Kenya, he set up small fighting units by splitting battalions. Mumford has contended that “counterinsurgency is inherently difficult to learn. It is unique form of warfare, posing its own complex strategic problems and requiring challenging tactical adaptations.”

In addition, in switching structures from a conventional to a counterinsurgency force, counterinsurgents also need to take into consideration the specific insurgency they are confronted with in order to modify accordingly. Each counterinsurgency campaign faces different challenges because of the varying nature of each insurgency. Strategies for one successful counterinsurgency campaign may therefore not yield the same results when applied to deal with different insurgencies. General Sir Frank Kitson, a

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137 Ibid.
140 Ibid., 667.
veteran of the Mau Mau insurgency, and Malaya, Cyprus, Oman, and Northern Ireland, noted, “If you had eighty different insurgencies, there were eighty different ways to defeat them.” 141 Similarly, a counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen pointed out, “There is no such thing as a ‘standard’ counterinsurgency. . . . [T]he set of counterinsurgency measures adopted depends on the character of the insurgency.” 142 A counterinsurgency may require forces with varied strength and expertise. Specifically, it requires highly trained forces for direct action against insurgents or tough counterinsurgency operations, averagely trained forces for pacification efforts such as holding the cleared areas, and lesser trained forces to protect static positions where strong fighting skills are not required. 143 Apart from adapting to the demands of counterinsurgency warfare, the counterinsurgency forces need to be continuously flexible in response to practical experiences in the field. 144

The quality of force used by counterinsurgents plays a crucial role in making a counterinsurgency campaign a success or a failure. Andrew Mumford contended that “the traditional ‘centre of gravity’ for a counter-insurgency campaign is the population”, requiring that “plans for military assaults upon the enemy have been couched in terms of protecting the civilian population and preserving their trust.” 145 Similarly, Rod Thomson maintained that in counterinsurgency campaigns, “the quality of force... has to be seen more important than its quantity.” 146 Moreover, the use of force must be consistent with the objectives of a counterinsurgency campaign. As the 1923 British Army manual Duties in Aid of Civil Power put it, what is important is “not the annihilation of an enemy but the suppression of a temporary disorder, and therefore the degree of force to be employed must be directed to that which is necessary to restore order and must never exceed it.” 147

Indiscriminate or excessive use of force in a counterinsurgency campaign tends to aggravate the grievances of the local population. A counterinsurgency expert, John Lynn, noted that indiscriminate use of force only serves to generate “the three R’s: resentment, resistance and revenge.” 148 An analysis of various counterinsurgency campaigns conducted by American, British and French forces found a link between the appropriate use of force and success in the counterinsurgency missions. 149 The

141 Ibid.
144 Ucko and Egnell, Counterinsurgency in Crisis, 13.
149 Mumford, The Counter-Insurgency Myth, 7.
indiscriminate use of force against civilian populations has often generated what Martha Crenshaw termed ‘action-reaction syndrome’, whereby violence becomes pervasive and couched in a strike and counter-strike pattern.\textsuperscript{150}

Apart from the military and paramilitary forces, the role of local security forces such as the police is considered a crucial element in a counterinsurgency campaign.\textsuperscript{151} Local security forces tend to have a better understanding of the threat environment and local intelligence.\textsuperscript{152} A counterinsurgency campaign cannot be successful if the police are inefficient, ill-equipped and unable to provide security to the local population. Security of the population is crucial for a successful counterinsurgency campaign. The support of the local population cannot be secured without providing them security against the use of coercive tactics by insurgents.\textsuperscript{153}

The inability of local security forces to provide security to the local population may prompt them to submit to the insurgents’ rule\textsuperscript{154} and can cause them to be coerced to take up the cause of the insurgents.\textsuperscript{155} Galula highlighted the importance of the security of the population in counterinsurgency: “If the insurgent manages to dissociate the population from the counterinsurgent, to control it physically, to get its active support, he will win the war because, in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness.”\textsuperscript{156}

Besides using military means, the best counterinsurgency practices also emphasise the use of political means to counter insurgency. A negotiation with insurgents is one way of employing political means. However, counterinsurgents cannot always employ this political tactic for their benefit. Negotiations with insurgents without first weakening their power can possibly damage a counterinsurgency campaign. Negotiations with insurgents from a position of weakness are very likely to be interpreted by insurgents as a sign of the counterinsurgents' weakness. This carries the risk of bolstering insurgents' morale and strengthening their resolve. A counterinsurgency expert contended that “The counterinsurgent cannot safely enter into negotiations except from a position of strength, or his potential supporters will flock to the insurgent side.”\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{151} Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan}, 10.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{153} Galula, \textit{Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice}, 8,16,54.
\textsuperscript{155} Melshen, “Mapping Out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan,” 669.
The destruction of the insurgents’ infrastructure is a prerequisite for the complete defeat of an insurgency. The insurgents’ infrastructure includes their political, economic and military capabilities. Timothy Deady maintained that destruction of “insurgents’ strategic and operational centres of gravity” permitted the United States forces to achieve successful counterinsurgency in Philippines.\textsuperscript{158} The complete elimination of insurgents’ capabilities is a time-intensive process. Dealing with insurgency “on the cheap’ may not be successful.”\textsuperscript{159} Charles Edward Callwell offered the following advice for counterinsurgent forces:

Every undertaking should have a definite and distinct purpose, and once entered upon should be carried out to the end... The enemy must be forced to understand that business is meant, that the regular army intends to accomplish whatever enterprise it engages in. Half measures are fatal.\textsuperscript{160}

After destroying the insurgents’ infrastructure, clearing areas of the remnants of insurgency is also essential to achieve success in the counterinsurgency campaign. Clearing requires the counterinsurgency forces to find and destroy scores of improvised explosive devices and frequently engage in house-to-house or field-to-field fighting.\textsuperscript{161} Clearing also involves preventing the insurgents’ counter-attacks on the security forces and destroying insurgents’ ability to use intimidating actions intended to keep their hold on the population.\textsuperscript{162}

After clearing the remnants of an insurgency, there is a need to then hold the areas to prevent the possibility of insurgents returning. This is also essential for winning the trust of the population and requires the stationing of a large number of troops in cleared areas.\textsuperscript{163} Holding is not only important in asserting the writ of the state, but also a precondition to starting development work. To chase insurgents to the point of complete defeat, deployment of counterinsurgency forces in forward areas is also recommended as a best practice for counterinsurgency.\textsuperscript{164}

After the complete military defeat of insurgents, durable success in a counterinsurgency campaign can be achieved only by winning hearts and minds of the local population. Moreover, a counterinsurgency’s main objective is not only to kill or capture insurgents, but also to eliminate the causes of insurgency. The motives behind an insurgency are mostly social, political or economic in nature. Therefore, defeating insurgency requires

\textsuperscript{159} Melshen, “Mapping Out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan,” 670.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{164} Melshen, “Mapping Out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan,” 684.
more than a merely military approach. Galula contended that “counterinsurgency is 80 percent political action and only 20 percent military.”

Templer had experience in launching a successful counterinsurgency campaign against the communist insurgents in Malaya. He argued, “The answer [to the uprising] lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people.”

Winning hearts and minds can help to turn the population away from the insurgents’ cause. Insurgents are better able to secure the population’s support when the latter have deep grievances against the state. In one of the classic works of counterinsurgency literature, Mao Tse-tung said that the relationship between insurgents and the population in which they operate is similar to fish and water, such that “guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation.”

Thomas Mockaitis, an insurgency and counterinsurgency historian, provided an insight:

> Trust and cooperation depend . . . on recognizing and as far as possible addressing the real needs and the legitimate grievances on which the insurgency feeds . . . People generally support an insurgency out of a shared sense of wrong or frustration at not having their basic needs met.

Through development projects such as building schools, roads or health clinics, the counterinsurgents may win the hearts and minds of the population. The British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson contended that “Winning’ the population can tritely be summed up as good government in all its aspects . . . such as improved health measures and clinics . . . new schools . . . and improved livelihood and standard of living.”

A retired United States Marine, T. X. Hammes, said emphatically, “The fundamental weapon in counterinsurgency is good governance.”

Addressing grievances of the local population provides a durable basis for an effective counterinsurgency. Bard O’Neill observed similarly:

> Popular support [for insurgency] from the elites and especially the masses stems primarily from concrete grievances concerning such things as land reform, injustice, unfair taxation, and corruption. It is over these issues that the battle to win hearts and minds is most directly enjoined. History suggests that a

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165 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 63.
170 Cited in Fitzsimmons, “Hard Hearts and Open Minds?,” 341.
government can most effectively undercut insurgencies that rely on mass support by splitting the rank and file away from the leadership through calculated reforms that address the material grievances and needs of the people.\textsuperscript{171}

As I will demonstrate, Pakistan's approach in the FATA exhibited an initially poor and then later strong counterinsurgency approach. The government's initial counterinsurgency campaign in the FATA lacked both will and capability. As such, it compromised the security of the local population, eroding potential support from those concerned about the TTP. It also conducted negotiations with the insurgents from a position of weakness. Moreover, Pakistani forces were largely conventional in their training and equipment and were either incapable of or unwilling to adapt to the needs of counterinsurgency. As a result, the FATA insurgency grew rapidly.

Starting in late 2008, a stronger counterinsurgency approach by the Pakistani government caused the decline of the FATA insurgency. A strong political will to eliminate the insurgency had grown within the political and military elite. The Pakistani military finally employed the necessary resources to fight the insurgents. Personnel received the requisite training to sharpen their counterinsurgency skills and adequate counterinsurgency equipment. This enabled state forces to employ a more targeted use of force to avoid civilian damage. Moreover, the military employed the clear and hold model after destroying the insurgents' military strength. After clearing the areas from the insurgents, the military stationed troops and established checkpoints to stop re-infiltration by the insurgents. Furthermore, the government also attempted to win the hearts and minds of the local people, introducing important development projects in the region. As I will demonstrate, the TTP is now a much weakened and fractured organisation and Pakistan has expelled the insurgents from most of the FATA.

Unsurprisingly, challenges remain in 2016. The government's efforts in addressing the socio-economic grievances of the people are far from satisfactory. A lack of political reforms in the region means the FATA remains a largely autonomous area. Pakistan's recent counterinsurgency has been quite successful in ending the insurgency. However, this victory may not be sustainable without adequate socio-economic development of the region.

### 2.4 Conclusion

Various explanations have been offered in the existing theoretical literature to explain the phenomenon of insurgency. One of these explanations has highlighted grievances as the foremost cause of insurgency. The grievances can be political, economic or

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
ethnic in nature. This theoretical assertion has been challenged on the empirical grounds that some marginalised areas experience insurgency, while other such areas do not. This demonstrates that the mere presence of grievances does not necessarily lead to a rebellion. Some other explanations have focused on opportunity in explaining the outbreak of rebellion. The opportunity argument emphasises the availability of finances, military feasibility or physical terrain as the most important factors in stimulating insurgency.

However, the best opportunity is provided by a weak state, Weak governance, weak military and paramilitary forces, and lack of resources are some of the elements of a weak state that can potentially motivate rebel leaders to launch rebellion. The weak state argument has increasingly found consensus among the insurgency scholars. The line of argument that weak states are susceptible to insurgency is appealing, but it does not explain why some weak states do not experience insurgency at all, or why some weak states can sustain themselves for a long period of time without facing an insurgency. Most importantly, it does not explain the timing of insurgency in a weak state.

To resolve the puzzle of the timing of an insurgency, a three-step model is proposed and elaborated upon in the following chapters. The first step of the model shows that the maintaining of the status quo by a weak state does not lead to rebellion. The second step of the model demonstrates that insurgency erupts when a weak state disrupts the status quo, especially with the indiscriminate use of force, while trying to impose order. Finally, the third step of model suggests that the nature of a counterinsurgency strategy by a state determines whether an insurgency grows or decreases. This argument is taken further by asserting that a weak counterinsurgency by a state allows insurgency to grow and a strong counterinsurgency can cause the decline of an insurgency.

In the remainder of this thesis I illustrate how the three-step model developed above accounts for the absence, onset and escalation and decline of the FATA Insurgency. As such, different chapters align with the various phases of the model. The following two chapters account for the absence of serious insurgency in the FATA throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods, by illustrating how national governments and local leaders in the FATA enjoyed a status quo which served the interests of both. Chapter Five then accounts for the onset of insurgency by showing how the Pakistani government disrupted this status quo by launching the first of several military campaigns in the area. Chapters Six and Seven then demonstrate how the different approaches taken by the government towards counterinsurgency explain the rebellion’s rise and fall.
CHAPTER THREE: STATUS QUO IN THE FATA AND THE LACK OF REBELLION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the decades-long *modus vivendi* between the British and Pakistani states and the tribal groups of the FATA. The chapter analyses the different policies pursued by the British and Pakistani states in dealing with the people of the tribal areas. Under the control of the British and Pakistani states, the FATA tribes maintained their autonomy and traditional ways of life based on their centuries-old *Pashtunwali* traditions. This chapter contends that it was this *modus vivendi* that explains why, despite the Pakistani state’s weak control in the tribal areas, there was no rebellion from the tribal people. This explanation supports the assertion of the first step of the theoretical model of this study: that there will be no rebellion as long as a weak state maintains a *modus vivendi*, respecting the authority of local leaders and rarely intervening in the region.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the Pashtun tribes and the importance of their *Pashtunwali* traditions in maintaining their independent status through the centuries. This discussion also provides a context for the evolution of the British administration of the tribes. The chapter proceeds to explain the different policies of the British in dealing with the FATA tribes, followed by a discussion of the *modus vivendi* developed between the British state and the FATA tribes. The chapter then moves on to discuss how after independence in 1947, the Pakistani state continued this *status quo* and maintained only limited control over the tribal areas. This policy was initially pursued in order to appease the FATA tribes in the face of Afghanistan's attempts to use the tribes against the Pakistani government. Autonomy was also afforded the tribal areas due to Pakistan's attempt to counter the Russian threat which emerged in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The chapter also discusses what came after the Soviet withdrawal, and how Pakistan sought to gain influence in Afghanistan and use the FATA to frustrate India. Finally, the chapter discusses the impact of the low level of state control and self-rule by the tribes on socio-economic conditions in the tribal areas.

3.2 Understanding the Pashtun tribes: *Pashtunwali* and tribal independence

The Pashtun of the tribal areas have fiercely guarded their independence for centuries. No imperial power was ever successful in subjugating these tribes. They have scorned the civilisations and governments of the settled world. They do not believe in state-
based forms of law, the authority of law courts and they hate paying taxes. They have followed their own tribal code commonly known as *Pashtunwali*. The tribes’ strict adherence to the *Pashtunwali* has facilitated them in keeping the outside intruders at bay.  

Currently, the FATA consists of seven distinct administrative districts known as Political Agencies (henceforth agencies), and six tribal territories known as Frontier Regions. Running from north to south, these agencies are located along the international border (also known as Durand Line) between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The FATA covers an area of about 27,200 square kilometres and approximates the size of Maryland in the United States. Its population is about three million according the Census report of 1998. The area is inhabited by various Pashtun tribes which are similar in terms of cultural and social traits.

The Pashtun are generally considered to be “one of the largest tribal groups in the world,” with a population of approximately 25 million in Pakistan and another 15 million across the border in Afghanistan. Most of the Pashtun population has been absorbed by the larger state systems in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, the Pashtun tribes inhabiting the FATA have proved distinct from many other members of the wider ethnic group. They have been quite successful in maintaining their existence largely outside the control of a state over centuries, thwarting attempts by outside powers to subjugate them. Even during the British colonial period, they continued to thrive in upholding their culture and traditions of self-rule.

Geographically the Pashtun lands can be best described “as a long narrow fortification running parallel in two belts, first a moat and then a rampart, along the line of the Indus.” The rampart is the Sulaiman Mountains range running southward from its apex in the mighty ranges of the Hindu Kush, and roughly constitutes today’s FATA. The moat is made up of settled plains (under direct control of the government) along the river, which are valuable for farming and include Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu-Marwat and the Derajat. The rulers of India, including the British, integrated the moat areas under their direct administration but were not successful in subjugating the rampart areas

174 Pashtuns are also known as Pukhtuns or Pathans.
176 Shuja Nawaz, *FATA — A Most Dangerous Place: Meeting the Challenge of Militancy and Terror in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), 2009), 2. Pukhtuns constitute around 42% of Afghanistan population and are an ethnic majority there whereas their number in Pakistan is around 15%.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid., xvii–xviii.
(tribal areas). The tribal areas are largely an unattractive place because of their topography and harsh weather conditions, with little to offer to a governing power other than a few transit routes that provide access to the Indian subcontinent from Central Asia.\textsuperscript{180} The invaders from Central Asia were only able to extend their "control over the plains and one or two of the passages through the mountains."\textsuperscript{181} The control of the passes in the tribal areas was possible only by paying subsidies to the tribes.

The Pashtun of the tribal areas are distinguished from the Pashtun inhabiting the plains (under government control). Akbar Ahmed has termed this as the divide between \textit{nang} and \textit{qalang} cultures: \textit{nang} denoting the honour code of the tribesmen and \textit{qalang} referring to the cultivable land subject to taxation.\textsuperscript{182} Akbar further elaborated that \textit{qalang} (literally rent or taxes associated with a rentier class) are those who fall prey to social stratification along hierarchical lines.\textsuperscript{183} The inhabitants of the plains have come under the direct rule of the occupying empires and "have always been regarded as the senior branch of the race."\textsuperscript{184} \textit{Nang} (literally honour which lies at the heart of \textit{Pashtunwali}) are those Pashtun who have maintained their traditional egalitarian social structure and adhere to a concept of "patriarchal society where concepts of modern law and liberty find no place."\textsuperscript{185} The Pashtun tribes "never fell under the effective sway of any recorded imperial authority and now form the backbone of the so-called tribal belt."\textsuperscript{186} Bijan Omrani described the FATA Tribes as being:

…fiercely proud of their independence. They hold in contempt the civilisation and governments of the settled world. They do not like to pay taxes, they do not have time for the conventional forms of law and law courts and they do not have any taste for laws imposed from distant capitals.\textsuperscript{187}

The uncompromising nature of the self-governed hill Pashtun is best differentiated from the greater government-controlled Pashtun of the plains by a Pashtun proverb: "Honour ate up the mountains; taxes ate up the plains."\textsuperscript{188} The Pashtun tribes' continuous resistance to foreign occupation has made them aggressive and belligerent: "They are

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., xx–xxxi.
\textsuperscript{181} ibid., xxi.
\textsuperscript{183} Ahmed, \textit{Millennium and Charisma among Pathans}, 73–76.
\textsuperscript{185} S. Iftkharr Hussain, \textit{Some Major Pakhtoon Tribes along the Pak-Afghan Border} (Islamabad: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar & Hans Seidal Foundation, 2000), 163.
the most warlike of all the Indian\textsuperscript{189} … they “are the bravest of all the people in those parts”.\textsuperscript{190} Alberuni, a notable scholar, who lived in Ghazni and the north-western region (now Pakistan), portrayed the tribes occupying the frontiers of India towards the West as “rebellious, savage races.”\textsuperscript{191} Writing about their nature of fierce independence and warlike attitude, one eminent scholar noted:

\begin{quote}
…proud to a degree, self-reliant only as their life can make them, hardy beyond measure and absolutely tireless. Their physical fitness would be incomprehensible if one did not consider the climate and country they live in, which allows no weaklings to survive … Taken as a whole, the frontier tribes are unquestionably among the hardiest men on earth, and so much the more redoubtable foes when war is afoot.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

In addition, the Pashtun tribes of the FATA have followed no law but their own tribal code, \textit{Pashtunwali}. \textit{Pashtunwali} stresses the personal values of independence, honour, revenge, and hospitality.\textsuperscript{193} Freedom from authority and the egalitarian character of the Pashtun society are highly revered among the Pashtun of the hills.\textsuperscript{194} Moreover, \textit{Pashtunwali} emphasises a sense of personal honour or \textit{nang} that requires a Pashtun to protect the “inviolability of his person, his land, and his women.”\textsuperscript{195} The concept of land entails individual land holdings, as well as tribal territory as a whole.\textsuperscript{196} This is the reason that tribal Pashtun have offered severe resistance to foreign aggressors when they attempted to establish their rule; it was taken as an infringement of their land. Failure by a Pashtun to uphold his honour risks him becoming an outcast.

These tribes have strictly adhered to \textit{Pashtunwali} by keeping outside intruders at bay.\textsuperscript{197} Literally the term \textit{Pashtunwali} means the way of the Pashtun,\textsuperscript{198} comprising an informal or unwritten code of conduct encompassing all aspects of life and calling for strict adherence from a Pashtun, both at individual as well as collective levels. The central “maxims are those of mediation or protection (\textit{Nanawati}), retaliation (badal), and hospitality (\textit{Melmastia}).”\textsuperscript{199}

\textit{Nanawati} is the law of asylum, according to which asylum must be given to all fugitives, and even to bitter enemies if they come as suppliants. According to

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 42.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{192} Cited in Azmat Hayat Khan, \textit{The Durand Line: Its Geo-Strategic Importance} (Peshawar, Pakistan: Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar & Hans Seidal Foundation, 2005), 31–32.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{196} Rubin, \textit{The Fragmentation of Afghanistan}, 24.
\textsuperscript{197} Ahmed, \textit{Millennium and Charisma among Pathans}.
mehmastia he should show hospitality and protection to every guest. The badal imposes upon him the responsibility of wiping out insult with insult: i.e., ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’. The last element in the Pathan [Pashtun] code of honour is the main cause of feuds and vendettas which may last for generations.200

Compliance to this code is mandatory for a Pashtun to preserve his honour and to protect his identity. Strict observance of the principles of Pashtunwali has made it possible for the Pashtun tribes to survive fiercely independent for more than 1,000 years.201 Pashtunwali demands that members of the Pashtun society fulfil certain obligations. In general terms, Pashtunwali stresses the tribes’ collective expectations that their members conform to the norms and customs that make them a distinguished socio-cultural group. Pashtunwali “enforces a rigid standard of behaviour for guiding the community’s life and determines the standard of behaviour of individuals and the tribe.”202 It is important to examine some of the key principles laid down in Pashtunwali.

Revenge or badal is an important feature of Pashtunwali “which is embedded in a social deterrence of amazing proportions.”203 Revenge or badal is required, irrespective of the consequences, when a Pashtun has been dishonoured or injured. Badal often leads to inter-clan and intra-clan rivalries which can persist for years and transform into a blood feud unless retribution is made.204 Revenge may take time. As one Pashtun proverb goes, “I took my revenge after a hundred years, and I only regret that I acted in haste.”205 The Pashtunwali code generates social norms that cherish independence, while at the same time constraining that freedom by requiring conformity to the tribal code. It is believed that Pashtunwali provides “some sanity in an otherwise hostile environment of tribe.”206

The jirga is an important institution in the Pashtunwali tradition that provides a legal framework for resolving inter-tribal or intra-tribal disputes. The jirga provides a mechanism for conflict resolution. Larger jirga are held in the case of war with another tribe or foreign intrusion, whereas smaller tribal jirga are convened to discuss and decide disputes at a village or local level. The jirga consists of tribal leaders and other members of the tribe participating in the consultative process to reach to a decision. When called to resolve a conflict, the jirga is not a singular event, but rather a complex

200 Khan, The Durand Line: Its Geostrategic Importance, 35.
201 Johnson and Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire,” 59.
203 Ibid.
205 Johnson and Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire,” 59.
206 Aziz, “The Frontier Crimes Regulation,” 120.
sequence of events in a “protracted, consultative, and deliberative process that may take months to conclude.”\textsuperscript{207} The important features of the \textit{jirga} are that everything takes place in an open environment and the final decisions are accepted unanimously by all the groups concerned.\textsuperscript{208}

This tribal system is generally mistakenly characterised as lawless with no formal governance system in place. This is not true particularly with regard to the FATA. Spain wrote, “Despite the fact that it [\textit{Pashtunwali}] has perpetuated the blood feud, it provides for what is probably the maximum amount of law and order in a society of warrior tribes.”\textsuperscript{209} Johnson saw \textit{Pashtunwali} as “an alternative form of social organization with an advanced conflict resolution mechanism.”\textsuperscript{210}

These cultural and traditional practices have been central to Pashtun life for centuries. Local communities have been willing to formally respect state control so long as these cultural structures were not threatened. Recognising this, the British established limited control of the tribal areas while giving freedom to the tribes to retain their traditional way of life and maintain their cultural practices. Independent Pakistan also maintained limited control of the tribal areas which allowed the tribes to continue with their traditional autonomy and keep their cultural structures intact.

### 3.3 Evolution of British control of the tribal areas (1849-1947)

The British allowed the FATA to remain a semiautonomous area because they were not interested in integrating an area that is mostly barren and devoid of natural resources. Furthermore, the tribesmen’s strong attachment to their traditional way of life based on \textit{Pashtunwali} had strongly discouraged any foreign power from seeking direct control of the tribes. In addition, the British were primarily concerned about the Russian threats to their empire and also with keeping the settled areas under direct British control secure from tribal raids. The British therefore saw the area as a buffer region and allowed autonomy for the FATA tribes.

The North-West Frontier has occupied strategic importance since ancient times, providing an opening to invading armies from Central and Western Asia to approach the fertile Indus plains and the areas beyond. After establishing power, the rulers of India had always remained apprehensive about the defence of the North-West Frontier. The passes of the impenetrable Hindu Kush and Suleman mountain ranges, which provided gateways to India, had in fact made the north-western expanse an Achilles heel for

\textsuperscript{207} Johnson and Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire,” 60.
\textsuperscript{209} Spain, \textit{The Pathan Borderland}, 68.
\textsuperscript{210} Johnson and Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire,” 61.
Indian defence. A cursory look at Indian history demonstrates that this vulnerability continued to haunt the rulers of India throughout the centuries. To secure the frontiers from any foreign invasion, the Indian rulers often switched the North-West Frontier between Indus and the Oxus.  

After the British had assumed control of the North-West Frontier region after the Second Sikh War and the fall of Sikh rule in Punjab in 1849, they were faced with the same dilemma over defence in the North-West as their predecessors. Russia’s attempts to gain influence over Central Asia and the Caucus had created extreme fear in British minds over the vulnerability of the North-West border. The struggle between the British and Russian Empires during the nineteenth-century is commonly known as the “Great Game”. The first culmination of this struggle was the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838-42), in which the British sought influence in Afghanistan by installing a puppet regime in order to prevent possible Russian encroachment towards the north-west of India. The British were largely unsuccessful in their attempt due to the fierce resistance from the Afghan people. However, the British managed to fend off Czarist Russia by creating a buffer zone between British India and Russia.  

The extension of British sovereignty to the North-West Frontier region established a direct border between the British controlled areas and the Pashtun hill tribes. These hill tribes were apparently under the sovereignty of Kabul but were not under any direct control and lived a de facto independent life. The British, like the previous rulers of this area, were confronted with the problem of handling these tribes. The British were apprehensive about tribal raids on the settled areas under direct British control. However, the British were reluctant to take direct control of the tribal areas, primarily because of the difficulties involved in effectively governing these areas. Substantial financial resources and a large workforce were required for this purpose. Therefore, the British first adopted what came to be known as the “Closed Door Policy”. Non-aggression in tribal territory and non-interference in tribal affairs were the guiding

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212 Alexander approached the plains of the Punjab around 327BC by crossing the Khyber Pass in the Hindu Kush followed by Mahmud of Ghazna and Mohammad Ghuri who also raided India through the passes of the Hindu Kush. Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India also entered the Indian plains by using the Khyber Pass. See Caroe, *The Pathans 550 B.C. - A.D. 1957*, Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*.  
213 See Khan, *The Durand Line: Its Geostategic Importance*.  
214 The British were extremely concerned towards the defence of North-West from the possible Russian attack. See Charles Miller, *Khyber, British India’s North West Frontier: The Story of an Imperial Migraine* (London: Macdonald and Jane’s, 1977), xv.  
principles of this policy. The British decided to exercise influence over these areas primarily through political means, such as “subsidies, blockade, occasional interference in tribal affairs, and, when necessary, punitive expeditions.” The British maintained the autonomy of the tribes and promised to give them subsidies and allowances in return for not attacking the settled areas of Punjab. The tribesmen reserved the right to enter into British territory for trade purposes but entry by British officers into tribal territory was restricted. However, a military force called the Punjab Frontier Force was introduced for defensive purposes.

For decades, the British practiced this non-interference policy towards the tribal areas, but it did not prove successful in preventing tribal raids into settled territory. The British halted allowances and imposed blockades whenever the tribesmen carried out raids. To tame the tribes, the British also launched a number of expeditions. For example, 23 expeditions of varying sizes were launched into the hills from 1857 to 1881. Further, Russian expansion into Central Asia and advances towards the borders of Afghanistan also created enormous fear among the British. By the 1870s the Russians had captured the great Central Asian cities of Bokhara, Samarkand and Khiva, posing a direct security threat to the cities of Afghanistan such Kabul and Kandahar. This led ultimately to the replacement of the Closed Border Policy with the “Forward Policy”. A historian, Omrani, observed that “It was not only the threat of a Russian attack that the British needed to take into account when setting their frontier policy; there was also the question of internal security in India.”

The first step in the Forward Policy was taken in 1876 in the area currently known as Balochistan. The Forward Policy aimed at building a strategic line of defense against Russian penetration in Central Asia. In an agreement with the Khan of Kalat, the British secured the lease of Quetta, together with the Bolan Pass, and stationed British Indian forces in Quetta. Fearing British advancement, Sher Ali, the Afghan ruler, invited a Russian mission to Kabul, while denying entry to a British mission through the Khyber Pass. These events stimulated the second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878, giving impetus to the British Forward Policy in the borderland. The British “Forward Policy” envisioned that “the frontier should be pushed as far forward as possible, ideally to the genuine or

\[\text{\textsuperscript{218}}\] Spain, The Pathan Borderland, 116.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{221}}\] Iqbal, “An Overview of British Administrative Set-Up,” 80.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{223}}\] Omrani and Ledwidge, “Rethinking the Durand Line,” 48.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{225}}\] Ibid., 373–375.
‘scientific’ frontier of the Hindu Kush, with Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar [cites of [Afghanistan] forming the first line of defence.”

The Forward Policy required pushing the colonial administration out into the tribal areas. To achieve this, the policy suggested developing and ‘civilising’ the tribes gradually while allowing them autonomy in running their own affairs. This would make the tribes submit to the British government’s influence. The Forward Policy also proposed that “strong points were captured, fortified, garrisoned, [and] connected by roads which would be protected.” Colonel Robert Sandeman had employed this policy in the neighbouring region of Balochistan and it proved quite successful in controlling the Baloch tribes. This led the British to attempt to implement this policy in the Pashtun tribal areas. However, the Pashtun tribes proved more intractable than the Baloch border tribes, rendering this policy mostly ineffective. The Pashtun tribes resisted British attempts to impose control.

Despite this, the Forward Policy led to some formal British penetration of the tribal region. As a result of the second Anglo-Afghan War in 1878–79, the British forces expelled the Afghan forces from Kurram Valley and declared it to be a British agency.

In 1879, an administrative unit known as Khyber Agency was created and Pierre Louis Napoleon Cavagnari was appointed as its first political officer. In 1881, an agreement was signed between the British government and the Afridi tribes to keep the Khyber Pass open for trade. The agreement delineated: 1) the recognition of the independence of the tribe, 2) an annual subsidy to various sub-tribes and, 3) the raising of Jezalchis (later Khyber Rifles) for the protection of the pass. Despite these interventions, the tribal areas were far from under the British control.

3.4 Establishment of the Durand Line: Defining the tribal areas

Due to the uncertainty involved in the conquest of the tribal areas, and partly due to revived Russian interest in expanding their territory into the North-West of India, the British clearly realised that formal borders needed to be established between Afghanistan and British India. The Russians had advanced further during the 1880s and were pushing towards the river Oxus and Afghanistan. To delimit the sphere of influence between Afghanistan and British India, a treaty was signed between the two to

| 226 Omrani and Ledwidge, “Rethinking the Durand Line,” 183. |
| 228 Spain, The Pathan Borderland, 117. |
| 229 Ibid., 143. |
| 231 Omrani and Ledwidge, “Rethinking the Durand Line,” 50. |
establish ‘the Durand Line’, named after the architect of the agreement, Sir Mortimer Durand. The demarcation of the border has continued to be a bone of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan, marring bilateral relations even today.\footnote{Ronald Neumann, “Borderline Insanity,” \textit{The American Interest} 3, no. 2 (2007): 52–58.}

The tribal areas were recognised as being under British influence after the demarcation. The Durand Line was not treated as an international border but more of a line that marked the ‘the limit of their respective spheres of influence’. The treaty stated in Article 2 that “the Government of [British] India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and His Highness the [Afghan] Amir will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.”\footnote{Cited in Omrani and Ledwidge, “Rethinking the Durand Line,” 50.}

The British did not want the line to be a boundary because they “did not want to absorb the tribes into their administrative system.”\footnote{Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 427.} The Durand Line in fact had established a tribal belt to the west of the settled districts of British India that created “a buffer to a buffer [Afghanistan] and the line had none of the rigidity of other international frontiers.”\footnote{Ibid.}

It is important to note that this demarcation divided the Pashtun tribes, especially the Wazir and Mohmand tribes, between British India and Afghanistan.\footnote{Omrani and Ledwidge, “Rethinking the Durand Line,” 50.} The Birmai tract of Waziristan went to the Afghanistan side, while the rest of Waziristan was held as part of British India. Similarly, the Mohmand tribal areas were also divided in two.\footnote{Omrani, “The Durand Line,” 186.} In the words of Fraser-Tytler, this line was “illogical from the point of view of ethnography, strategy and geography.”\footnote{W.K. Fraser-Tytler, \textit{Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia} (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 188.} Louis Dupree, another scholar, said it was “a classic example of an artificial political boundary cutting through a culture area.”\footnote{Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, 425.}

The tribesmen considered the demarcation of the boundary line as increasing British involvement in their internal affairs and this was highly resented. In June 1897, an uprising erupted in Tochi Valley (Waziristan) which soon expanded into other tribal areas including Kurram, Orakzai, Khyber, Mohmand and Malakand. The local religious leaders had issued \textit{fatwas} (religious decrees) to kill the English and “secure certain entry into Paradise.”\footnote{Ibid.} The Government had responded vigorously by sending more than 70,000 troops who succeeded in controlling the region.\footnote{Lal Baha, \textit{N.-W.F.P. Administration under British Rule 1901-1919} (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, n.d.), 4–8.} The government had paid huge price in both men and money to defeat the insurgents.\footnote{Caroe, \textit{The Pathans} 550 B.C.- A.D. 1957, 388.}
tribal revolt, its rapid escalation into the entire tribal area, and the expenses the government had to incur to suppress the rebellion convinced the British Indian authorities that conquering the tribal area was not a viable option. According to Syed Waqar Ali Shah, “Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA): Will It End the Current Militancy?” (Working Paper no.64, South Asia Institute, Department of Political Science, Heidelberg University, 2012), 5.

The depth of this frontier provided an effective defence against any Russian encroachment, but the British continued to face an internal policing problem in the tribal belt. Almost two thirds of the whole military force of the North-West Frontier was deployed to control the Pashtun tribes, incurring huge expenses amounting to almost half of India’s annual budget. Throughout the British period, the hill tribes had remained vigilant in guarding their traditional freedoms against any possible intrusion. The British could not establish firm control over them, despite launching 62 military expeditions against the tribes between 1849 and 1899.

3.5 Administering the tribal areas

It took a few decades to develop a modus vivendi that allowed the British to achieve limited control over the tribal areas, while at the same time granting autonomy to the tribes to manage tribal affairs in accordance with their norms and traditions. In 1901, the new Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, revived the old ‘Closed Border Policy’ towards the tribal areas that aimed at minimal interference in tribal affairs. Under this policy, the regular troops were withdrawn and the security of the tribal areas was entrusted to newly organised militia units such as the Khyber Rifles, Samana Rifles and Tochi Scouts. Subsidies to the tribes were enhanced and projects for the development of communication and transportation systems were launched which provided work to the tribes. Curzon’s policy reduced the government’s expenditures and brought relative peace in these areas.

Moreover, the British government focused on developing the administrative system for the tribal areas. The rugged and difficult terrain, the tribes’ antagonism towards foreign intervention and a treacherous neighbourhood necessitated an ingenious political and administrative approach to the area. Furthermore, the area’s inability to offer any

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244 Syed Waqar Ali Shah, *Political Reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA): Will It End the Current Militancy?* (Working Paper no.64, South Asia Institute, Department of Political Science, Heidelberg University, 2012), 5.
249 Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas.”
substantial revenue made direct governance unreasonable and undesirable.\textsuperscript{250} Fahim explained the British vision towards these areas, observing that “From the British point of view, here the governance strategy needed to be flexible enough to avoid direct confrontation with the tribes yet at the same time sufficiently tenacious to impose a degree of order as and when required.”\textsuperscript{251}

For this purpose, a new province named the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) was carved out of the Punjab province on 9 November 1901.\textsuperscript{252} The new province of NWFP consisted of five settled districts comprising Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, and five tribal agencies comprising South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Malakand, Khyber and Kurram. To administer the tribal agencies, the British made written agreements with the tribes in an arrangement that ensured British influence and at the same time preserved tribal autonomy.

The tribes were allowed to maintain their autonomy in return for helping the British in defending the border from invaders and ending tribal raids in the settled areas. The government pledged to pay subsidies and allowances to the tribes for complying with good behaviour. In addition, the tribal areas were divided into two distinct administrative categories: protected and unprotected territories. The protected areas came under the direct control of the state, while unprotected areas were administered indirectly through the local tribes. Protected areas included roads, hospitals, schools and government offices.

An office of the Political Agent (PA) was created in each agency to manage the tribes in compliance with the treaties. The PA was delegated with enormous executive and judicial powers but these were restricted mostly to areas characterised as ‘protected territories’, which included roads in the tribal area and government buildings and installations. In reality, the maximum stretch of PA authority covered 100 yards either side of a major road.\textsuperscript{253} Hence, the protected territories constituted a small portion when compared with the tribal territories. In the tribal territories, the tribes were the sole masters of their own affairs, which were conducted according to \textit{Pashtunwali} without any government meddling.\textsuperscript{254}

The Political Agent relied on local leaders or tribal intermediaries, called maliks, in managing relations with the tribes, including the disbursement of subsidies and matters

\textsuperscript{250} Hugh Beattie, \textit{Imperial Frontier: Tribe and State in Waziristan} (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), 164.


\textsuperscript{254} Aziz, “The Frontier Crimes Regulation.”
of justice.\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Khassadars}, a police force mainly recruited from the local tribes of each agency, was placed at the discretion of the PA.\textsuperscript{256} The distribution of subsidies and allowances among the tribes was associated with good behaviour. The Political Agent was empowered to exercise a whole range of punitive measures for non-compliance, including suspension of subsidies, allowances, and salaries of the \textit{Khassadars}, the imprisonment of relatives or fellow tribesmen, confiscation of property, or even military retribution if necessary.\textsuperscript{257} If undertaking a military reprisal, the PA had the support of military and paramilitary troops stationed in specific areas. Despite the availability of these coercive means, the PA relied most often on political means in handling the tribes. For the PA, developing personal relationships, skilful manipulation, calm negotiations and political tactics were all necessary to deal with the complexity of governance in the tribal lands.

A distinct set of laws, the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), mostly based on the important traditions of the centuries-old unwritten Pashtun code of conduct, \textit{‘Pashtunwali’}, was introduced to govern state-tribes affairs. The Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) had been in force in various forms since the 1870s, and it was formalised in 1901.\textsuperscript{258} To be clear, the new arrangement between the colonial administration and the tribes did involve coercion. The norms of collective and territorial responsibility of the tribes and resolution of disputes or administering justice through a council of elders (\textit{jirga})\textsuperscript{259} constituted the main elements of the FCR.\textsuperscript{260} The principle of collective and territorial responsibility served as the pivot in the British devised administrative system of the tribal areas.\textsuperscript{261}

Under the collective and territorial responsibility clause of the FCR, the whole tribe would be held accountable for the wrongdoing of any of its members, and also responsible for any offence committed within its territory.\textsuperscript{262} The tribes had been following these norms in their own inter and intra-tribal affairs for centuries. The Kukikhel Afridis were the first subjects of this technique. It was in their area that a British messenger was ambushed and deprived of quinine bottles.\textsuperscript{263} Colonel John Coke, the

\begin{thebibliography}{263}
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\bibitem{256} Azmat Hayat Khan, “FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan),” in \textit{Tribal Areas of Pakistan: Challenges and Responses} (Islamabad, Pakistan: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2005).
\bibitem{258} Spain, \textit{The Pathan Borderland}, 145.
\bibitem{260} Aziz, “The Frontier Crimes Regulation.”
\bibitem{261} Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas,” 68.
\end{thebibliography}
officer in charge of the Kohat Pass Afridis, implemented the notion of “collective responsibility”. He laid down the procedure in the case of trouble caused by the tribe: “To close the Pass at once, seize all the Afridis to be found in the Peshawar and Kohat districts, put the men in jail, sell their cattle, stop all Pass allowances held by the Afridis, and, when the matter is settled, cause all losses to be made good, not from their confiscated allowances, but from the allowances made from the time they may commence.”

Jirga, an important part of Pashtunwali tradition, was also made part of the FCR. The British government agreed that all civil and criminal cases within the protected territories would be dealt with through jirga. The FCR empowered the Political Agent to constitute a jirga, comprised of a group of tribal leaders, to make recommendations on any matter referred to them. The jirga was mandated to give a finding of either guilt or innocence. The British made use of jirga to include tribal leaders in maintaining general peace and administering justice in the protected territories. These traditions had been practiced by the tribes for many generations to regulate their own inter and intra-tribal affairs.

Despite these arrangements, the British remained largely unsuccessful in establishing a firm hold on the tribes because of the deeply democratic and egalitarian character of the Pashtun hill society. Controlling or persuading chiefs in some other tribal societies, such as in Balochistan, had made it easier for the British to gain compliance from the tribes. But the Pashtun tribes lacked any kind of tradition where authority is invested in a single individual. There were maliks in the Pashtun tribes but they were devoid of any power or authority, and did not enjoy the same status as some tribal chiefs do in other tribal societies.

A malik was able to exercise some influence over his tribe but this was quite different from exercising traditional authority. Even maliks who could influence the tribes to a certain extent were few, demonstrating the profoundly egalitarian character of the hill tribes. Although, the colonial government did make serious attempts to reinforce the authority of the friendly maliks through official support, it did not produce the desired results. A malik was hardly able to exercise any influence beyond his immediate subsection of the tribe.

In addition, the arrangements between the British and the tribes did not always work smoothly. In 1901, the administration of Lord Curzon renounced its aggressive policy in

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264 Cited in Khan, “Special Status of Tribal Areas,” 68.
266 Aziz, “The Frontier Crimes Regulation,” 120.
267 Ahmed, Resistance and Control in Pakistan.
the tribal areas which led to a relative peace in the region. The British, however, continued to face a dilemma in controlling the tribes until the end of their rule in India.269 During the third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919, the British intervened in the tribal areas, resulting in a tribal uprising. A military expedition was launched during 1919–1920 in Waziristan to suppress the rebellion, but it faced severe resistance from the tribes. The commander-in-Chief of the Indian army described the military operations as being constituted:

... of unparalleled hard fighting and severity. The enemy fought with a determination and courage which has rarely, if ever, been met with by our troops in similar operations. The character of the terrain, combined with trying and arduous climatic conditions, alone presented difficulties before which the most hardened troops might well have hesitated.270

As a result of rebellion from the tribes, the British continued with a ‘modified forward policy’. The British attempted to extend their control in the tribal areas. The modified forward policy was followed by the construction of a road system in Waziristan linking important towns such as Wana, Razmak and Miranshah, and the establishment of permanent garrisons in these towns.271 In 1920, the Viceroy of India stated:

For many years ... we followed the policy of non-interference with its inhabitants. ... We hoped that if we left them alone, they would leave us alone. This hope, has, I regret to say, proved fallacious, and the time has come when we can no longer shut our eyes to the fact.272

The British continued to face resistance from the tribes. In addition, the tribes continued to create troubles in the settled areas of British India. In 1922, the British announced that “The immediate object of our North West Frontier policy is to control the trans-frontier tribes as to secure life and property in our frontier districts.”273 The Forward Policy had engaged many regular troops and incurred enormous costs. It resulted in an upsurge of violence with over 200 recorded raids in 1930 from the tribal areas down into the settled areas.274

Another revolt emerged in North Waziristan in 1936 when the tribes felt the British were interfering excessively in their religion. The Faqir of Ipi, hailing from a Wazir in North Waziristan, declared a jihad against the British for their undue interference in tribal

270 Dr Maqsudul Hasan Nuri Dr. Noor ul Haq, Dr. Rashid Ahman Khan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, IPRI Paper No. 10, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (Islamabad, 2005), 20.
271 Spain, The Pathan Borderland, 151.
272 Dr. Noor ul Haq, Dr. Rashid Ahman Khan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, 20.
affairs. A force of 32,000 regular troops and 5000 scouts were engaged in fighting with his resistance movement. The revolt led by the Faqir of Ipi was the last major revolt in the region before the British relinquished power in the Indian sub-continent in 1947. It was suppressed by the British Government only after some time. Warren noted that the British attempts to exert control over the tribes were largely unsuccessful throughout the history of British rule. He said there had been:

... several major incursions into tribal territory during the hundred years of British presence in North-West India. On each occasion the tribes and the mountains won a strategic victory, despite local tactical reverses, and the bulk of the Indian army's troops were forced to withdraw back on the plains of the Indus valley. Periodically, the British forget that you annex land but not people.

The tribes’ animosity subsided only with the replacement of the British by Pakistan. The assuming of control by members of their own faith had a calming influence on the recalcitrant tribes. Most importantly, the new state provided constitutional assurances to the tribes about maintaining their autonomous status and not establishing direct rule until they requested it. In consideration of there being no such petition made from the tribes thus far, Pakistan continued with the British tradition of limited administration with the exception of some territorial readjustments. After becoming part of Pakistan, these areas were named as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas which currently comprise seven Agencies and six Frontier Regions (FRs).

3.6 Pakistan’s policy towards the FATA (1947–2002)

The Pashtun tribes of the FATA decided to become part of Pakistan after receiving assurances from the Pakistani leadership that the existing arrangements with the British protecting their traditional autonomy would not be changed. Pakistan assured local leaders that there would be no interference in their internal affairs. To this end, Pakistan provided constitutional safeguards to ensure the FATA’s autonomy. As such, the Pakistani constitution, as well as state institutions including parliament and the courts do not have jurisdiction over the FATA. Due to the non-existence of formal law and

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275 Ibid.
277 The Malakand Agency was detached from FATA and made part of NWFP in 1970. Apart from this, there were some territorial readjustments within the FATA Agencies. For instance, Mohmand Agency was created in 1951 and Bajaur and Orakzai agencies were created in 1973. See David M. Hart, The Guardians of the Khaiber Pass: The Social Organisation and History of the Afridis of Pakistan (Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard Books, 1985), 108.
state institutions in the FATA, this area has been described by different scholars variously as ‘Yaghistan’ (literally land of insolence or the rebellious); ‘the wild west’; ‘the vanishing point of jurisprudence’; ‘no man’s land’ and it was even designated as the ‘last free place on earth’. 279

3.7 Pakistani state’s weak writ in the FATA

Indeed, in the postcolonial era, the autonomy of the FATA has increased. No significant changes have occurred regarding the political status of the FATA. The autonomous status of the FATA was recognised in the 1956, 1962, and 1973 constitutions of Pakistan. Under the 1973 constitution, the FATA territories are regarded as part of Pakistan and administered by the direct executive authority of the President of Pakistan. 280 The FATA has representation in the National Assembly as well as in the Senate, but these representatives are constitutionally barred from participating in the local affairs of the FATA. The President has the sole authority to administer the FATA, to alter the existing laws and issue ordinances for the tribal areas. Article 247 of the constitution of Pakistan says that no act of parliament is applicable to the FATA and the high courts and Supreme Court of Pakistan do not have jurisdiction over the tribal areas. This has reduced the state’s control over the FATA region.

The FATA is divided into two administrative categories: protected areas and non-protected areas. The protected areas are under the direct control of the government, while in the non-protected areas local tribes administer their affairs according to their local customs and traditions, commonly known as Pashtunwali. In the protected territory, civil and criminal cases are adjudicated by Political Agents invested with judicial powers. In non-protected areas, disputes among the tribes are decided through a local jirga (assembly of the tribal elders). The Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) provides a legal system, originated during the British colonial rule and adopted by Pakistan, to regulate the affairs between the state and tribes through the interaction of Political Agents and tribal leaders. 281 The tribes are permitted autonomy in deciding their affairs as long as it does not directly threaten the interests of the state. However, this state of affairs has created “perceptions of exclusion rather than inclusion.” 282

Iftikhar has described the writ of the Pakistani state in the FATA:

279 Cited in Mohammad, “Property Rights, Contracts, and Development (FAT),” 4.
281 Daniel Markey, Securing Pakistan’s Tribal Belt (The United States of America: Council of Foreign Relations, 2008), 5.
The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is a political construct defined by its unique structure of governance and its demography. As with the British, the Government of Pakistan often viewed FATA as a buffer zone…. The writ of the government in the area has never been strong and people of the area were seen as primitive, wild and fractious. Areas of the FATA close to Afghan border were considered inaccessible until several years ago.\textsuperscript{283}

The Political Agents' executive authority was reinforced with a local police force (levies and khassadars), recruited from the local tribes. The Political Agents were authorised to use military and paramilitary forces which are usually stationed in designated areas. Despite having coercive means available, the Political Agents have mostly maintained good relationships with the tribes. Nurturing of personal relations with the tribes, patient negotiations and political manoeuvring have constituted the norms of governance in the tribal areas. Traditionally, Political Agents have relied on political means, rather than the use of force, to resolve issues with the tribes. In addition, the Political Agents have generally respected the tribal autonomy and the tribal norms and traditions in dealing with the tribes.\textsuperscript{284} A former Political Agent described the role as performing diverse roles concurrently: “The political agent was only half administrator. The other half of him was a diplomat, dealing with the co-signatories of treaties.”\textsuperscript{285} This agent said further, “Use of force by a political agent will show that he did not have essential credentials to perform his duties.”\textsuperscript{286}

Some experts contend that the so-called ‘federal jurisdiction’ of the Pakistani state over the tribal areas is simply a misnomer. In fact, the government writ has never existed beyond the range of 100 meters on either side of the road in the tribal areas.\textsuperscript{287} Mossarat Qadeem, in-charge of the community-based empowerment initiative in the FATA, explained the weak-writ of the Pakistani state: “Pakistan rarely tried to integrate them (Tribal Areas) and maintained a ‘closed door policy’ a heritage of the colonial rulers…Thirty percent of FATA is still inaccessible both politically and administratively.”\textsuperscript{288}

In addition, the FATA seriously lacks infrastructure which makes it one of the most inaccessible areas in the world.\textsuperscript{289} Thus, although the FATA is “formally a part of

\textsuperscript{284}Rustam Shah Mohmand, a former political agent in FATA (Peshawar), interview by author, February 20, 2014.  
\textsuperscript{286}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{288}Cited in Shabana Fayyaz, “Pakistan Response Towards Terrorism: A Case Study of Musharraf Regime” (Department of Political Science and International Studies, The University of Birmingham, 2010), 197.  
\textsuperscript{289}Leventis, “The Waziristan Accord,” 21.}
Pakistan [the region] more closely resembles a colony whose population lives under laws and administrative arrangements that set it apart from the rest of the state.”

National identity is secondary to tribal allegiance and Islamic brotherhood. A weak writ of the state made the FATA a favourite retreating zone for criminals of all sorts. Reportedly, by the end of 2001:

FATA became a shelter for offenders and drug-traffickers. No-one in the tribal areas is prevented from keeping modern and sophisticated weapons. Out of 16,988 registered proclaimed offenders in the NWFP, 99 per cent have taken shelter in Darra Adam Khel, Orakzai Agency, Kurram Agency and Khyber Agency [FATA].

The Pakistani state maintained the semiautonomous status of the tribal areas and granted the tribes autonomy to govern their affairs. This explains why the tribes did not rebel despite the weak control of the Pakistani state.

3.8 Pakistan’s allowance of the FATA’s autonomy

With the end of British rule in India in 1947, the tribal areas became part of Pakistan. All the agreements and treaties between the tribal people and the British government were abrogated under the Indian Independence Act, 1947. The new state of Pakistan made fresh agreements with the tribal leaders (maliks) in 1947, under which they agreed to be part of Pakistan and made a commitment “to be peaceful and law abiding and to maintain friendly relations with the people of settled district.” In return “on the foregoing conditions the Government of Pakistan pledged to continue the existing benefits” to the tribal chiefs.

To provide a legal and constitutional cover to these agreements, the Governor General of Pakistan, who assumed direct jurisdiction of the tribal areas, declared the tribal areas as part of Pakistan in a series of orders and notifications, with effect from 15 August 1947. The government of Pakistan also withdrew troops from advanced positions in the tribal territory and the tribesmen in turn affirmed their loyalty and support to Pakistan. “To many,” according to Akbar S. Ahmed, “in an increasingly different post-independence world, the inherited structure appeared alien and out of tune with the times.”

Cited in ibid.
Fayyaz, “Pakistan Response Towards Terrorism,” 192.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ahmed, Resistance and Control in Pakistan, 35.
Some proposals were made to integrate the tribal areas with the NWFP province, but the Pakistani government preferred to maintain the status quo, at least temporarily.\textsuperscript{297} The temporary nature of this arrangement was reflected in the speech of the first Governor General of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who visited the NWFP in April 1948 and addressed the tribal jirga (assembly of tribal elders and maliks) at Peshawar. He said that:

\begin{quote}
Pakistan has no desire to unduly interfere with your internal freedom. On the contrary, 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 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.\textsuperscript{298}
\end{quote}

In the same speech Jinnah endorsed the continuation of the allowances they received during the British rule, and said:

\begin{quote}
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 arrangements except in consultation with you so long as you remain loyal and faithful to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{299}
\end{quote}

After the death of Jinnah in 1948, successive Pakistani regimes did not revise the policy regarding the tribal areas, preferring to continue with the British administrative and political structure. The following decades did not witness any change relating to the administration of the tribal areas. The subsequent governments of Pakistan preferred to maintain the status quo.\textsuperscript{300} Similarly, the government did not introduce any political, legislative or electoral reforms in the FATA, so maintained its semiautonomous status. The tribes were provided electricity free of cost and they were not required to pay any taxes to the Pakistani state. They continued to receive allowances and subsidies for remaining loyal to the state.

The tribes were allowed autonomy within their territories, where they had freedom to practice Pashtunwali. The tribes did not create any disturbance for the state as long as


\textsuperscript{299} Ibid., 239.

\textsuperscript{300} Khan, “Political Developments in FATA: A Critical Perspective,” 33.
their traditional and cultural practices were not threatened by the state. Since Pakistan’s independence, the state had never sent its military forces into the tribal areas. The following section explains successive Pakistani governments’ motivations and strategic considerations in allowing the FATA its autonomous status.

3.9 Afghanistan’s hostility towards Pakistan and allowance for the status quo in the FATA

In the decades following independence, different Pakistani governments were mainly content with the status quo in the FATA due to strategic compulsions. The rise of the Pashtunistan issue in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and its continuous exploitation by Afghanistan, including its non-acceptance of the Durand Line, have largely shaped Pakistan’s approach towards the autonomous status of the FATA. Pakistan needed to keep the FATA as a buffer area because of Afghanistan’s hostility. To win over the tribesmen and to prevent them from aligning with Afghanistan over Pashtunistan, successive regimes in Pakistan have been mostly content with tribal autonomy.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Pashtun from the NWFP and staunch supporter of Pashtun nationalism, had strongly opposed partition of the subcontinent. He had also founded a movement known as Khudai Khidmatgaran (the Servants of God) that provided political support to the Congress party in opposing British imperialism. Because of his strong nationalist feelings, Ghaffar Khan had demanded that the Pashtuns of NWFP should be given a choice to join Afghanistan, or form their own entity, ‘Pashtunistan’, in the case of partition of the Indian subcontinent.

At the time of the partition of the subcontinent, a referendum was held, from 6 to 7 July 1947, in the five settled districts of NWFP in which majority of the people had opted for inclusion in Pakistan. To decide the future of the tribal areas, jirgas were convened in November 1947 by Sir George Cunningham, the then Governor of NWFP. Again, the tribal people had favoured joining Pakistan. After consulting the jirgas, George Cunningham reported, “I interviewed the jirgas of all the tribes from end to end of the frontier, and ‘without exception’, he said, they (tribes) stated and confirmed in written statements that they were part of Pakistan, and wished to preserve the same relations.

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301 Ibid., 31.
303 Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Hampshire; England: Ashgate, 2005), 41.
with Pakistan as they had with the British.”

This agreement was ratified by the government of Pakistan.

In the following years, Afghanistan attempted to exploit the Pashtun nationalist feelings against Pakistan and denied the Durand Line, the border between the two countries. Afghanistan’s hostility towards Pakistan started well before Pakistan’s establishment in 1947. Afghanistan had laid irredentist claims to Pakistan’s NWFP province and certain parts of Balochistan province, which led to the policy of refusing to recognise the Durand Line. Afghanistan raised this issue after the British announcement of the June 3rd plan for the partition of India subcontinent. The Afghan rulers claimed that these areas were historically part of the Afghan empire during the reign of Ahmad Shah (1747–1773).

In the middle of 1940s, the Afghan government approached the British requesting the right of the frontier people to have independence or to reunite with their motherland (Afghanistan), but this effort did not bear any fruit. Afghanistan was the only country which opposed Pakistan’s entry into the UN in 1947. Speaking in the United Nations General Assembly on 30 September 1947, the Afghan delegation stated:

The Afghanistan delegation does not wish to oppose the membership of Pakistan in this great organisation, but it is with the deepest regret that we are at this time unable to vote for Pakistan. This unhappy instance is due to the fact that we cannot recognise the North West Frontier as part of Pakistan so long as the people of the North West Frontier have not been given an opportunity free from any kind of influence and I repeat free from any kind of influence to determine for themselves, whether they wish to be independent or to become part of Pakistan.

The Afghan rulers continued to insist on creating an independent homeland for ethnic Pashtun living in Pakistan’s frontier areas of Dir, Swat, Chitral and Amb and the Balochistan states of Kalat, Kharan, Mekran and Las Bela. Various Afghan rulers had argued that the Durand Line, dividing the Pashtun, was forcibly thrust upon them and only accepted under duress. They contended that the Pashtun form one nation on the basis of common ethnicity, language, geographical proximity, culture and traditions. President Daud had once remarked that the “British did a wrong many years ago and we have been fighting to rectify it. Until that is done the struggle will continue.” To this

304 S.M. Burke, Foreign Policy of Pakistan: A Historical Analysis (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973), 70.
308 Ibid.
purpose, successive Afghan governments had attempted to create unrest in the tribal areas of Pakistan by using the tribal leaders.

To keep the tribesmen satisfied and to prevent them from joining the Pashtun nationalist movement, Pakistani governments had continued with tribal autonomy while giving allowances to the tribes as before. The security threats from Afghanistan largely explained Pakistan’s contentment with the status quo in the tribal areas.

No political or legislative reforms were introduced by the government in the FATA that had kept its semiautonomous status. In addition, Pakistan largely refrained from interfering in tribal affairs. The tribal leaders in turn remained steadfast in confirming their loyalty and support for Pakistan. The Political Parties Act of 1962 was not extended into the FATA because the Pakistani establishment viewed this as losing their control of the tribal leaders. The Pakistani establishment believed that permitting political activity in the FATA would increase the popularity of the Pashtun nationalist parties in the tribal areas, who were “accused of being sympathetic to the Afghan cause.”

3.10 Pakistan’s strategic interests in Afghanistan and maintenance of the tribal areas’ autonomy

The semiautonomous status of the FATA was reinforced in the following years as a result of the changing geo-political situation of the frontier region. Due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the military-led regime in Pakistan largely viewed the FATA as a buffer area and launched a struggle against the Soviet occupation to protect its territorial integrity. This allowed the FATA more autonomy. Pakistan’s strategic interests were better served by maintaining the autonomous status of the FATA.

The Soviet-sponsored communist regime, led by Noor Muhammad Tarakai, had grabbed power in Afghanistan in April 1978. The Afghan Islamist groups resisted the new communist regime. In support of the communist regime, the Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan on 27 December 1979. The Pakistani military perceived that the Communist-sponsored coup in Kabul had compromised Afghanistan’s traditional buffer status between the Soviet Union and the Indian subcontinent, posing a serious security threat to Pakistan. Members of Pakistan’s strategic circles feared that the Pakistan could be the next target of Soviet aggression.

310 Shah, Political Reforms in the Federally Administered, 8.
311 Hussain, Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy, 102.
General Zia ul Haq came into power after overthrowing the democratic government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in July 1977.\textsuperscript{312} Zia’s regime secretly started supporting the Afghan Islamist groups in opposing the communist government in Kabul. Islamabad provided considerable financial and military support to the Afghan Islamist groups through Pakistan’s Inter-services Intelligence (ISI).\textsuperscript{313} Moreover, the Pakistani military had provided military training to the Afghan resistance forces in secret military camps established in various parts of the frontier regions, including the tribal areas.\textsuperscript{314}

The United States along with some other European countries provided a huge amount of money and weapons to the Afghan mujahedeen through the Pakistani government.\textsuperscript{315} The Pakistani Inter-Services-Intelligence (ISI) was in-charge of providing money and weapons to the Afghan resistance groups. By 1987, approximately 20,000 fighters per year had received training at seven Pakistani training camps and thousands of tons of arms and munitions been distributed to the Afghan Mujahedeen groups.\textsuperscript{316}

The Muslim states, such as Saudi Arabia and including the Gulf States, had enthusiastically participated in the Afghan Jihad. The United States alone had sent US$5 billion worth of weapons to the mujahedeen during 1986–1990 and the Saudi financial assistance for arms purchase, according to Muhammad Yousaf, ‘equalled’ Washington’s expenditures.\textsuperscript{317} Moreover, a vast infrastructure of madrassas was established with the help of the Arab Islamic countries in the tribal areas and the adjacent settled areas to impart religious education, with a special emphasis on jihad.\textsuperscript{318}

The main theme of the religious instruction in these madrassas focused on the idea that Islam in Afghanistan was being attacked by the ‘Godless’ Soviet occupiers that made jihad against them mandatory.\textsuperscript{319} The United States even published thousands of copies of the Quran and distributed them amongst the Afghans and Central Asian Muslims though the CIA to bolster the jihad.\textsuperscript{320} Most of these madrassas served specifically as training camps to prepare Mujahids to fight in Afghanistan. The ISI’s Afghan bureau alone had trained more than 80,000 Mujahideen in Pakistani military secret training camps in the frontier regions.\textsuperscript{321} Hundreds of Pakistani Islamists, belonging to the Islamist political parties such as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and

\textsuperscript{312} Shah, \textit{Political Reforms in the Federally Administered}, 9.
\textsuperscript{313} Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy}, 103.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{317} Muhammad Yousaf, \textit{The Silent Soldier} (Lahore: Jang, n.d.), 87.
\textsuperscript{318} Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy}, 120.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{320} Cited in ibid.
\textsuperscript{321} Muhammad Yousaf and Mak Adkin, \textit{The Bear Trap: Afghanistan’s Untold Story} (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), 3.
Jamat-e-Islami (JI), also joined the Afghan Mujahideen struggle.\textsuperscript{322} A larger number of Islamists from the Arab countries also joined the jihad to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{323}

The tribal areas served as training camps for these Afghan groups as well as facilitating incursions into Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{324} The Waziristan agencies had remained the strategic points on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line and were used by the Afghan Islamic groups, with the help of ISI, to launch operations in the Khost area of the Paktai province of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{325} According to Rashid Ahmad:

> The tribal areas became the training and staging ground of Afghan mujahideen, who also used the areas for the purpose of providing medical aid to the wounded Afghan fighters. Since war of resistance (jihad) was the top priority, everything was subservient to its objectives.\textsuperscript{326}

The influx of millions of Afghan refugees into the tribal areas deteriorated the law and order situation, which in turn further weakened the writ of the Pakistani state. The tribal areas witnessed the large-scale cultivation of opium and promotion of gun culture. The then Pakistani government largely ignored this, looking the other way.\textsuperscript{327} An eminent scholar, Rashid Khan, explained the reinforcement of the autonomous status of the tribal areas in these words:

> Since the whole area had become a war zone and Pakistan had opened its borders to allow Afghan refugees to enter the country and take refuge in Pakistan from the Afghan side. Similarly, the mujahideen groups would cross the Pak-afghan border at will. The Durand Line had practically ceased to exist with the free movement of people, fighters, arms and ammunition across the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The whole area became heavily armed with heavy weapons supplied by the United States to the Afghan mujahideen to fight against the Soviet troops. Under the impact of the ongoing jihad, the local administration, which already exercised nominal control over the tribal population, was rendered totally ineffective.\textsuperscript{328}

Moreover, the Jihad against the Soviets and its aftermath had seen a gradual deterioration of the maliks’ authority in the tribal areas. Hundreds of tribesmen were recruited to participate in the jihad across the border in Afghanistan. After the jihad was

\begin{itemize}
\item Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy}, 117.
\item Fred Halliday, \textit{Threat from the East} (London: Penguin, 1982), 146.
\item Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy}, 108.
\item Cited in Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy}, 119.
\end{itemize}
over, these religiously indoctrinated *jihadis* constituted a new social class equipped with war money, arms and prestige. Gradually the members of this new social class started challenging the *maliks*, putting at risk their traditional powers.\(^{329}\) Over time, the newly emerged class became even stronger during the Taliban rule in Afghanistan from 1996–2001. Despite these changes in the tribal areas, the overall status of the FATA did not change. The autonomy of the tribes was not threatened by the state and they continued to live in accordance with their norms and traditions. The state-tribes relations went on as before and there were no tensions between the two.

The ISI’s policy in Afghanistan in the 1990s, after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, further reinforced autonomy in the FATA. The concept of achieving strategic depth in case of an Indian attack gained currency in Pakistani military circles. Therefore, the military and the ISI continued to covertly support the Islamist forces to install a pliable government in Afghanistan that could serve Pakistan’s strategic interests. Finally, Pakistan supported the Taliban, mostly the former students of the Pakistani madrassas, to gain control over Afghanistan.\(^{330}\) The FATA continued to serve as a strategic place to recruit and train fighters to fight in Afghanistan.\(^{331}\)

The Pakistani military believed that the Taliban could be a potential long-term ally of Pakistan in securing influence in Afghanistan.\(^{332}\) Many local people from the tribal areas joined the Afghan Taliban in their struggle to gain control of Afghanistan.\(^{333}\) Moreover, the mujahideen from the Arab countries who settled in the FATA after the Soviet Jihad also provided support to the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. Such active support from the tribal areas enabled the Taliban to ascend to power in Afghanistan before they were ousted as a result of US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.\(^{334}\) Furthermore, the Pakistani military used the tribal areas, with support from the Taliban, to train mujahideen to fight against the Indian forces in Kashmir.\(^{335}\)

Pakistan’s geo-strategic considerations in the last two decades have reinforced the autonomous status of the tribal areas and the writ of the Pakistani state further weakened. The pumping of large quantities of weapons into the region and presence of millions of Afghan refugees in the tribal areas worsened the law and order problem. However, Pakistan’s relations with the tribes remained largely smooth as long as it did not challenge their autonomy.

\(^{329}\) Interview with a malik in Peshawar, January 20, 2014.
3.11 The socio-economic conditions in the FATA

Self-government and a low level of state control can have its downsides, as seen in the low level of socio-economic development in the case of the FATA. Administratively, 30 percent of FATA area has been declared to be inaccessible.\(^{336}\) The isolation of the FATA from mainstream Pakistan has left the area highly marginalised in terms of development. In 1972, for the first time, the government showed its willingness to pay special attention to the FATA and bring economic and social improvement. Between 1972 and 1980, approximately 1600 million Pakistani Rupees (Rs.), i.e. an average of about 200 million Rs. per annum, was allocated to development projects in the FATA.\(^{337}\)

Despite significant allocations to the FATA for development, this has “only covered a fraction of the backlog of the past neglect both of pre-independence and post-independence periods.”\(^{338}\) The Pakistan Planning Commission suggested the integration of the tribal areas into the settled districts of NWFP as necessary to realising any significant change in the social and economic conditions of the FATA. The commission noted, “tribal areas, adjacent to NWFP are in fact an economic part of that province and are being treated separately only for political reasons. Therefore, its development will have to be integrated with the development of North-West Frontier Province.”\(^{339}\)

The FATA has lagged far behind the rest of Pakistan on almost all socio-economic indicators. Local per capita income is half of the national average of US$ 500 and around 60 percent of the overall FATA population lives below the national poverty line.\(^{340}\) There is one hospital bed for every 2,327 people, as compared to one for 1,450 in Pakistan as a whole. Moreover, there is only one doctor for every 8,189 people. Agriculture is highly underdeveloped and the total irrigated land is roughly only 1,000 square kilometres. Natural resources including minerals and coal are under-exploited and there is hardly any industrial development in the area, causing high unemployment rates. Only 43 percent of its people have access to clean drinking water.

Budget allocations for educational purposes have always been low in the FATA, with less than 1.5 billion rupees allocated annually prior to 2001 (increased to 2.7 billion in 2004–05). State-run schools have failed to cater to the educational needs of children, and since the 1980s there has been a substantial increase in Islamic seminaries or

\(^{336}\) Durrani, “The Country and the Territory.”
\(^{337}\) Government of Pakistan, Special Development Plan for Tribal Areas of the North-West Frontier Province (Islamabad: Planning Commission, 1982), 3.
\(^{338}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^{339}\) Ibid., 9.
madrassas, which are attracting the bulk of students because of the rampant poverty. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) carried out in 2007 noted:

FATA has remained one of the most insular and an isolated corner of the country, cut off from the mainstream of Pakistani society… Access to secondary education is low in FATA for males as well as females. The primary school (6-10 years of age) Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was found to be 28.3%. The 10+-literacy rate was 21.4% in FATA. The overall literacy of 15+ years of age was 22% in FATA. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the primary school Net Enrolment Rate was 0.45 in FATA. Child registration is rare in FATA, where only 1% of the children below 5 years of age are registered at birth. The registration process is growing in urban areas with the introduction of proper offices and facilities. Around 5.6% of births were registered in urban areas. Of all children aged 5-14 years, 3.6% were involved in either economic or domestic work, while 1.5% worked outside their households. Just 0.1% was paid for their labor…Increasingly impoverished and marginalized; they (People of FATA) have also become vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of criminal and extremist elements.341

Despite this socio-economic marginalisation, the people of the FATA remained largely quiescent and presented little problem for the Pakistani state. Most were more concerned over the preservation of local autonomy and the freedom to practice their traditional way of life without any interference from the state.

3.12 Conclusion

The FATA has been an autonomous area throughout its existence. The British government devised an indirect system of administration instead of attempting to gain direct control over the local population. This system granted the British government some influence over the tribal areas and at the same time provided significant autonomy to the tribes. However, these arrangements did not always work smoothly, and the British government also launched various military expeditions to gain control in the area. Yet, the tribes remained quite successful in guarding their autonomy and continued their long tradition of self-rule.

Similarly, independent Pakistan withdrew its troops from the tribal areas as a way of demonstrating respect for local autonomy. This gesture was reciprocated by the tribes with a pledge to remain part of Pakistan and swear off any violent resistance against

341 UNESCO WFP and Planning and Development Department, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Peshawar, Pakistan: FATA Secretariat, 2007).
state control. Successive Pakistani governments allowed the FATA tribes to maintain their autonomy to keep them satisfied. This was mainly due to Afghanistan’s hostility towards Pakistan and its campaign to create Pashtunistan out of the Pashtun-inhabited territories, including the tribal areas of Pakistan. Pakistan's ISI policy of interference in Afghanistan during the 1980s and 1990s, and the use of these areas to annoy India, sustained the autonomy allowed to the FATA during these decades. However, autonomy and low levels of state control in the tribal areas compromised the development of the region.

Yet, the tribal areas refrained from posing any challenge to the Pakistani state and the relationship between the central government and the tribal areas remained largely calm and undisturbed, and without any open conflict. This is mainly because the Pakistani state did not change the status quo and allowed the tribes to continue with their autonomy in accordance with their traditions and customs. The explanations and discussion in the chapter substantiate the contention stated as the first step of the theoretical model of this thesis, namely that the maintenance of the status quo largely explains the absence of conflict or rebellion in the FATA region.

The next chapter discusses Pakistan’s initial responses to the arrival of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants in the FATA, due to the US military intervention in Afghanistan. Despite the influx of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban and their warm reception by local tribesmen, there was no insurgency in the FATA. This chapter argues that despite some tensions between the state and the FATA tribes due to the Pakistani government actions during 2002–2003, the status quo in the FATA remained largely intact and there was no rebellion from the tribes during this time period.
CHAPTER FOUR: POST 9/11 FATA: US PRESSURE AND PAKISTAN’S INITIAL RESPONSES TO FOREIGN MILITANTS’ ARRIVAL IN THE FATA

4.1 Introduction

After the US invasion of Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many Al Qaeda militants and Afghan Taliban took shelter in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Under pressure from the United States to prevent the use of Pakistan’s tribal areas by the remnants of Al Qaeda militants, who were launching attacks against coalition forces inside Afghanistan, the Pakistani government used traditional methods to persuade the tribes to stop sheltering and assisting the foreign militants. In addition, the Frontier Corps (FC), a paramilitary force predominantly drawn from the local Pashtun population, carried out some search operations in the tribal areas to apprehend Al Qaeda militants. These initial interventions were half-hearted and only taken under pressure from the United States. The early search operations carried out between 2002 and the first half of 2003 caused some tensions with the FATA tribes, but the government and local tribes largely carried on as before.

This chapter continues to illustrate the first step of the theoretical model of this thesis which posits that as long as a government does not disrupt the *status quo* in a potentially restive area, rebellion is unlikely. In consonance with this theoretical assertion, this chapter argues that the Pakistani government’s initial approach in dealing with the tribes did not disrupt traditional power structures and therefore did not stimulate rebellion. The government mainly relied on traditional methods in dealing with the influx of militants that did not undermine the authority of the local leaders.

The chapter begins by describing Pakistan’s decision to join the United States-led global alliance in the war against Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. The chapter then moves on to discuss Pakistan’s decision to deploy military forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to apprehend Al Qaeda militants, and the ensuing responses of the tribal people. This is followed by an explanation of the tribal people’s motivations for providing shelter to the foreign militants who fled to the FATA from Afghanistan. Finally, the chapter demonstrates how the Pakistani government maintained the *status quo* between the state and the tribes, while pressurising the latter to expel or hand over the foreign militants. It was this unwillingness to undermine the longstanding modus vivendi between the state and tribes that meant an insurgency did not immediately erupt, despite the instability caused by the dramatic events in the region.
4.2 Pakistan an ally of the United States in the war against Afghanistan

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, USA, President Bush declared that the US would do “whatever it takes” to punish the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack.\textsuperscript{342} The United States accused Al Qaeda – under the protection of the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan – of orchestrating these attacks. In response, the United States launched an invasion of Afghanistan to extract Al Qaeda militants, including the organisation’s leader, Osama bin Laden, from the Taliban's protection.

While seeking the support of the international community, President Bush warned other nations that there could “no neutral ground in the fight between civilization and terror.”\textsuperscript{343} President Bush also vowed to take action against those who provided protection to the terrorists. The ‘Bush doctrine’ stated unequivocally that “If you harbour terrorists, you are a terrorist; if you aid and abet terrorists, you are a terrorist and you will be treated like one.”\textsuperscript{344} In an address to the nation, Bush said, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them.”\textsuperscript{345}

The Bush administration considered Pakistan to be an important ally in the war against terrorism because of its geographical proximity to Afghanistan, its deep connections and sponsorship of the Taliban regime in Kabul, and its intelligence experience and significant information on Afghanistan. Yet, Pakistan, along with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were the only countries extending diplomatic recognition to the Taliban government in Afghanistan. \textit{The New York Times}, in a 2001 editorial, highlighted the fact that Pakistan was the only country that continued to support the Taliban “despite international sanctions.”\textsuperscript{346}

Pakistan had provided considerable military, political and financial support to the Taliban to establish their rule in Afghanistan from 1996–2001.\textsuperscript{347} An expert on the Taliban, Ahmed Rashid maintained that approximately 60,000 Pakistani Islamic seminary students had fought in Afghanistan along with the Taliban.\textsuperscript{348} He also claimed that the Pakistani military was heavily involved in helping the Taliban maintain their army, as well as providing assistance to them in fighting against their enemies commonly known as the Northern Alliance. As Rashid observed in October 2001,
“Pakistan’s knowledge of the Taliban’s military machine, storage facilities, supply lines, and leadership hierarchy was total.”

US government officials exerted pressure on Pakistan to suspend diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime and close its border with Afghanistan to prevent Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters from entering the country. Washington had also contacted Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) to request comprehensive details on bin Laden and his connections with other Islamic militant organisations. In addition, the United States presented a list which contained the following demands of Pakistan:

1) to stop Al-Qaeda operatives at its borders and end all logistic support for bin Laden;
2) to give the United States blanket over-flight and landing rights for all necessary military and intelligence operations;
3) to provide territorial access to the US and allied military intelligence and other personnel to conduct operations against Al Qaeda;
4) to provide the United States with intelligence information;
5) to continue to publicly condemn the terrorist acts;
6) to cut off all shipments of fuel to the Taliban and stop recruits from going to Afghanistan; and
7) to break relations with the Taliban government if the evidence implicated bin Laden and Al Qaeda and the Taliban continued to harbor them.

In the case of non-compliance, United States officials threatened to include Pakistan in the list of the terrorist states and to impose international sanctions. The former US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, reportedly threatened to bomb Pakistan “back into the Stone Age” if it declined to be part of United States-led coalition to fight terrorism. The United States considered Pakistan’s cooperation indispensable to fighting terrorism. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul D. Wolfowitz, said that US actions would be aimed at “removing the sanctuaries and support systems” and “ending states which sponsor terrorism.” Pakistan was confronted with an obvious choice: either to be a partner of the United States or a target. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, told President Musharaf forthrightly, “The American people would not understand if Pakistan was not in this fight with the United States.” Pakistan’s military ruler realised the

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349 Cited in ibid.
gravity of the situation and understood that Pakistan would risk international isolation, as well as the likelihood of becoming a target of retaliation for the terrorist attacks, if it refused to support the United States. Pakistan would also be deprived of any financial or military assistance from the United States in the future. Former Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad regarded this as “a moment of reckoning” for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{355}

In addition, those in Pakistan’s decision-making circles had deep concerns over India’s offer of help to the United States in the war against terrorism, including the use of its territory.\textsuperscript{356} India attempted to link the global war against terrorism with Pakistan’s support of the insurgency in Kashmir. India alleged that many training camps were established in Afghanistan under the Taliban’s rule, and were supporting the insurgency in the Indian-held Kashmir.\textsuperscript{357} Indian leaders tried to persuade the United States that the war against terrorism would not be productive if Pakistan was not purged.\textsuperscript{358} As such, India was one of the most important factors Pakistan took into account in making its decision to join the war against terrorism. As one analyst put it, “The decision to reverse a decade of Pakistani policy in Afghanistan was a result of the underlying Pakistani concern about India.”\textsuperscript{359} President Musharaf explained his decision to renounce the Taliban in his memoir, \textit{In the Line of Fire}. He stated that Pakistan would suffer strategic losses if it declined to join the allied war on terror. As he put it:

\begin{quote}
I also analyzed our national interest. First, India had already tried to step in by offering its bases to the US. If we did not join the US, it would accept India’s offer. What would happen then? India would gain a golden opportunity with regard to Kashmir. . . . Second, the security of our strategic assets would be jeopardized. We did not want to lose or damage the military parity that we had achieved with India by becoming a nuclear weapons state.\textsuperscript{360}
\end{quote}

Due to the strategic calculation described above, Pakistan emerged as an indispensable partner of the United States in South Asia to combat terrorism.\textsuperscript{361} Gen. Musharaf acquiesced to the demands of the United States. After meeting with US Ambassador, Wendy Chamberlain, Gen. Musharaf offered his government’s resources to aid the American-led anti-terrorism campaign. In his address to the nation on 19 September 2001, Gen. Musharaf reassured the United States of Pakistan’s “unstinted support” in the fight against terrorism. He noted that Pakistan would provide support

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
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\item[355] Ahmad, “Post 9/11 Foreign Policy of Pakistan,” 3.
\item[359] Riedel, “Pakistan: The Critical Battlefield,” 358.
\end{thebibliography}
including the sharing of intelligence information, the use of air space, and logistical support.\textsuperscript{362} Further, in a press conference with President Bush on 10 October 2001, Gen. Musharaf pledged “to be a part of the coalition, to be with the United States, to fight terrorism in all its forms wherever it exists” and marked it as the “dawn of a new era of a relationship between Pakistan and the United States.”\textsuperscript{363}

Gen. Musharaf’s decision to be part of the United States-led coalition was not received well within the Pakistan Army. Pakistan’s newly adopted anti-Taliban stance had come as a surprise for the army, which remained heavily involved in building and strengthening the Taliban regime. Some senior military officials expressed their concerns over the removal of the Taliban regime as a potential threat to Pakistan’s interests in Afghanistan. To them, the destruction of the Taliban regime would come at a heavy cost: that of Pakistan’s long-sought strategic depth in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{364} In response, Gen. Musharaf purged the military’s ranks, firing Mahmoud Ahmed, Director-General of the ISI, Muzaffer Usmani, the deputy chief of army staff, and other senior generals who were known to harbour sympathies for the Taliban regime. Gen. Musharaf brought new officers into key positions in alignment with his new pro-United States and anti-Taliban policy. He proclaimed that “the Taliban’s days are numbered.”\textsuperscript{365}

In addition, Pakistan provided crucial intelligence and logistical support for “Operation Enduring Freedom”, conducted by the United States against the Taliban regime. Pakistan opened two-thirds of its airspace and provided airbases and seaports for large amphibious operations.\textsuperscript{366} Moreover, Pakistan also authorised the coalition forces to use two forward operational air bases; one located in Jacobabad and the other at Dalbandin, Balochistan on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The United States launched “more than 57,000 military sorties” against Taliban targets in Afghanistan using these bases.\textsuperscript{367} Pakistan provided extensive support during the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and in the post-OEF phase of operations. According to a declassified CENTCOM LNO (Liaison Officer) briefing, “Pakistan has provided more support, captured more terrorists, and committed more troops than any other nation in the GCTF [Global Counterterrorism Force].”\textsuperscript{368}

Pakistan earned appreciation from the United States by becoming part of the United States-led international coalition to counter terrorism. President Bush praised Gen.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{362} “President Musharaf Address to the Nation,” The News, 2001.
\bibitem{364} Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, 37.
\bibitem{365} “Pakistan and the Taliban: About Turn,” The Economist, October 6, 2001.
\bibitem{366} C. Christine Fair, The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004), 9–63.
\bibitem{367} Iqbal and De Silva, “Terrorist Lifecycles,” 76.
\bibitem{368} Cited in Fair, The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India, 27.
\end{thebibliography}
Musharaf for demonstrating “ever greater courage, vision and leadership” in becoming part of the US war against terrorism and helping to uproot the Taliban regime, as well as in capturing Al Qaeda-linked militants. In a joint press conference with Gen. Musharaf, Bush said, “Musharaf’s efforts against terror are benefitting the entire world.”

As thanks for its support in the war against Afghanistan, the United States showered Pakistan with substantial economic and political rewards including the removal of economic sanctions. The economic aid included the facilitation of debt rescheduling programmes by several major international financial institutions which helped to relax Pakistan’s US$38 billion foreign debt. Washington also promised to provide Pakistan with US$1 billion to use for border control, refugee support, and reducing poverty. In addition, Washington agreed to reschedule Pakistan’s US$400 million debt to the United States. The Pakistani government was subsequently pressured to launch attacks in the FATA to hunt Al Qaeda and other foreign fighters. The following section traces the infiltration of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban into the tribal areas.

### 4.3 Pakistan’s army deployment along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border

Operation Enduring Freedom was launched by the United States in Afghanistan in October 2001 to destroy Al Qaeda. Because of its conventional military superiority, the United States easily defeated the Taliban regime which had provided refuge to Al Qaeda. Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime in December 2001, Pakistan’s tribal areas emerged as safe havens for and provided shelter to hundreds of fleeing Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda and other foreign militants of Arab, Chechen and Uzbek origin. Geographical proximity is regarded as one of the key factors making the FATA a preferred destination for the foreign militants. The 2,640 kilometre-long border between Afghanistan and the FATA is extremely mountainous terrain and can be seen as reasonably porous, allowing easy movement of the Pashtun living on both sides of the border.

In anticipation of the US attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan deployed regular army units, Frontier Corps (FC) and personnel from the Inter- Services Intelligence (ISI) directorate in the FATA, along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, to monitor tribal behaviour and

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373 Hadar, “Pakistan in America’s War against Terrorism: Strategic Ally or Unreliable Client?,” 3.
374 Iqbal and De Silva, “Terrorist Lifecycles,” 75–76.
conduct operations against infiltration routes from Afghanistan to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{375} The United States launched a military operation in October 2001 in Afghanistan’s Tora Bora, a place just 10 kilometres away from the FATA.\textsuperscript{376} Due to the geographical proximity of Tora Bora to two FATA agencies, Khyber and Kurram, it was very likely that Al Qaeda militants would seek refuge in these areas. The western half of the Kurram and Khyber agencies were no-go areas. People lived there but the government had never ventured into this area and there was literally no government writ there.\textsuperscript{377} In 2002, the army deployed a division into the Khyber Agency’s Tirah Valley and into Parachinar in Kurram Agency to stop the infiltration of fleeing militants into Pakistan.\textsuperscript{378}

Similarly, during the US ‘Operation Anaconda’ in Afghanistan in April 2002, Pakistani troops were dispatched to South and North Waziristan tribal agencies.\textsuperscript{379} South Waziristan borders the Paktika province in Afghanistan, whereas North Waziristan adjoins the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost. There are a calculated 243 illegal routes in North Waziristan for entering Afghanistan and there were at that time only five border checkpoints in this area.\textsuperscript{380} There were some no-go areas in North Waziristan, such as ‘Shawal’ which is located along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The troops were entrusted with the task of arresting Al Qaeda militants and the Afghan Taliban entering into Pakistan’s tribal territory.

Introducing military forces into tribal areas was a difficult decision taken by the military-led government. The then XI Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, who was also in charge of the military deployments, revealed that a high-level meeting in Army General Headquarters, Rawalpindi, was held to discuss the possible pressure from the United States to capture fleeing Al Qaeda militants resulting from the invasion of Afghanistan. In the meeting it was decided that military troops should be pre-emptively deployed on the FATA border to apprehend the foreign militants.\textsuperscript{381} Initially, paramilitary forces such as the Frontier Corps were deployed to seal the border. They were soon joined by the Pakistani army.

\textsuperscript{377} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{379} C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Pakistan} (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 43.
\textsuperscript{381} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
The army’s deployment in the FATA was unprecedented in the history of independent Pakistan.\textsuperscript{382} Before entering into the tribal areas, the Pakistani army consulted with local tribesmen in an attempt to win their confidence. The military informed them of the gravity of the situation and persuaded them to accept the military deployments. Lt. Gen. Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai, the then XI Corps Commander and a tribesman hailing from Orakzai agency, cautioned tribal elders about possible US military strikes inside the FATA region in pursuit of Al Qaeda fighters. In March 2002, the US commander in Afghanistan had talked about the possibility of using force in the FATA to hunt Al Qaeda fighters. This affirmed the possibility of US direct attacks in the FATA.\textsuperscript{383} Lt. Gen. Orakzai described how he persuaded the tribes to accept the military deployment:

> We explained to them [tribesmen] that if we, the Pakistan Army, does not come into this area and secure the borders, we will have problems. These undesirable elements will come here and make their sanctuaries, safe havens and this might provide justification to the Coalitions forces to conduct ‘hot pursuit’ operations in order to apprehend these people. There may even be aerial bombing and this entire area will be devastated.\textsuperscript{384}

In addition, Lt. Gen. Orakzai also informed them of government plans to initiate various development projects in the region.\textsuperscript{385} This typical ‘carrot-and-stick approach’ helped to convince the tribesmen to allow the deployment of the military troops in the region. Rahimullah Yusufzai, a journalist covering the tribal area, described the mixed feelings of the tribesmen about the Pakistani military’s infiltration in the tribal area: “Though many tribesmen were unhappy that their sovereignty was gradually being eroded, others thought it was a blessing in disguise as the government had committed huge funds for the development of their remote and under-developed valleys.”\textsuperscript{386} Khalid Aziz, who had served as a Political Agent in the FATA and as secretary to the NWFP, anticipated that the tribes would react negatively once the army started interfering with their affairs:

> Owing to international pressure on Pakistan to prevent any terrorist safe havens in tribal areas, Pakistan has been forced to move troops into the tribal areas. History has shown that moving into the tribal areas is easy, getting out is almost impossible. … the presence of Pakistani armed personnel will be irksome to the

\textsuperscript{384} Lieutenant General (Retired) Ali Jan Orakzai interview: “Pakistan’s War on Terror”, DVD, produced by Major General Shaukat Sultan, Director General, Inter Services Public Relations, Pakistan. Cited in Puri, Pakistan’s War on Terrorism, 47.
\textsuperscript{385} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{386} Yusufzai, “Fall of the Last Frontier.”
tribesmen. And … they will complain that such a presence interferes with their freedom.\textsuperscript{387}

Lt. Gen. Orakzai commented on the arrival of Al Qaeda militants in the tribal areas: “There was every possibility that these undesirable elements could have and in fact would have entered the tribal areas, and particularly the inaccessible areas where we had no troops and where the borders were not secure. So we analysed it and we decided to go into these areas.”\textsuperscript{388}

The deployment of Pakistani troops in the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan during the US operations enabled the military to arrest a number of Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants while they were crossing the border into Pakistan. For instance, in December 2001, Pakistan’s military and FC troops captured a number of Al Qaida and other foreign fighters near the border in the Khyber Agency.\textsuperscript{389} Similarly, in May 2002, Pakistani Tochi Scouts, a paramilitary force, arrested Al Qaeda militants on the border of North Waziristan and seized mortar rounds, antipersonnel mines, and ammunition. In addition, in June 2002, Frontier Corps and the regular army captured several Al Qaeda operatives in South Waziristan. The arrested Al Qaida fighters were handed over to the United States who kept them in prisons in Kandahar, Bagram, and other locations in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{390}

Despite these arrests, the Pakistani military was not able to capture all of the militants, primarily because of the lengthy border and its difficult terrain. Many of the foreign militants managed to flee and hide in the tribal area. Although the Pakistani military established checkpoints, the area of operations remained limited.\textsuperscript{391} As Zaidi described, “[Pak-Afghan border] The Durand line abuts swathes of rugged, mountainous territory which is a surveillance nightmare. The areas are replete with mountain passes and treacherous routes linking Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are in most cases, known only to the locals.”\textsuperscript{392} In Lt. Gen. Orakzai’s words, some 8,000 Pakistani troops were deployed with the consent of the local tribesmen but “I would not say that we were able to seal the border 100 percent and the possibility of some trickling through or infiltrating through the gaps cannot be ruled out”.\textsuperscript{393}


\textsuperscript{388} Lieutenant General (Retired) Ali Jan Orakzai interview: “Pakistan’s War on Terror”, DVD, produced by Major General Shaukat Sultan, Director General, Inter Services Public Relations, Pakistan. Cited in Puri, \textit{Pakistan’s War on Terrorism}, 47.

\textsuperscript{389} C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Pakistan}, 43.

\textsuperscript{390} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{391} Zaidi, \textit{Taliban in Pakistan: A Chronicle of Resurgence}, 27.

\textsuperscript{392} Ibid., 22.

Meanwhile, the US troops in Afghanistan came increasingly under attack and US military officials alleged that the attackers had taken refuge in Pakistan’s tribal areas.\textsuperscript{394} The US special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, said, “Afghanistan is no longer the principal base for the al-Qaeda, but I think there are key figures near and across the border in Pakistan... Certainly there are remnants of the al-Qaeda in Pakistan.”\textsuperscript{395} Islamabad came under increasing pressure from the United States to prevent Taliban and other militants from using the tribal areas as a base for attacks on Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{396}

\subsection*{4.4 Local responses to the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants' influx in the FATA}

Al Qaeda mainly consisted of Arab fighters who had previously fought the anti-Soviet Jihad and were deeply familiar with the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{397} The main leadership of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda – including Mullah Mohammad Omar, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri – was also believed to be hiding in Pakistan’s tribal areas. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that:

\begin{quote}
Hundreds of al-Qaeda operatives and sympathisers as well as the Taliban moved, via mountain passes, from Afghanistan into North and South Waziristan and other bordering FATA agencies. According to Pakistani officials, some 500-600 foreign fighters (mostly Arabs, Uzbeks and Chechens) sought shelter there following U.S.-led offensives against them.\textsuperscript{398}
\end{quote}

In addition to Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, members of many other international terrorist groups moved to South Waziristan in late 2001 and early 2002, including members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Chechens and Uighurs from the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and members of the Moroccan and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Groups (as contended by Rohan Gunaratna).\textsuperscript{399} An anonymous official from ISI described how Al Qaeda and other foreign militants arrived in Pakistan’s FATA:

\begin{quote}
Hundreds of Central Asians who had fought alongside the Taliban fled across the border, too, joining countrymen who had settled in Waziristan in the 1980s
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{399} Rohan Gunaratna and Anders Nielsen, “Al Qaeda in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan and Beyond,” 784.
Afghan war against the Soviets. Many new arrivals took up residence in rambling mud-brick compounds run by the al-Qaida-linked Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, whose fighters also were hiding in the area. The Arabs settled in different towns in Waziristan, setting up training facilities in Shakai where they trained Pakistani recruits.⁴⁰⁰

The Afghan Taliban regime and Al Qaeda later launched attacks from the FATA against the international forces led by the United States inside Afghanistan. The failure of American military operations to eliminate Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, and Pakistan’s inability to stop infiltration of these elements into Pakistan tribal territories, caused a lot of trouble in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas in the coming years. One expert, Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi, maintained that “had the operations been more successful, and the influx of these militants to Pakistan had been stemmed, things might have been better today both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.”⁴⁰¹

The local people of the FATA warmly received the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda militants. The local people had great respect for the Afghan Taliban who not only fought against the Soviets during the 1980s, but also established an Islamic government in Afghanistan. In turn, Al Qaeda was respected because of its association with the Afghan Taliban. Zaidi contended, “These boys were heroes in the eyes of the tribals; they had brought down the Soviet bear, and had withstood the onslaught of the allied forces with hugely smaller resources.”⁴⁰² Moreover, these people were treated like countrymen as they crossed the border frequently during the Afghan Jihad.

During the Soviet Jihad during the 1980s, social bonds were established between the local people of the FATA and the mujahideen. The tribal areas had served as a base for these mujahideen for decades. In particular, the South and North Waziristan agencies had served as pivotal bases for carrying out operations and as a “supply line of Mujahideen” to fight the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.⁴⁰³ Moreover, the Pakistani state’s patronising of mujahideen operating in Afghanistan and in Kashmir during the 1990s had further cemented their bonds with the local people. The International Crisis Group noted in its report, “The roots of Islamic militancy lie in the regional and international patronage of religious extremists during the anti-Soviet jihad, during the (Afghan) civil war and Taliban rule which radicalized the area [FATA].”⁴⁰⁴ Highlighting the deep-rooted support for the Afghan Taliban in the area, Amir Rana noted:

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⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 785.
⁴⁰¹ Zaidi, Taliban in Pakistan: A Chronicle of Resurgence, 23.
⁴⁰² Ibid., 26.
⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.
Taliban heavily influenced the politics of the area and the people were influenced by their Islamic ideologies... donations were showered on the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, a Pakistan organization ideologically associated with the Taliban movement, which then established a network of Islamic schools and had funds to operate them.405

Ethnic affiliation and the prevailing tribal customs were also considered important factors in helping the Afghan Taliban and the foreigners to receive shelter in the tribal areas. The tribal code, the *Pashtunwali*, stresses the need to provide *milmasty* or hospitality and protection to those who demand it, and was exploited by fleeing Al Qaeda and other foreign fighter to secure shelter in the FATA region. Hospitality is a vital feature of *Pashtunwali* and failing to provide such a welcome can lead to a loss of honour.406 As discussed, the combination of “religious conservatism” and the Pashtun honour code of *Pashtunwali* is entrenched in the tribal psyche. Allegiance to Pakistan is only secondary.407 An expert on the FATA observed that:

…there are fighting tribals on both sides who also happen to be relatives of each other. They have a tradition of being warm to the guests and remain united against the aliens. Famous Taliban commanders, Jalaluddin Haqqani and Saifullah are popular in countless households. They are not strangers for the Taliban; in fact they happen to be their kith and kin.408

In addition, religious factors were also significant in helping Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban to secure sanctuaries in the tribal belt.409 An analyst reflected on this: “Indigenous people in the tribal areas along the border sympathize with and help the Taliban and do not distinguish between Al-Qaeda and other Jihadi groups. Madrasas situated near the border also sympathize with the jihadi groups.”410 A number of interviews from the local FATA residents solidified the view that Islamic brotherhood and *Pashtunwali* were the dominant themes motivating the local people to side with the Afghan Taliban and their foreign allies against the government. The Waziristan agencies emerged as the central location for regrouping, recruitment and training, and carrying out cross-border attacks against International forces in Afghanistan. To quote an expert on the FATA:

Most of these people, staunch believers in Islam with strong commitment to the tradition of shelter, and a propensity to side with all those who oppose the

406 Johnson and Mason, “No Sign until the Burst of Fire,” 63.
409 Iqbal and De Silva, “Terrorist Lifecycles,” 76–77.
410 Rana, *The Seeds of Terrorism*, 236.
Americans, have been unable to reconcile with the new situation in which yesterday’s Mujahideen and Taliban are being chased as terrorists… For them, al-Qaeda means being staunch Muslims and Pashtoonwali demands these brothers must be protected.411

Al Qaeda also developed its tribal connections in the FATA agencies as a way of gaining shelter. For instance, after his brief stay in Waziristan in 2002, Al Qaeda deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, moved to Bajaur Agency where he married a local woman from the powerful Mahmoud tribe. Al Qaeda leaders are noted for this strategy. Osama bin Laden had also married a woman from Yemen to nurture his relationship with Yemeni tribes. Al-Zawahiri’s marriage helped to develop strong tribal connections with the leadership of the banned Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) in Bajaur Agency. Faqir Muhammad, who later emerged as a TTP leader, belonged to the Mahmoud tribe, which provided shelter to Al-Zawahiri. In the same way, Al Zawahiri established connections with Maulana Liaquat Hussain, a leader of TNSM in Bajaur, who was later killed in a drone strike in October 2006. These local contacts enabled Al Zawahiri to evade capture and helped him to revitalise a weakened Al Qaeda.412

Al Qaeda is also believed to have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in payments to the local FATA people, earning their favour and providing them with safe haven, training opportunities, and other logistics.413 Al Qaeda distributed huge sums of money among the locals by renting out their compounds and training camps within the FATA. Al Qaeda also paid US$ 250 a month to those local Pashtun tribesmen willing to fight against the invading forces in Afghanistan.414 Some observers have maintained that the FATA tribesmen were enticed by money to provide sanctuary to Al Qaeda and other foreign militants, and not solely because of their ethnic or ideological affinity or sympathy for their cause.415 A senior Pakistani government official noted that the local religious clerics (Mullahs) and militants had provided support to Al Qaeda not for jihad, “but actually it revolved around economics and financial gains from foreign terrorists.”416

In addition to providing refuge to these elements, local sympathisers – especially religious leaders – circulated jihad literature and pamphlets across the FATA region, persuading people to join the jihad against the American forces to liberate

414 Hussain, Frontline Pakistan, 48, 143–144.
415 Dr. Noor ul Haq, Dr. Rashid Ahman Khan. Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan.
Afghanistan. For instance, about 2,000 Ulema issued a fatwah for jihad against American forces and the Karzai government in Afghanistan. The local sympathisers also assisted Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban in recruiting the local tribesmen to provide support to their campaign against the international forces in Afghanistan. According to Behuria, the Afghan Taliban tried to create a recruitment pool in the FATA in order to provide support for their resistance movement inside Afghanistan.

Moreover, a significant number of Pashtun tribesmen from the FATA left for Afghanistan in support of their fellow tribal Pashtun, to fight the invading US and NATO forces. Sufi Mohammad, the founder of Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-Mohammadi (TNSM), mobilised thousands of volunteers from the tribal area to fight in Afghanistan. Approximately, 3,000 of these Pashtun fighters were killed by the international forces, while the remainder were either captured inside Afghanistan or returned to Pakistan.

4.5 Search operations against Al Qaeda: Pakistan's avoidance of disruption of status quo in the FATA

The Pakistani government's weak writ in the region and delayed response to the influx of Al Qaeda into the tribal belt enabled the latter to amass significant local support. After the foreign militants established themselves in the region, they started attacking the international forces in Afghanistan. Despite the locals providing shelter to the foreign militants and assisting in launching attacks in Afghanistan, there were no signs of rebellion against the Pakistani government. Hence, the rebellion cannot be explained simply by the influx of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.

The United States had been complaining to the Pakistani government since 2002 that fleeing foreign militants were using the FATA region as a sanctuary and launching attacks inside Afghanistan. In response, the Pakistani government mainly relied on traditional methods of dealing with the tribes. The government consulted the local leaders of the South Waziristan and North Waziristan agencies of the FATA through the political administration (representative of the Pakistani government in the FATA), to seek their support to hunt Al Qaeda and other foreign militants. The local leaders

418 Rana, The Seeds of Terrorism, 217.
420 Rana, The Seeds of Terrorism, 217.
423 Most of the operations were conducted by the Frontier Corps which is a federal paramilitary force but operates under the control of the army. Frontier Corps officers are taken from the Pakistan Army.
hesitantly offered cooperation to the Pakistani government in searching out Al Qaeda and other foreign militants.\textsuperscript{424} According to Lt. Gen. Orakzai, “nabbing or taking action against the foreign militants in Waziristan or any other part of the tribal areas was not possible without taking the tribal leaders into confidence.”\textsuperscript{425}

The government was quite reluctant to displease the local leaders and the local population.\textsuperscript{426} Therefore, the political administration engaged the local leaders of the FATA tribes in negotiations out of respect for the norms and traditions of the area. During 2002, the political administration held several meetings with the tribal leaders of South Waziristan regarding the foreign militants. The tribal leaders were asked to help the government to arrest Al Qaeda militants or to expel them from the tribal areas.\textsuperscript{427}

The political administration – after various sessions of consultation with the local leaders – signed an affidavit with the tribes bearing pledges from the tribesmen, such as denying shelter to Al Qaeda fighters in their respective territories and facilitating authorities to search houses in the case of any information about the presence of the foreign elements.\textsuperscript{428} The tribal leaders also agreed that they would authorise the political administration to take punitive action in the case of violations of the agreement under the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR), the prevailing law of the land. The tribes also consented to the demolition of the houses of tribesmen found sheltering Al Qaeda militants, as well as to their expulsion from the tribe and the imposition of a fine of Rs. 500,000.\textsuperscript{429}

The political administration inflicted punishments on some tribes for violating the agreement.\textsuperscript{430} Some members of Zalikhel and Qarikhel tribes were accused of sheltering Al Qaeda militants in South Waziristan. The political administration meted out punishments to the entire tribe under the collective responsibility clause of the FCR. As mentioned earlier, the political administration is authorised to inflict punishment on an entire tribe as a form of “collective responsibility”, if any of its members breaks the law.\textsuperscript{431} Some 32 tribesmen from Zalikhel and Qarikhel sub-tribes were arrested and their properties sealed to pressure them into producing the three accused locals.\textsuperscript{432}

Corps comes under operational command of XI Corps and headquartered in Peshawar. Frontier Corps is overwhelmingly Pashtun and recruited from FATA, therefore have local knowledge, language skills, and a better sense of the human terrain.

\textsuperscript{424} Malik from North Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 20, 2014.
\textsuperscript{425} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{427} International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” Asia Report No. 125, 2006, 14.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{432} Ismail Khan, “Crackdown Launched as Tribesmen Seek Time,” Dawn, October 9, 2003.
affected tribes were unhappy over the punishments meted out to them.\textsuperscript{433} Yet, because the political administration used mostly traditional methods in forcing the tribes to meet its demands, it kept the status quo intact.\textsuperscript{434}

From 2003, the US and Afghan Government officials put more pressure on the Pakistani government by repeatedly alleging that remnants of Al Qaeda and the Taliban were launching attacks into Afghanistan from the FATA region. In one such attack, more than 300 people, including US and Afghan soldiers, were killed.\textsuperscript{435} Americans held the former Afghan mujahideen leader Mulla Jalaluddin Haqqani responsible for the growing number of guerrilla attacks in southern Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{436} Two American senators, Richard Lugar and Joseph Biden, alleged that elements in the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) might be helping members of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban operating along the border.\textsuperscript{437}

Mostly as a result of pressure from the United States, the Pakistani government decided to carry out some search operations. Frontier Corps units in South Waziristan carried out a number of raids and search operations to apprehend Al Qaeda militants, and in North Waziristan Agency and its surrounding areas as well.\textsuperscript{438} Gen. Athar Abbas said Pakistan was hardly left any option except to initiate search operations in the FATA, especially in South and North Waziristan agencies, because of American threats to attack these areas in order to destroy the sanctuaries of Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban militants.\textsuperscript{439} The Pakistani government therefore decided to conduct its own search operations to arrest Al Qaeda militants.

The tribal leaders consented to these search operations in their area on the condition that they would be taken into confidence before any were undertaken.\textsuperscript{440} Accordingly, most of these operations were launched after consulting the local leaders. In addition, the government also agreed with the tribal leaders that only FC troops, mainly recruited from the tribal areas and well-conversant with tribal traditions, would be involved in the operation.\textsuperscript{441} Lt. Gen. Ali Orakzai said that endorsement of the local leaders for the

\textsuperscript{433} A local resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{434} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{436} Yusufzai, "Fall of the Last Frontier."
\textsuperscript{438} "Hunt for Al Qaeda Continues," The Nation, December 2, 2002.
\textsuperscript{439} Former DG Inter-Services Public Relations, Maj. General retired, Athar Abbas (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
search operations by the FC troops largely avoided confrontation between the Pakistani state and the FATA tribes.\textsuperscript{442}

These search operations by the Pakistani paramilitary forces did create some resentment among the tribes.\textsuperscript{443} The tribesmen perceived these government acts as humiliating and annoying. An observer, Hafiz Sana Ullah Khan, noted that any use of force by the Pakistani government would propel the tribes to offer severe resistance. He contended that “President Pervez Musharraf’s plan to merge the defiant Tribal Areas in the north west of Pakistan with the rest of the country” will “face strong resistance” from the tribes.\textsuperscript{444} The tribes were becoming displeased over these search operations.

However, several factors meant that these operations did not disrupt the longstanding modus vivendi between the state and the tribes, and therefore did not trigger insurgency. First, the trust and confidence of the local leaders and the tribes was not seriously damaged.\textsuperscript{445} The Pakistani government mostly relied on dialogue with the local leaders and the larger tribes to extract their cooperation in routing out the foreign militants. The political administration, with which the tribesmen were accustomed to dealing, remained at the forefront of consultations with the tribal leaders. Although the political administration inflicted some punishments on the tribes, the administration largely followed local customs and norms by involving local leaders. Moreover, the FC troops, mainly recruited from the Pashtun population and well-conversant with tribal norms and customs, conducted the search operations. These government actions helped considerably to limit any damage to the relationship and hence to keep the tribes’ anger in check.

Furthermore, there was little damage to property or killing due to the careful use of force. This was partly due to the Pakistani government’s emphasis on dialogue while dealing with the local leaders and the tribes. The intervention into the region was also half-hearted because the military leadership did not agree with it. Despite pressure from United States, full-scale military operations were avoided because of probable severe resistance from the tribes.\textsuperscript{446} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, who was in charge of the military

\textsuperscript{442} Most of the operations were conducted by the Frontier Corps which is a federal paramilitary force but operates under the control of the army. Frontier Corps officers are taken from the Pakistan Army. Frontier Corps comes under operational command of XI Corps and headquartered in Peshawar. Frontier Corps is overwhelmingly Pashtun and recruited from FATA, therefore have local knowledge, language skills, and a better sense of the human terrain.

\textsuperscript{443} A local resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 5, 2014.


\textsuperscript{445} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.

\textsuperscript{446} Ibid.
forces, contended that he consistently resisted American pressure for tough military operations against the tribes.\textsuperscript{447}

Most importantly, the Pakistani government did not halt the payment of allowances to local leaders. The tribal leaders continued to enjoy their traditional authority in the region. In addition, the government did not threaten the region’s autonomous status and tribal cultural practices were not jeopardised. The government maintained the tradition of \textit{jirga}, an important tribal institution used for consultation, by holding dialogue and consultations with the local leaders and the tribes.

The search operations did create some tensions between the government and the tribes. However, there was no rebellion because the authority of the local tribal leaders and the region’s autonomy were not seriously challenged. In the eyes of local leaders, the Pakistani government had largely maintained the status quo, which effectively precluded rebellion.

\textbf{4.6 Conclusion}

The military search operations carried out by the security forces created some tensions between the government and the tribes. However, this did not lead to an insurgency because the government did not severely undermine the authority of the local leaders. The maintenance of the status quo by the Pakistani government explains the lack of conflict during this period, providing affirmation of the first step of the theoretical model of this thesis.

After the relocation of the foreign militants to Pakistan’s tribal areas, the Pakistani government did not take the problem very seriously and looked the other way for the most part. Initially, Pakistani military troops were deployed along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to apprehend the fleeing Al Qaeda militants from Afghanistan. For the military deployment, the Pakistani government consulted the tribal leaders following tribal traditions and took them into their confidence.

Despite pressure from the United States to use force in the tribal areas, the government mostly relied on traditional methods of dealing with the tribes through the involvement of the tribal leaders. The political administration held various consultations with tribal leaders to persuade the tribes to expel or hand over Al Qaeda militants to the authorities. These efforts were not totally successful because of the tribes’ unwillingness which was partly due to the tribal tradition of providing asylum to foreign guests, and partly due to a sense of Islamic brotherhood. The political administration

\textsuperscript{447} Ibid.
inflicted various punishments such as fines and imprisonment to pressure the tribes to cooperate. However, all punishments were meted out in accordance with the FCR, the law of the land, and tribal traditions.

Primarily as a result of US pressure, the Pakistani security forces initiated search operations in the FATA to capture Al Qaeda militants. The FC troops, who were well-conversant with tribal norms and customs, conducted most of the search operations. The tribal leaders were also consulted from time to time. Despite the growing pressure from the United States for tough military operations, the Pakistani government did not use much force against the tribes. The Pakistani government used traditional methods of engaging with the tribes, while relying on the local leaders to conduct the search operations. This approach thus largely maintained the status quo and dampened tensions that would have stimulated the tribes to rebel against the state.

The situation changed drastically after the Pakistani government followed an intensive intervention with a greater use of force starting in 2004. The next chapter argues that an intensive military intervention in the FATA increasingly disrupted the status quo causing the outbreak of insurgency. From 2004, military troops conducted vigorous search operations in the FATA leading to human rights abuses and collateral damage. This also destroyed the authority of the local leaders. The tribes largely interpreted the government’s moves as an infringement of their autonomy and a breach of long-standing agreements between them and the state. This amounted to disruption of the status quo that triggered rebellion in the FATA.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISRUPTION OF THE STATUS QUO AND THE ONSET OF REBELLION IN THE FATA

5.1 Introduction

If the Pakistani government’s maintaining of the status quo in the FATA helps explain the lack of rebellion, the disruption of the status quo helps us understand the onset of rebellion. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was military intervention in the FATA in 2002–2003 and growing frustration among the tribes. However, this did not lead to insurgency as together these factors did not seriously undermine the authority of the local leaders. At the beginning of 2004, however, the military conducted more operations in the tribal territory as a result of US pressure on the Pakistani government for further action. The new round of interventions was not only more extensive but also differed in form to the interventions in 2002–2003. The military did not consult tribal leaders before carrying out search operations, triggering defiance among the tribesmen who threatened to take up arms against the state. The military intervention also became more violent in 2004; it not only caused civilian causalities, but also undermined the authority of the local leaders. In response, the tribesmen attacked government forces, marking the beginning of the insurgency in the FATA.

This chapter therefore elaborates on the second step of my theoretical model: while a weak state might remain free from insurgency for decades, rebellion is more likely to erupt when the state disrupts a modus vivendi with local leaders. To illustrate these events and my theoretical model of insurgency onset more clearly, I provide a detailed analysis of events in the South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur agencies.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the structure of insurgency in the three agencies of the FATA, namely South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur. This is followed by an explanation of what motivated Pakistan’s intensive military intervention starting in 2004. This chapter further explains how the Pakistani military intervention undermined long-standing agreements between the state and the tribes of the FATA, even potentially jeopardising the semi-autonomous status of the region. The use of heavy and indiscriminate force and numerous human rights abuses is also described. I demonstrate that it was this disruption of the modus vivendi between the state and the tribal leaders which quickly triggered an insurgency led by the TTP.

5.2 Insurgency in the FATA

As discussed in the previous chapter, despite the influx of Al Qaeda and other foreign militants into the FATA after the US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, there was
no fighting against the state. Tensions developed between the government and the tribes but did not lead to a conflict. The insurgency erupted after an intensive military intervention by the Pakistani state disrupted the status quo which had stood for decades, most notably by undermining the authority of local leaders.

The insurgency first erupted in the Wazir-inhabited areas of South Waziristan. Under pressure from the United States to take action against the foreign militants, the Pakistani military launched its first major operation against the local Taliban fighters and their foreign allies in March 2004 in Wana, South Waziristan, using 7,000 troops. The tribal militants, led by Nek Muhammad, posed severe resistance to the military forces. Nek Muhammad, a member of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe, was the first head of the Taliban in South Waziristan. He not only provided refuge to fleeing members of the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters, but also mobilised local Taliban fighters and started cross-border attacks in 2003 on American and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The military suffered huge losses as a result of intense fighting that forced the Pakistani government to make a peace deal with Nek Muhammad’s forces. The deal did not last and Nek Muhammad was later killed by a US drone strike. The insurgency continued after his death.

The insurgency in the Mehsud-inhabited areas of South Waziristan started in 2005 after the military operations were launched there. Abdullah Mehsud and Baitullah Mehsud spearheaded the resistance against the Pakistani military. Baitullah Mehsud, the first leader of the TTP, had participated in the Afghan Jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s and also developed close ties with the Afghan Taliban in the late 1990s. Baitullah Mehsud provided support to thousands of fleeing Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters and organised local tribesmen to fight inside Afghanistan. He also mobilised the local tribesmen to fight against the Pakistani security forces. He rose to prominence when he formed the TTP in December 2007 by uniting various local militant groups under one umbrella organization and became its first head. He was also alleged to have orchestrated the 2007 assassination of Pakistani politician Benazir Bhutto.

Similarly, the insurgency in North Waziristan started after thousands of military and paramilitary troops were sent to the region late in 2004 and early 2005 to conduct military operations. Hafiz Gul Bahadur, a member of the Mada Khel clan of the Uthmanzai Wazir tribe, emerged as the main militant leader, offering resistance to the

450 A local resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 5, 2014.
452 Ibid., 7.
Pakistani military operations throughout 2005-2006. Upon its formation, Bahadur joined TTP as its deputy.

In Bajaur, the insurgency started around 2006. Maulvi Faqir Muhammad led the resistance movement against the Pakistani state. After the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001, the Tanzim Nifaz Shariat-i-Mohammadi (TNSM), an Islamist group led by Sufi Mohammad, mobilised local people, many of them in the nearby Swat District, to fight against the US forces in Afghanistan. Faqir Muhammad, vice chief of the TNSM in Bajaur agency, provided support to Sufi Muhammad to recruit young people, mostly from the Mamond Tehsil (subdivision) of the Bajaur Agency, to fight in Afghanistan. Faqir is also believed to have actively participated in the jihad against Soviet forces in Afghanistan and had fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan during the 1990s. Faqir later joined the TTP upon its formation in 2007 and became a deputy head based in the Bajaur Agency.

Over the years, the insurgents became stronger and established control over the FATA population, in particular the three aforementioned tribal agencies. The writ of the government became almost absent. A military officer who served in FATA observed, “A parallel state was established which eroded the authority of the political agent. All notables — strong people of the area including the Maliks — were killed. A new order was established in the agency where the Taliban were the rulers.”

As this chapter will demonstrate, the start of the FATA insurgency was triggered by military intervention. The intervention occurred at different times in different agencies. As we will see, in three agencies – South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur – intervention was followed by the onset of the insurgency. The military intervention was primarily motivated by the pressure from the United States.

5.3 United States pressure and the Pakistani government’s decision for intensive intervention

Despite a deployment of around 70,000 Pakistani regular troops along the border and the arrest of a number of senior Al Qaeda members from the tribal areas and other

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456 Fayyaz, “Towards A Durable Peace in Wazirstan.”
US officials alleged that Al Qaeda militants and their local sympathisers continued to launch attacks in Afghanistan from Pakistan's tribal areas. A senior officer of the United States-led coalition forces in Afghanistan, Col. Roger King, complained that Taliban and Al Qaeda elements were targeting both American and Afghan forces across the border. Peter Tomsen, who served as President George Bush’s special envoy on Afghan resistance from 1989 to 1992, was of the view that the Pakistan government might not be utilising its military forces to fight in the tribal areas, resorting “to temporary deployment in case the situation worsens and pulls out even before it is salvaged.” The US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, raised questions about the sincerity of the Pakistani government’s efforts in preventing the use of the tribal areas for attacks inside Afghanistan.

Foreign fighters continued to attack US troops in Afghanistan from their new base in Pakistan’s tribal region. Taliban attacks in Afghanistan increased markedly in the last half of 2003. In one such attack, more than 300 people were killed, including US and Afghan soldiers and aid workers. Pakistan was both unable and unwilling to stop the cross-border activity of the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. A lack of capacity on the part of the Pakistani forces was exacerbated by the tribes’ wholehearted support for the foreign militants. In addition, Pakistani intelligence operatives were ambivalent in their attitude toward the Afghan Taliban or mujahideen, contributing to Pakistan’s inability to rein in these militants. Two US senators, Richard G. Lugar, and Joseph R. Biden expressed their belief that elements of the Inter-Services Intelligence agency were helping members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda operating along the border.

US officials pressured Pakistan to use force against foreign and local militants who not only provided protection to the foreign militants, but also assisted them in launching attacks inside Afghanistan. Gen. David Barnes, the Commander of the US forces in Afghanistan, asked the Pakistani government to carry out tough military operations to

458 Many Al Qaeda militants hide themselves in big cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and other parts of Pakistan including the tribal areas. The Pakistani local law enforcement agencies had arrested hundreds of Al Qaeda suspects since the launch of the US-led anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan. Of these, 480 were handed over to the US authorities. Khalid Shaikh Mohammad was the highest-ranking Al Qaeda operative apprehended by the Pakistani security forces. Abu Zubaydah, Al Qaeda’s chief of operations, was nabbed in Faisalabad. And Ramzi Bin Al-Shaiba, a Yemeni believed to be a chief planner in the September 11 attacks was arrested from Karachi. Qudssia Akhlaque, “480 Al Qaeda Men Handed over to US,” Dawn, March 11, 2003; “Pakistan Takes Hunt for Al Qaeda into Cities,” Daily Times, October 30, 2002.
463 Haqqani, “Friendship, Not Alliance.”
464 Yusufzai, “Internationally Administered Trouble Areas.”
465 Nawaz, FATA — A Most Dangerous Place, 15.
466 “Islamabad Still Helps Taliban: US Senators.”
force the tribesmen to expel the foreign militants. As well as exerting pressure on the Pakistani government, the United States promised a generous aid package of US$3 billion in conjunction with the awarding of status as a non-NATO ally in return for intensive military operations in the tribal areas.

Under this pressure, the government decided from the beginning of 2004 to use heavy force against the tribes to drive out the Al Qaeda militants from South Waziristan. High officials from the military and the governor of KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province) province, Lt. Gen. Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, resolved to be tough on the local tribes. A senior government official explained, “There would now be less talk and more action.” Another high ranking official said that “The time for holding jirgas is running out.”

Military and paramilitary forces were reinforced by sending more troops to South Waziristan. A Peshawar-based journalist, Ismail Khan, commented, “The decision marks a change in the government's approach which has hitherto been stressing the need for involving tribes in the hunt for Al Qaeda militants in the region.” During this time, the tribal areas witnessed aggressive military operations. The following section examines closely the military intervention and its causal link with the disruption of the longstanding status quo and the onset of insurgency in the three agencies of the FATA. These three agencies saw the most serious disruption of the status quo, leading to the eruption of the insurgency.

5.4 Post 9/11 relocation of the foreign militants in the FATA agencies

Rebellion first erupted in South Waziristan. This agency is the country’s southernmost tribal agency, covering an area of 6,619 square kilometres. It shares a border with the Paktika province of Afghanistan. Two major tribes known as Ahmedzai Wazir and Mehsud have lived in this agency for centuries. Both tribes live in self-contained areas within South Waziristan. The local tribes were providing shelter and assistance to the foreign fighters, while local militants already associated with the Afghan Taliban before September 11, such as Nek Muhammad, Abdullah Mehsud, and Baitullah Mehsud,
organised local Taliban groups across South Waziristan to help their Afghan brethren.474

The Pakistani state alleged that, in particular, two of the sub-tribes of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe, known as Yargulkhel and Zalikhel, were providing protection to the foreign militants.475 The government pressured these tribes to hand over the militants but the tribesmen were reluctant for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter; partly because of local traditions, and partly because of a sense of Islamic solidarity. The foreign militants also sought refuge in the Mehsud-dominated areas of South Waziristan. In addition, some Al Qaeda fighters moved to the Mehsud areas of South Waziristan after major military operations started in 2004 in the Wazir areas.476

Like South Waziristan, North Waziristan, the second largest of the FATA agencies and adjoining the Afghan province of Khost, also received a large number of Al Qaeda and other foreign militants after 2001. Most of them took shelter in the agency’s treacherous and heavily forested Shawal Valley. In addition, a wave of militants fled to North Waziristan after the Pakistani security forces launched attacks in South Waziristan in 2004 and 2005. The Haqqani network also relocated to this agency after the US invasion of Afghanistan. They had historical links to the area.

The leader of the Haqqani network, Jalaluddin Haqqani, had left Afghanistan and settled in North Waziristan in the mid-1970s.477 Jalaluddin emerged as the most important mujahideen commander in eastern Afghanistan in the 1980s. Jalaluddin’s son, Sirajuddin, served as the commander of the Haqqani group, conducting attacks against the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. He used North Waziristan as a sanctuary and recruiting place. The network primarily operated in the Afghan provinces of Paktiya, Paktika and Khost, adjoining the North and South Waziristan agencies.478

The US military officials in Afghanistan complained about the increasing attacks on the coalition forces, especially in Afghanistan’s provinces adjacent to North Waziristan. The Pakistani government threatened the tribes with the use of force if they were found to be supporting foreign militants.479 The tribal elders denied any presence of foreign militants and refuted the allegations that their territory was being used to launch attacks.

474 A local resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 5, 2014.
475 Gunaratna and Shah, “Making Peace with the Taliban to Isolate Al Qaeda,” 5.
476 Musharaf, In the Line of Fire: A Memoir, 265–270.
on Afghan targets. The tribesmen threatened to resist if the military conducted any operations.\footnote{Mushtaq Yusufzai, “Tribesmen Wamed of Military Operation in North Waziristan,” The News, January 31, 2005.}

Bajaur Agency also provided refuge to some of the Al Qaeda militants, including members of the Al Qaeda leadership. Bajaur is the smallest of the seven agencies of the FATA. The agency borders Afghanistan’s Kunar province and Pakistan’s Dir district, providing a gateway to the Swat Valley. A senior member of al-Qaeda, Abu Faraj al-Libbi, was reported to have spent time in Bajaur before he was arrested in 2005.\footnote{Ismail Khan, “Zawahiri Was Not Here,” Dawn, January 15, 2006.} Bajaur Agency came into the limelight in 2005 when the terrorist plots targeting London and Barcelona were traced to Al Qaeda-linked operatives based in Bajaur.\footnote{Claudio Franco, “The Tehrik-E-Taliban Pakistan: The Bajaur Case,” NEFA Foundation, July 2009.} Faqir Muhammad, a local FATA militant, provided shelter to the foreign militants.\footnote{Rahimullah Yusufzai, “Attack: The Bajaur Bash,” The News, January 22, 2006.} He was alleged to have provided refuge to Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda’s second in command. Faqir had announced he would give shelter to all the foreign militants according to the Pashtun traditions.\footnote{Sohail Abdul Nasir, “Al-Zawahiri’s Pakistan Ally: Profile of Maulana Faqir Muhammad,” Terrorism Monitor IV, no. 3 (February 9, 2006).} After the settlement of the foreign militants in different agencies of the FATA, they started attacks against the military forces led by the United States in Afghanistan. This created huge pressure on the Pakistani government to conduct military operations in these areas to stop these attacks.

5.5 Deployment of Pakistan’s military troops and resentment among the tribes

Under pressure from the United States, the Pakistani government deployed additional troops in the FATA.\footnote{Zulfiqar Ali, “Mobilization of Troops in Tribal Belt Continues Dawn,” Dawn, September 5, 2003.} Two dozen checkpoints were erected to monitor the movements of the tribesmen.\footnote{Deployment of Troops Begins in S. Waziristan,” Dawn, February 21, 2004.} The army’s decision to deploy more troops to chase suspected Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters deep in the semi-autonomous tribal areas was highly appreciated by the United States.\footnote{Yusufzai, “Internationally Administered Trouble Areas.”} The military deployments fostered great resentment among the tribesmen, however.

As the deployment began, the tribal leaders warned of an uprising against the government and demanded withdrawal of the military troops from the tribal areas.\footnote{Fata MPs Call for End to Army Action,” Dawn, October 11, 2003.} A local tribal \textit{malik} noted in retrospect, “We have been defending the country’s 300-mile-long part of the western border ever since the country was created without asking for a
single penny from the Pakistan government. What the Federal Government has given to them in return is a heavy deployment of army and unwarranted operations.” An editorial in a Pakistani English newspaper maintained, “They [Tribes] are suspicious of armed intrusions into their territory and [they] guard the traditions of tribal independence jealously.”

The tribal leaders vowed to guard tribal autonomy and threatened to resist the military operations. A tribal elder threatened, “We have exercised extreme restraint but the option of retaliation in kind could not be held back if the brutal operation continues unabated.” Similarly, another tribal elder warned that, “Even an animal retaliates at one stage after being consistently tortured and here we are talking about the brave tribesmen who defeated the British colonialists for countless times and did not budge an inch of their homeland.” However, amid threats of revolt from the tribesmen came more deployments of military troops in the FATA. Raza observed that “It is getting uglier with every passing day, and stationing of Army contingents in these areas will breed more resentment.”

5.6 Military operations without consultation of the tribal leaders

The military intervention in the tribal territory became more intensive in 2004. Some senior government officials dealing with the FATA maintained that high officials were briefed that the violation of the traditional autonomy of the tribes could have serious repercussions for the government. According to Rustam Shah Mommand, the former senior FATA official, the military command could not pay serious attention to this warning and circumvented the traditional methods in dealing with the tribal leaders.

The Pakistani security forces relentlessly conducted various military operations against the tribes. It is important to highlight that the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force mostly drawn from Pashtun population, had previously undertaken search operations in the tribal areas. However, more recently, military personnel unfamiliar with tribal traditions and norms had become increasingly involved in raiding and search operations against
the tribes.\textsuperscript{497} The use of external troops was more likely to engender opposition among the local tribes.

The military ignored the local tribal leaders and did not consult them before launching the military operations.\textsuperscript{498} On 16 March 2004, the Pakistani military launched a major operation in Kaloshah, a village in South Waziristan, against local groups alleged to have provided refuge to the foreign militants.\textsuperscript{499} A total force of around 14,000 troops, including one division of the army and three wings of the paramilitary FC force, took part in the operation.\textsuperscript{500} Helicopter gunships were also used.\textsuperscript{501} This was termed the “largest and biggest operation in any of the federally-administered tribal region since Pakistan’s creation.”\textsuperscript{502} The military’s disregard for the local leaders provoked the tribesmen. A local tribal leader warned, “We hope that there is no error of judgment by those leading this campaign because it could go wrong and cause bloodshed.” He added further, “Those commanding the troops should show patience while dealing with tribesmen.”\textsuperscript{503}

In the same manner, the government did not take the local leaders of the Mehsud tribes into their confidence while carrying out military operations in 2005 in the Mehsud-dominated areas of South Waziristan.\textsuperscript{504} A large number of local tribesmen were arrested over allegations of providing shelter and assistance to the foreign militants. Military troops carried out several intensive search operations in areas such as Makin, Tauda China, Sher Koat and Shobikhel without consulting tribal elders. Jet planes and helicopter gunships were used to carry out strikes in these areas.\textsuperscript{505} This generated resentment among the tribesmen, creating anti-military feelings.\textsuperscript{506} A tribal leader said that tribesmen understood that these punitive actions from the Pakistani government had been undertaken to appease Washington but warned that it could be harmful for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{507}

In a similar way, the tribal leaders were marginalised in North Waziristan Agency when the military initiated operations there.\textsuperscript{508} A number of military operations were carried out in different parts of North Waziristan, such as Shawal Valley, Saidgai Wazir, Dattakhel, Mirali, and the major city of Miranshah in 2005-2006. In a military operation

\textsuperscript{498} Ali Wazir, an elder of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, January 26, 2014.
\textsuperscript{499} Fayyaz, “Towards A Durable Peace in Waziristan.”
\textsuperscript{501} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{503} Yusufzai, “Tribesmen to Help Hunt Terrorists.”
\textsuperscript{505} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{506} Gohar Mehsud, (a resident of South Waziristan belonging to the Mehsud tribe, Islamabad), interview by author, April 20, 2014.
\textsuperscript{507} Another local malik from South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, January 12, 2014.
\textsuperscript{508} Lt. Gen. Ali Jan Orakzai, former Corps Commander Peshawar and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
carried out at Lowara Mandi in North Waziristan on 16 January 2005, troops arrested almost 20 tribesmen, accusing them of having links with foreign militants. The tribal elders protested against the operation and demanded the release of the innocent tribesmen.\footnote{“Jirga Demands Release of Tribesmen Held in N Waziristan,” \textit{The News}, January 17, 2005.}

Despite the tribes’ increasing resentment and protests, the military remained consistent in pursuing operations in the tribal territories.\footnote{“Game Afoot in N. Waziristan,” \textit{The Nation}, April 24, 2005.} Military and paramilitary troops conducted another search operation during July 2005 in the Qutabkhel village of North Waziristan, which led to a protest by the local tribesmen.\footnote{Pazir Gul, “Search for Militants in Tribal Village,” \textit{Dawn}, July 19, 2005.} In another operation, almost 2000 troops raided the Dargah Darpakhel area of North Waziristan. A tribesman was killed and another three arrested.\footnote{Iqbal Khattak, “One Militant Killed, 3 Arrested in Raid on Hideout in North Waziristan,” \textit{Daily Times}, July 30, 2005.} The security forces launched another massive operation in Shawal valley of North Waziristan on 6 September 2005, using heavy artillery and jet fighters.\footnote{“40 Militants Killed in North Waziristan,” \textit{Daily Times}, September 30, 2005.} In another operation, the military sent several hundred troops to the Khatai Killay area of North Waziristan in search of local and the foreign militants. Heavy artillery and gunship helicopters were used to target the militants.\footnote{“Fighting Erupts as Troops Move into N Waziristan Villages”, \textit{The News}, September 30, 2005, “Fighting Erupts as Troops Move into N Waziristan Villages”, \textit{The News}, September 30, 2005.”} All these operations were carried out without consulting the tribal leaders.

In Bajaur, the Pakistani government initially relied on the local leaders and involved them in expelling the foreign militants. The government signed an agreement with the tribes on 30 May 2005, to prevent them providing shelter to the foreign militants. Almost 150 tribal elders and \textit{maliks} belonging to 12 tribes of the agency signed the agreement and assured the government of their support. They also pledged to take action against those providing shelter to the foreign militants in accordance with tribal customs and traditions.\footnote{“Accord in Bajaur to Curb Terrorists,” \textit{Dawn}, May 31, 2005.} In line with the agreement, in several cases the tribal elders meted out punishments to tribesmen involved in assisting the foreign militants. For example, an armed tribal Lashkar comprising around 2,000 tribesmen destroyed the houses of two local tribesmen in Seway and Chopatra villages in Bajaur. The two tribesmen had allegedly provided shelter to the foreign militants. In addition, a fine of Rs. 1 million was imposed and the two tribesmen were forced to leave the area.\footnote{Sailab Mahsud and Mushtaq Yusufzai, “100 Foreigners Still Hiding in Waziristan,” \textit{The News}, May 21, 2005.} The local tribes extended their cooperation as long as the government continued to take the tribal leaders into its confidence.
The relations between the government and the tribes turned sour when an American attack, conducted on 15 January 2006, violated Pakistan air space and killed 18 innocent people, including women and children, in the Damdola village of Mamoon Tehsil in Bajaur. Thousands of local tribesmen held a protest rally and condemned the killing of innocent people in the attack. The tribal elders heavily criticised the Pakistani government for its alliance with the United States and said, “It is astonishing and condemnable that foreign jets are targeting us on our own land and the government fails to provide us protection.” A local maintained that “Those killed were all innocent tribesmen, there were women and children among the dead. There was no Arab and no foreigners.” The Pakistani authorities alleged that four or five foreign militants were amongst those killed. This further inflamed the anger of tribesmen against the Pakistani government, creating tensions between the government and the tribes. Yet, the tribes still did not launch a rebellion against the Pakistani state.

The relations between the Pakistani government and the tribes deteriorated further when a madrassa was attacked by the United States on 22 October 2006, killing 80 students aged between 15 and 25. The tribes were enraged when the Pakistani government announced that the attack had been carried out by Pakistani forces. The Pakistani army’s spokesman, Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan, said that the army conducted the operation and the seminary was being used as a training camp for militants. He said that “The operation was launched after confirmed intelligence reports that a number of miscreants were getting terrorist training in a madressah.” He added that all who were killed in the attack were militants and denied that there was any collateral damage. Sean McCormack, the State Department spokesman, also confirmed that the attack on the seminary was a Pakistani military initiative and the target was a terrorist facility.

Pakistan’s acceptance of responsibility enraged the tribal leaders and the local people. The tribal leaders felt marginalised and the government had lost their trust. The tribal leaders blamed the Pakistani government for helping the United States to launch the missile attack. They said, “We trusted our government and agreed to make peace and this is how it paid us back. This is a terrorist attack and the victims are students learning...”

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518 Nisar Mahmood and Iftikhar Khan, “Tribesmen Protest Air Strike”; Khan, “Angry Tribesmen Disrupt Life.”
the Quran.” The tribesmen denounced the military attacks and vowed publicly to attack the Pakistani forces. Inayatur Rahman, a tribal elder, threatened to use suicide bombers to target Pakistani security forces: “We will carry out these suicide attacks soon.” Another local tribesman said, “We have been deceived. We will take revenge.”

5.7 Undermining the authority of the local leaders

The tribal leaders felt marginalised when the government did not consult them before carrying out the military operations. The government further undermined the authority of the local leaders by carrying out large scale arrests of tribesmen and by stopping allowances. The government arrested 13 tribal elders from the Ahmadzai Wazir and 64 other tribesmen in the South Waziristan Agency. The government withheld the allowances and privileges of around 349 tribal leaders, which potentially affected their ability to influence the tribal militants. Journalist Rahimullah noted, “With the leading Malik [tribal leaders] in jail and their wages stopped, it was obvious that they had been stripped of any power or influence to play a role in defusing the crisis.”

The government also stopped paying salaries to those Ahmadzai Wazir tribesmen who were employed by the government. A former secretary of the NWFP and former political agent in the FATA, Khalid Aziz, observed that “The traditional way of dealing with the tribes was hastily abandoned and instead massive military power that was used rendered the local administration and their protégés the tribal elders, ineffective.” An English language daily commented, “The area’s much cherished autonomy has been badly mauled and could have repercussions.” The government’s approach increasingly lost the confidence of the tribal leaders. A well-informed local journalist, Behroz Khan, observed:

...whether for the arrest of foreign terrorists or taming the tribesmen, the ongoing military operations and push-forward policy of the government is unlikely to bear fruit without the motivation of the local population in the hunt for unwanted elements and imposing the state’s authority. Without the cooperation of the local tribesmen, the writ of the government could not be extended in the

525 Yusufzai, “80 Die in Air Attack on Bajaur Seminary.”
530 Ibid.
531 Gunaratna and Shah, “Making Peace with the Taliban to Isolate Al Qaeda.”
hitherto inaccessible tribal and use of force against the heavily armed tribal people, could hardly help to serve the purpose.\textsuperscript{533}

The military’s intensive intervention in the Mehsud areas of South Waziristan also seriously undermined the powers of the local tribal leaders. Repressive measures such as arbitrary arrests and incessant search operations estranged the tribesmen from the Pakistani government and undermined the respect of those leaders who had previously supported the government. An observer of the FATA insurgency contended that “The frequent raids and killings by the Pakistani army discredited the tribal process. The tribesmen were accustomed to dealing with the PA … saw the army’s intervention as a violation of FCR.”\textsuperscript{534}

Similarly in North Waziristan, the Pakistani military did not utilise traditional ways of dealing with the tribes, undermining the authority of the local leaders and violating tribal norms and traditions. On 13 March 2005, in the Shawal Valley of North Waziristan, military troops arrested a number of tribesmen for keeping heavy weapons. However, a local tribesman argued that the tribes retained heavy weapons as a part of local customs and norms, and that the government already knew about it.\textsuperscript{535}

In addition, in March 2005, the coalition’s troops in Afghanistan killed around 24 tribesmen on the Pakistani side of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. This incident infuriated the locals who expressed anger at what they saw as the violation of their territory by foreign forces. An editorial commented, “This violation is a matter of disgrace for the tribesmen.”\textsuperscript{536}

Dishonouring the centuries-old tribal traditions and undermining the authority of the local leaders triggered protest from the tribesmen. Almost 500 tribal elders from all parts of North Waziristan held a meeting at which they blamed the government for destroying centuries of tribal norms and customs.\textsuperscript{537} A local tribesman maintained that the “Army show no mercy towards the local tribesmen in the continuing war on terror, which also included violation of the traditions and customs of the Pashtun tribesmen as well as Islamic teaching by entering houses and bringing disgrace to families live by their centuries old traditions.”\textsuperscript{538} The use of force by the government further weakened the writ of the state. An editorial in The Nation, an English daily, observed, “The use of military force, combined with economic sanctions subsequently imposed on the


\textsuperscript{534} Syeda Beena Butool, “Pakistani Responses to AfPak Policy Local Narratives and an Ending Global War?,” \textit{Asian Survey} 53, no. 6 (2013): 1016.


population, alienated the tribesmen. This not only failed to establish the writ of the government but also led to the killing of scores of tribal maliks who had cooperated with the government.”

Malik Khan Marjan, a tribal elder of South Waziristan, blamed the government for violating the tribal autonomy in the guise of war against terrorism. The tribal leaders demanded a stop to the ongoing military operations and the withdrawal of military troops from the tribal areas. A Wazir tribal elder said, “We were promised dialogue and developmental funds, while plans for military operations against our tribes were well underway. We were stabbed in the back.” A well-informed local journalist, Behroz Khan, reported:

Without the cooperation of the local tribesmen, the writ of the government could not be extended in the hitherto inaccessible tribal area and use of force against the heavily armed tribal people could hardly help to serve the purpose.

5.8 The use of military force against the tribes

In addition to undermining the government’s previously peaceful relations with the tribal leaders, the military operations resulted in human rights abuses and civilian damages. For example, on 24 February 2004, the military targeted a gathering of tribal leaders who were set to deliberate on the procedure for expelling foreign fighters. A local official said, “The military arrived armed with helicopter gunships when negotiations were underway...a step that undermined whatever little local trust could be harnessed.” In addition, the military operations caused considerable civilian damage in South Waziristan. The houses of local tribesmen were destroyed with heavy cannon fire. In a military operation in the Shakai Valley of South Waziristan in June 2004, involving around 10,000 army and FC troops, the military bombed tribal communities with Precision Guided Missiles (PGMs) resulting in significant causalities. A van carrying civilians was also targeted by helicopter gunships while moving to a safer location.

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541 Ibid.
542 Cited in Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 14.
543 Khan, “FATA Operation: Tribesmen Must Be Taken into Confidence.”
544 Syeda Beena Butool, “Pakistani Responses to AfPak Policy,” 1016.
545 Cited in Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 15.
548 Rahimullah Yusufzai and Sairab Mahsud, “Fighting Subsides as Jirga Seeks Truce.”
Various local accounts confirmed an Amnesty International report that recorded human rights abuses committed during the military operations. The report highlighted that despite the hoisting of white flags on their houses to differentiate them as non-combatants, the civilian population was often targeted by the security forces. The large-scale arrests and the demolition of a number of houses angered the tribesmen. A local journalist contended that the overwhelming use of force during operations had caused “more deaths and destruction rather than achieving the objective of cleansing the area of militants.”

The government also imposed an economic blockade on some areas. A blockade in the Wana area of South Waziristan prevented 80 percent of farmers transporting fruit and vegetables to the market, depriving communities of their main source of livelihood. Government hospitals, private clinics and educational institutions remained closed. The economic blockade was termed a violation of basic human rights. A local said that “Innocent tribal(s) should not be harassed in the name of foreign element(s),” adding further, “Enmity with tribals would bring negative repercussions.” Rahimullah Yusufzai maintained that the military approach was far from constructive. He said, “Military operations and punitive measures such as economic sanctions that affected both the guilty and the innocent alienated most of the people.”

Similarly, in the Mehsud areas of South Waziristan, the military used heavy artillery fire and helicopter gunships to bomb the militants, which also killed numerous innocent tribesmen. A local journalist, Intikhab, observed that “There was a growing uncertainty in the area and everybody feared for his life.” Amid this fear, a large number of families of the Mehsud tribe left these areas for safer places.

The military operations also resulted in human rights abuses in North Waziristan. For instance, 17 tribal people, including women and children, were killed during a military operation in the Waziri Kot area located on the outskirts of Miramshah, North Waziristan, in July 2005. According to one tribal elder, Maulvi Nek Zaman, the military killed innocent locals during the operation that generated bitter feelings among the tribesmen. The tribesmen protested against the killing of innocent people and...
attacked government offices and soldiers. Moreover, the tribal elders demanded the withdrawal of troops from all checkpoints in North Waziristan, saying, “All those killed in the last two-day operation were local tribesmen”, and that “Rulers [Pakistani government] were engaged in the genocide of innocent tribesmen just to please the United States.”

Civilian damages as a result of military operations alienated the tribesmen. Most of the shops in the main market of Miranshah bazar were destroyed due to artillery fire. Moreover, the government’s main hospital, schools, and college were badly damaged during the operation and several main roads were closed for an indefinite time. A local tribesman from North Waziristan maintained, “We are not in favour of terrorists but we want the issue to be resolved peacefully through talks.” Another local Muzamil Wazir noted that “Military action is not the solution to current imbroglio as armed clashes always lead to destruction of property and human life.”

The use of the FCR, a colonial black law, imposing collective punishments, closures of markets, and local economic blockades for months might have hurt a few hundred militants, but caused thousands of innocent tribesmen unmerited suffering, alienating the local population.

In Bajaur, the military operations also resulted in significant casualties. A local journalist described the severity of one such attack: “The bodies were burnt. Pieces of flesh were strewn all over the place. Rescuers were picking up body parts and putting them in bags and Chaddars.” Following the locals' repeated assertions that those killed in the seminary attack were civilians, Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that “The scale of the deaths point to use of excessive force in the extreme, with no or little effort to minimize loss of life.” According to journalist Rahimullah, “Missile attacks and bombings invariably cause collateral damage and contribute to the intensity of hatred against the [Pakistani government] attackers.”

The use of military means rendered other traditional methods of resolving problems with the tribes obsolete. A local journalist, Behroz, maintained that “The tribal elders would
not agree to enforce the decision through the sheer use of force.” According to Hasan Abbas, the indiscriminate targeting of civilians pushed them to support the “militant cause.” According to another analyst, Beena Butool, the Pakistan military's indiscriminate and heavy use of force “consequently converted the once covert protectors of the Taliban [local militants] into public heroes of the ‘peoples’ revolt’ against the state.

5.9 Tribal attacks against the military forces

By undermining the authority of the local leaders, coupled with the indiscriminate use of force which caused civilian causalities, the campaign invoked a violent tribal reaction which was to lead to the onset of the insurgency. Tribal militants began attacks against the military forces. A camp where a brigade of the Pakistani army was stationed was attacked with RPG-7 rockets in Kaloshah village in South Waziristan on 8 January 2004. The attackers fired hundreds of rockets at the army base, resulting in the killing of four soldiers and injuries to several others. The local people maintained that the tribesmen had never offered such violent resistance before. Rahimullah Yusufzai, a local journalist, said the “death of army men signaled a dangerous escalation in the hostilities" between the government and the tribes.

Local militants offered strong resistance to an operation on 16 March 2004 in South Waziristan. The military suffered huge losses: 43 army soldiers, including two majors, and 17 FC troops were killed, and several others were injured. Approximately one dozen army trucks, pickup trucks, armoured personnel carriers as well as light artillery were also damaged during the fight. The locals maintained that the military was defeated badly by the tribal militants. The former Pakistani President Musharraf explained the causes of the failure:

When our troops reached Wana, they found themselves trapped in a cleverly laid ambush. Our forces were in low-lying area while the terrorists have

570 Syeda Beena Butool, “Pakistani Responses to AfPak Policy,” 1018.
574 Khan, “FATA Operation: Tribesmen Must Be Taken into Confidence.”
578 Yusufzai, “Wana Operation: Tribal Trouble.”
occupied the surrounding hills and mountains … A pitched battle ensued, with the terrorists dominating the area. The army was called in to break the ambush and retrieve the trapped men of the Frontier Corps. Nearly 6,000 troops were immediately move in … [they] immediately threw a cordon around the ambush site and launched a search operation. Unfortunately, the adjacent ridge occupied by the terrorists remained outside the cordon. The army drew heavy fires from this ridge and suffered sixteen dead.\textsuperscript{580}

The losses suffered by the military and Frontier Corps reflected not only poor planning and execution, but also demonstrated the local militants' fighting capability.\textsuperscript{581} A well-informed local journalist explained the fierce resistance from the local tribesmen:

The tribesmen, who are born fighters and learn the use of the gun at an early age in keeping with local traditions, acquired more sophisticated fighting skills during the long years of Afghan war. Those skills have now enabled the militant tribesmen to put up fierce resistance to the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps troops and execute ambushes, plant landmines and fire rockets despite being outnumbered and outgunned.\textsuperscript{582}

The security forces faced severe resistance from the Mehsud tribes. The tribal militants targeted the security forces operating in different parts of South Waziristan, inhabited by the Mehsud tribes such as Makin, Tiarza, Kaniguram, Taray Zor and Spinkai Raghzi. This resulted in many casualties among security forces’ personnel.\textsuperscript{583} For instance, in an attack on the army convoy in Jandola, four troops were killed and 11 were injured.\textsuperscript{584} The tribal militants also attacked a military outpost in the Spinkai Raghzai area with missiles that killed many soldiers.\textsuperscript{585}

Tribal militants attacked the security forces in North Waziristan as well. In one instance, in May 2005, tribesmen fired three rockets at a joint Pakistan Army-Frontier Corps checkpost near the border with Afghanistan in North Waziristan agency.\textsuperscript{586} In another attack, several missiles targeted three paramilitary checkpoints.\textsuperscript{587} A Pakistani army patrol was ambushed killing one soldier and injuring four others in the Shawal Valley of North Waziristan.\textsuperscript{588} In addition, the local militants fired five missiles at military and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[581] Nawaz, \textit{FATA — A Most Dangerous Place}, 18.
\item[582] Yusufzai, "Wana Operation: Tribal Trouble."
\end{footnotes}
paramilitary installations in Miranshah, the headquarters of the North Waziristan Agency.\textsuperscript{589}

Firing rockets at military targets became a frequent occurrence in North Waziristan.\textsuperscript{590} More than 40 rockets were fired in a single night.\textsuperscript{591} The military responded to these attacks with heavy weapons fire that only enhanced resentment among the tribesmen.\textsuperscript{592} In response, the tribal militants attacked the army installations and government offices with missiles and rockets.\textsuperscript{593} The military troops also came under increasing attack while patrolling tribal territory.\textsuperscript{594}

Similarly, in Bajaur, a suicide attack was carried out at an army training school, the Punjab Regimental Centre, at Dargai in Malakand. Forty-five army recruits were killed and 22 wounded.\textsuperscript{595} The tribal militants threatened more such attacks to avenge the death of 80 innocent students.\textsuperscript{596} The militants increased their attacks on the government agencies, including ISI, Frontier Corps and army personnel.\textsuperscript{597} The tribal militants’ leader, Faqir, raised a force of around 6,000 fighters.\textsuperscript{598} The insurgents demolished more than half of the 72 checkposts.\textsuperscript{599} In addition, they occupied around 150 Pakistani military checkposts in the agency.\textsuperscript{600} The political administration of the agency was paralysed by rampant suicide bombings against civilians and government officials.\textsuperscript{601}

\section*{5.10 Disruption of the status quo and the onset of insurgency}

The government’s approach – characterised by the undermining of the authority of local elites and the use of brutal force – motivated the tribes to launch a rebellion. Military operations had been launched in haste under pressure from the United States without using previously successful methods of dealing with the tribes. Most notable was the launching of operations without consulting local leaders. Speaking of the military operations, the military commander in Miranshah said, “The insurgents have shifted to a new strategy of suicide attacks and have overcome their fear of martyrdom.” The military was ill-prepared to deal with such attacks and was forced to retreat.\textsuperscript{599} The tribal militants’ leadership was divided, with some militants advocating for a peaceful resolution while others were more aggressive.\textsuperscript{600} The government’s approach to dealing with the tribes was characterised by the undermining of the authority of local elites and the use of brutal force.\textsuperscript{601} The government’s approach was motivated by the need to protect the interests of the United States and to secure the country’s borders from threats posed by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.\textsuperscript{602} The military operations launched in response to these attacks were carried out with minimal consultation with local leaders, who were often left to deal with the aftermath of the attacks on their own.\textsuperscript{603} In response to the government’s approach, the tribal militants increased their attacks on the government agencies, including ISI, Frontier Corps and army personnel.\textsuperscript{604} The tribal militants’ leadership was divided, with some militants advocating for a peaceful resolution while others were more aggressive.\textsuperscript{605} The government’s approach to dealing with the tribes was characterised by the undermining of the authority of local elites and the use of brutal force.\textsuperscript{606} The government’s approach was motivated by the need to protect the interests of the United States and to secure the country’s borders from threats posed by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.\textsuperscript{607}
operations in the FATA, a retired army general commented, “As [U.S.] pressure on Pakistan mounted, the military rushed headlong into an ill-conceived military operation before regular political channels could be exhausted.”

A former director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Asad Durrani, asserted:

Military action was taken in haste. Regular channels of conflict resolution and dialogue should have taken precedence over the use of military force, which undermined the capacity of the administration and local tribesmen to neutralise, contain and de-weaponise the militants through non-military means.

Nek Mohammad, who laid the foundation of the tribal resistance against the government, stated that the military intervention had provoked them into resistance. The militants led by Nek Muhammad announced that they would continue to resist the permanent deployment of military troops in the FATA, and that their struggle was aimed at ending military interference in the area. Nek Muhammad emphasised that a return to non-interference by the army in tribal affairs could prevent further confrontations, saying, “The tribal Pashtun and the Pakistan Army should agree not to interfere in each other’s affairs and resolve to peacefully co-exist. That would ensure the status quo in terms of the special autonomous status of the tribal areas.”

The government lost the trust of the tribal leaders by launching military operations without consultation. Beena observed, “Had the tribal committees been given the chance to work out effective mechanisms, [to expel the foreign militants] such conflict might have been averted.” Rahimullah noted that “With the army taking things into its own hands, the political administration that manages the tribal areas through pro-government Malik or elders, jirgas and lashkars (armed volunteer force) has been rendered almost irrelevant.”

Undermining the status quo and the brutal use of force triggered the insurgency. Lt. Gen. Orakzai maintained that the Pakistani government’s approach rendered the traditional methods obsolete and the tribes were left with no option except to rebel against the government. Several knowledgeable people contended that the inclusion of the tribal elders through jirga, in accordance with local customs and traditions, might have prevented the commencement of rebellion from the tribes. Another scholar held

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603 Cited in Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 15.
605 Ibid.
606 Ibid.
607 Ibid.
608 Syeda Beena Butool, “Pakistani Responses to AfPak Policy,” 1019.
611 Yusufzai, “Issue: Another Truce.”
the government’s approach responsible for the commencement of insurgency. He argued that “For many others who might know the history and people of this region on our political periphery, it is sad to reflect how our state and the present government have gradually pushed the tribesmen into taking up arms.”

5.11 Conclusion

The detailed empirical information provided in this chapter establishes that the disruption of a decades-old status quo which had maintained peace between Islamabad and the FATA led to the insurgency. This explanation provides confirmation for the theoretical proposition of the second step of my theoretical model: that the disruption of a longstanding modus vivendi between local leaders and the central government in areas under weak state control is what leads to insurgency, rather than state weakness itself.

At the beginning of 2004, Washington exerted substantial pressure on Pakistan to conduct tough military operations in the FATA because of increasing attacks in Afghanistan from the region. In response, the Pakistani military carried out a number of military operations in the FATA, in three agencies in particular, without consulting tribal leaders. The intensive military intervention not only undermined the authority of the local leaders but also resulted in human rights abuses which led to the insurgency.

Military intervention and insurgency occurred at different times in each of the aforementioned agencies. Almost all of the FATA agencies, particularly South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur, received large numbers of Al Qaeda and other foreign militants after they were expelled from Afghanistan as a result of US attacks. The Pakistani military conducted military operations in the three agencies without taking into account the wishes and authority of local tribal leaders. The government further disrupted the status quo by arresting many tribal leaders and other local tribesmen, and by stopping the monetary allowances which had played a role in maintaining peace in the region. In addition, the military committed human rights abuses by using indiscriminate force that resulted in civilian casualties and damage to property. All these factors in combination led to the onset of the insurgency.

The Wazir tribes of South Waziristan were the first to rebel against the government in 2004. The Mehsud tribes of South Waziristan rebelled in early 2005 when the military forces launched intensive operations in their area. The insurgency erupted in North Waziristan in late 2005 and early 2006 after a heavy deployment of troops in different parts of the agency, followed by intensive search operations against the tribes. In the

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same way, insurgency in Bajaur did not arise until late 2006, despite the presence of
the foreign militants since 2001 and the existence of a local support network. The tribes
of the agency had pledged to support the government in the expulsion of the foreign
elements because the government had dealt with them in a way which respected the
authority of the tribal leaders and tribal autonomy. The rebellion occurred in Bajaur
when a drone attack on a seminary killed 80 students and the Pakistani government
accepted responsibility for this attack. This attack discredited the authority of the tribal
leaders and the tribal process. The local tribes perceived this act as jeopardising their
autonomy and showing disregard to the authority of the local leaders, thus giving rise to
the insurgency.

As a result of the nature of the military campaign, the insurgents operating in different
parts of the FATA coalesced to form an organisation named TTP in December 2007.
This enabled them to share resources and coordinate their activities against the
government. Within a few years, the insurgents were successful in establishing strong-
holds in some agencies of the FATA, especially South Waziristan, North Waziristan and
Bajaur. In addition, they also wielded their influence in other agencies of the FATA and
in some settled parts of Pakistan, such as Malakand division which was under the
regular control of the government. The next chapter argues that the government’s poor
counterinsurgency efforts in the following years enabled the TTP to develop into a
formidable force.
CHAPTER SIX: WEAK COUNTERINSURGENCY AND RISE OF REBELLION IN THE FATA [2004–2008]

6.1 Introduction

If the Pakistani government’s disruption of the status quo in the FATA helps explain the onset of rebellion, then the quality of the state’s counterinsurgency helps us understand the rebellion’s escalation. This chapter therefore elaborates the third step of my theoretical model: that weak counterinsurgency by a government tends to make an insurgency a more potent force. The chapter demonstrates that an ineffective counterinsurgency strategy by the Pakistani government allowed the FATA rebellion to grow. The FATA insurgents not only established control in some agencies, especially Bajuar, South Waziristan and North Waziristan; they also vied for influence in the settled areas of Pakistan such as Swat.

This chapter discusses the various elements of the Pakistani government’s counterinsurgency strategy that allowed the FATA insurgency to escalate. The theoretical literature discussed in Chapter Two guides the analysis of the deficiencies in the government’s counterinsurgency approach. Firstly, I explain how the Pakistani government lacked the political will to seriously take on the FATA insurgency. I demonstrate that the fact that Pakistan was pressured to join the United States-led alliance in the war on terror meant that the government had an indifferent attitude to countering the FATA insurgency. The chapter then moves on to discuss how the Pakistani government’s approach of using conventional forces, compounded by a lack of interest in developing a counterinsurgency doctrine and skills, proved counterproductive in fighting the insurgency. The indiscriminate use of military force caused civilian damage that helped the insurgents to gain recruits from the affected population and contributed to strengthening the insurgency. The chapter then turns to discuss how insufficient or incompetent local security forces, who were unable to defend the local population, allowed the insurgents to gain hold of the population. Finally, the chapter contends that the Pakistani government’s strategy of conducting negotiations from a position of weakness after failed military operations against insurgents, allowed the latter to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the local population; support which they then utilised to become stronger. I contend that a combination of these misguided approaches explains the rise of the FATA insurgency.
6.2 Establishment of the TTP and growing insurgent activities

A number of small and disparate militant groups operating in different parts of the FATA coalesced to form Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in December 2007, under the leadership of the South Waziristan-based Baitullah Mehsud. After the TTP’s formation, the insurgents not only succeeded in establishing a stronghold in the FATA, but also projected their influence into the settled parts of the country adjacent to the tribal areas. For example, in April 2009 an affiliated group of the TTP took control of Buner, a key district in the Malakkand division located in the environs of the Swat Valley, approximately only 170 kilometres away from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan.613 This unsurprisingly generated serious concerns within Pakistan, and also in the United States, that the insurgents might gain access to Pakistan's 60–100 nuclear weapons.614

The establishment of the TTP marked the real onset of insurgency against the Pakistani state. There was an escalation of insurgent attacks on the security forces. A month after the establishment of the TTP, the group attacked the Sararogha Fort in South Waziristan, killing scores of security personnel and capturing the fort.615 The militants also ambushed a convoy of paramilitary FC forces, killing 22 soldiers, in the Loisam area of Bajaur Agency.616 In another instance, Baitullah-led militants captured 242 Pakistani soldiers in an ambush in South Waziristan. This was regarded as the most humiliating moment for the Pakistani army thus far.617 The military later recovered these soldiers, but only after the reciprocal release of 24 militants, some of whom had been convicted of planning suicide bombings. “This was a bitter pill that we had to swallow”, one senior military officer later said.618 The TTP was emboldened by its achievements and proclaimed in 2008 they would take the war out of the tribal areas into the rest of Pakistan. A statement by the TTP read:

if a war is imposed on us [by Pakistan], we will take this war out of tribal areas and NWFP to the rest of the country and will attack security forces and important government functionaries in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and other big cities.619

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613 See the editorial "60 Miles From Islamabad," New York Times, April 26, 2009.
618 Ibid.
Why did the FATA insurgency grow to such a large and devastating size? I will now demonstrate that the insurgency was given the opportunity to grow by a range of poor counterinsurgency steps by the Pakistani government and military.

6.3 Pakistan’s weak counterinsurgency in the FATA

An ineffective counterinsurgency strategy by the Pakistani government was largely responsible for allowing the TTP to grow in size and strength. The Pakistani regime, led by President Musharraf, became part of the United States-led war against terrorism, partly under coercion from Washington and partly due to its own strategic interests. The Pakistani government largely believed that they were forced into fighting the US war.620 The majority of the Pakistani public was also sceptical about whether the country was fighting its own war. The majority believed that President Pervez Musharraf was fighting America’s war.621 Until approximately 2007, they did not see the FATA insurgency as a critical threat to Pakistan’s national interests.622

The Pakistani government suffered from a lack of clarity and commitment in fighting the insurgency. The government employed an ad hoc strategy involving the excessive use of force, followed by peace negotiations with the insurgents. Indiscriminate and extreme use of force alienated the larger population, and peace deals and cessations in fighting only allowed the insurgents to gain strength and confidence.623 The poor counterinsurgency practices allowed the FATA insurgency to take off. David Kilcullen ascribed Pakistan’s failed counterinsurgency to: 1) excessive use of force focussing on enemy targeting; 2) overuse of large-scale multi-unit forces (mostly brigade level) instead of smaller units disseminated among the population; 3) deployment of forces to static garrisons or defensive positions rather than proactive actions; 4) lacking quick reaction forces to deal with contingencies; 5) over-reliance on kinetic ‘direct-action’ operations and heavy firepower; and finally 6) a lesser use of local forces’ capacity and knowledge.624 This study supports Killcullen only partially. It goes beyond Killcullen’s assertions and bring into consideration more factors responsible for Pakistan’s poor counterinsurgency performance. A detailed discussion of Pakistan’s weak counterinsurgency strategy and escalation of the FATA insurgency follows.

6.4 Lack of political will

As discussed in Chapter Two, the absence or lack of strong political may potentially lead to a failed counterinsurgency campaign. The local population's support for the government will be forthcoming only once they are convinced that the government has “the will, the means, and the ability to win” against the insurgents. If the people perceive the imminent defeat of the government, it is very unlikely for the local people to oppose insurgents. The Pakistani government lacked a strong political will and that provided the insurgency with the opportunity to grow.

Pakistan's lack of political will can best be explained by examining the government's motivations in joining the United States-led war against terrorism. Pakistan was quite reluctant to join the US alliance in Afghanistan. The decision was ultimately taken under duress because the military regime realised that any refusal to comply with the US demands would risk Pakistan itself becoming a target state. Moreover, India also appeared to be another crucial factor in Pakistan's decision to be part of the international coalition. Bruce Riedel, contended, “The decision to reverse a decade of Pakistani policy in Afghanistan was a result of the underlying Pakistani concern about India.” Even President Musharraf mentioned India while explaining Pakistan's decision to align with the United States. He stated:

I also analyzed our national interest. First, India had already tried to step in by offering its bases to the US. If we did not join the US, it would accept India's offer. What would happen then? India would gain a golden opportunity with regard to Kashmir. . . . Second, the security of our strategic assets would be jeopardized. We did not want to lose or damage the military parity that we had achieved with India by becoming a nuclear weapons state.

Furthermore, US financial and military assistance greatly induced Pakistan to side with them. To reward and entice Pakistani cooperation, Washington removed economic sanctions inflicted on Pakistan because of the 1998 nuclear tests and the military takeover in 1999. In addition, under the Economic Support Fund (ESF), the United States reduced Pakistan's bilateral debt by US$1 billion in the 2003 financial year (FY) and US$460 million in FY 2004. Moreover, the United States rewarded Pakistan with

626 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 55.
628 Ahmad, “Post 9/11 Foreign Policy of Pakistan,” 3.
630 "President Musharraf Address to the Nation."

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US$3 billion in cash support and another US$3 billion of loans were written off. The United States also rescheduled Pakistan’s debt of $12.5 billion dollars for the next 38 years.

Pakistan also received substantial US military assistance through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programmes and the Coalition Support Fund (CSF). A large portion of this assistance was spent by Pakistan on the procurement of major US weapons systems. In November 2004, the Pentagon approved three major FMF sales to Pakistan including eight P-3C maritime reconnaissance aircraft, 2,000 TOW anti-armour missiles, and six Phalanx naval guns. Between FY 2002 and FY 2007, the United States approved more than $9.7 billion worth of weapons sales to Pakistan.

Pakistan thereby emerged as one of the largest recipients of US assistance. The United States designated Pakistan as a “major non-NATO ally” (MNNA) of the United States in June 2004. This act allowed Pakistan to access a range of military and financial benefits. In July 2006, the Bush administration announced a substantial US$5.1 billion arms package for Pakistan that included 36 F-16 fighter jets, armaments, and upgrades for its existing fleet of F-16s. But some US officials expressed concerns that Pakistan might use the US supplied high-tech weapons during a conflict with India. However, a US State Department document acknowledged that Pakistan’s support “has been, and remains, critical to United States success in apprehending al-Qaida, Taliban, and other terrorists.”

Pakistan also reaped a significant amount of money in the form of Coalition Support Funds (CSF). The US Congress approved billions of dollars for Pakistan to provide physical support to the United States-led counterterrorism operations. Pakistan received almost US$6.7 billion in total, or an average of US$79 million per month from the CSF, until January 2009. The Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, justified this money by reference to Pakistan carrying out almost 100 army operations in the tribal areas, in addition to deployment of around 100,000 Pakistani troops in North-West Pakistan.

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641 “U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2007.”
Another official, Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for the National Security Adviser, emphasised, “Pakistan’s cooperation is very important in the global war on terror and for our operations in Afghanistan.”

Pakistan joining the United States-led coalition was primarily motivated by financial as well as strategic interests linked with the United States and India. As a result, the government was less inclined to pursue terrorists with real intent. To secure its strategic interests, Pakistan had taken actions against the militants hiding in the tribal areas, but these measures were lacking in sincerity and serious intent. Pakistan targeted some groups especially Al Qaeda and other foreign militants, but spared some other groups such as the Afghan Taliban. They continued to distinguish among militant groups operating in the FATA. Most US military aid was spent on purchasing weapons used for conventional warfare, not for counterinsurgency. A renowned expert on the FATA, Ahmed Rashid, stated, “More than 80 percent of the $10 billion in United States aid to Pakistan since the Sept. 11 attacks has gone to the military; much of it has been used to buy expensive weapons systems for the Indian front rather than the smaller items needed for counterinsurgency.”

Even Pakistan’s security agencies were believed to have sympathy for some groups whom they considered useful for fighting in Afghanistan and Kashmir. An expert, Jones, asserted, “Not only did Pakistan refuse to target some militant organizations, but some elements in the ISI, Frontier Corps, and military continued to back some of them.” Some US officials alleged that Pakistan’s intelligence agency (ISI) had provided support to some militant groups that attacked the United States-led forces in Afghanistan; although, the Pakistani government refuted these contentions. Aqil Shah maintained:

While the military and other security agencies have cooperated with the United States against al-Qaeda fugitives, the security establishment’s track record when it comes to controlling the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban has been less encouraging. Whatever resolve the military might harbor to deal firmly with the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban is trumped by the army’s perceived need to retain ties to the Taliban as an insurance policy against Indian influence in Afghanistan.

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645 C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, Counterinsurgency in Pakistan, 83.
646 Ibid.
This practice of targeting some groups and leaving others undermined the government’s ability to establish law and order. Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, former Director General of Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR), acknowledged that Pakistan’s discriminatory approach towards various militant groups in the FATA ultimately helped the insurgency to grow stronger.\textsuperscript{649}

Pakistan’s security forces also lacked motivation to fight the insurgency because of a lack of public support. The majority of Pakistanis, especially the tribal people, opposed Pakistan’s alliance with the United States and considered the military’s raids in the FATA as part of an “American war.”\textsuperscript{650} Lacking larger public support, the security forces appeared demoralised and unwilling to fight their compatriots. For instance, some 250 Pakistani army and paramilitary troops surrendered to the insurgents without a fight in South Waziristan.\textsuperscript{651} A local resident of Bajaur Agency explained the indifferent attitude of the government over the growing power of the insurgents:

They [insurgents] burnt schools, destroyed hospitals, and by doing this they completely destroyed the places which were for the benefit of the people. . . The government was watching everything that the militants were doing, including destroying security forces pickets, roads, and bridges. But the government didn’t do anything. Then Bajaur Agency became completely under the control of the Taliban. Even then the government didn’t do anything.\textsuperscript{652}

At the beginning of the counterinsurgency campaign, the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC), predominantly Pashtun, was at the forefront of fighting the insurgency because of their local knowledge of the terrain and customs. The FC soldiers had ethnic ties with the local insurgents that bound them more tightly to the tribesmen than to the Punjabi military forces. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when the FC was used in the earlier phases of counterinsurgency operations, “it suffered from large-scale desertion, surrender and loss of morale.”\textsuperscript{653}

Furthermore, due to the absence of strong will, the counterinsurgency campaign was largely inconsistent in its response to the growing insurgency. Jones explained the weaknesses of Pakistan’s initial counterinsurgency operations: “Pakistan’s operations were not sustained over time. Pakistani efforts were marked by sweeps, searches, and occasional bloody battles, but none of these employed enough forces to hold

\textsuperscript{649} Former DG Inter-Services Public Relations, Maj. General retired, Athar Abbas (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{650} Ayaz Wazir, a former ambassador and resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, November 4, 2013.
\textsuperscript{651} Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 17.
\textsuperscript{652} Interview with a graduate student, Bajaur Agency, FATA. Cited in Amnesty International, As If Hell Fell on Me: The Human Rights Crisis in Northwest Pakistan (London: Amnesty International, 2010), 53.
In addition, the Pakistani government’s repeatedly accommodating policies towards the insurgents exhibited a lack of seriousness. Up until late 2008, even after the establishment of the TTP in December 2007, the Pakistani government did not see the FATA insurgency as a serious challenge to the state.

While Pakistani officials were well aware of the insurgents’ advances in establishing a parallel authority in the FATA, they largely viewed the insurgency as a “threat to be contained, not defeated.” Military actions against the FATA insurgents were usually “incomplete, inconclusive and, at times, appeared insincere.” Moreover, a lack of coordination between multiple security agencies, including regular army units, the paramilitary Frontier Corps as well as military intelligence agencies, also undermined the operation. “It seems like every agency is running its own shop with constant back and forth from the corps commander to the governor and back”, said Brig. (Retd.) A.R. Siddiqi.

6.5 Use of conventional forces

As stated earlier in the theory chapter, counterinsurgency warfare is significantly different from conventional warfare. Frank Kitson argued that “The qualities required for fighting conventional war are different from those required for dealing with subversion or insurgency.” A conventional force is therefore quite incapable of fighting insurgency. Fighting insurgency through conventional force may cause great military losses. Moreover, the use of conventional force hardly distinguishes between common people and insurgents, which may potentially result in serious damage to the civilian population and create more grievances against government forces. This can potentially harm the counterinsurgency campaign.

Roger Trinuier contended that the French counterinsurgency operations in Indochina and Algeria failed primarily because of the French forces’ failure to adapt to becoming a counterinsurgency force. Similarly, John Nagl attributed the British army’s success in counterinsurgency in Malaya to its rapid learning of counterinsurgency techniques, whereas the failure of America’s counterinsurgency in Vietnam was associated with its inability to learn the techniques of counterinsurgency warfare.

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654 C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, 54.
656 Ibid., 76.
657 Cited in International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 15.
The Pakistan Government’s initial counterinsurgency campaign in the FATA was counterproductive because of the use of conventional forces. The Pakistani army is a conventional force that is primarily trained and equipped to fight a conventional war with India. Pakistan’s army was ill-prepared for counterinsurgency warfare. Previous wars with India had involved operations across the plains of Punjab. An observer of the FATA insurgency, Aqil, contended that “trained for a conventional war with India, the army was ill equipped to wage a counterinsurgency campaign.” To adapt to counterinsurgency warfare, a major reorientation was needed in Pakistan’s strategic thinking which had traditionally put India as the country’s main security threat. Moreover, it dictated a change in arms procurement policies and reform in the military’s curriculum.

However, Pakistan remained quite reluctant to change its forces’ orientation from a conventional to a counterinsurgency force. The Pakistani military’s inability or unwillingness to undergo a complete transformation of its forces to adapt to counterinsurgency warfare was partly due to its consistent fear of a superior Indian army, and partly to lack of resources and time. Sameer explained that the Pakistani military’s inability to adapt to counterinsurgency was “because of its sheer difficulty, [and due to] the prohibitive costs in money and manpower, organizational lags, and substantial trade-offs with Pakistani grand strategy and military doctrine.”

The then chief of army staff, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani refused offers from the US military and NATO officials to retrain or reequip troops to fight the counterinsurgency war. He stated that the bulk of the army would remain deployed along the eastern border to defend Pakistan against its arch-rival India. US intelligence assessments also raised serious concerns over Pakistan’s capability to fight insurgency successfully. As one US Defence Intelligence Assessment (DIA) concluded:

Pakistan lacks the transport and attack helicopters and upgraded communication gear needed to prosecute more effective and sophisticated counter-insurgency operations. Much of the Pakistani army also lacks the knowledge and language skills required to successfully operate across the tribal frontier’s complicated cultural terrain.

661 C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, Counterinsurgency in Pakistan, 37.
662 Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 22.
665 Rashid, “Pakistan's Worrisome Pullback.”
666 See Michael D. Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate” (February 2008), 22; Michael D. Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate” (March 2009), 12.
Furthermore, locally recruited paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) forces initially spearheaded the fight with the insurgents because of the sensitivity of the Pashtun towards the deployment of regular troops from the pre-dominantly ethnic Punjabi army. As discussed above, the FC was therefore poorly motivated because of this ethnic factor.\textsuperscript{667} They also seriously lacked training and modern weapons. The US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessment noted, “Frontier Corps troops understand the culture and region better and speak the local language, they have even less equipment and less training than the military.”\textsuperscript{668}

The conventional army of Pakistan, equipped with tanks and artillery and aided by aircrafts, was inept at fighting against the insurgents who were skilled in guerrilla warfare.\textsuperscript{669} There were high casualties amongst both the army and the Frontier Corps because of their inadequate counterinsurgency skills. The army lost hundreds of soldiers during military operations in the FATA in 2004.\textsuperscript{670} A Western estimate claimed that the Pakistani military lost 70 percent of its battles with the insurgents.\textsuperscript{671} Ghosh explained the causes of these failures, as such:

Nobody can expect soldiers and their leaders to be instant experts in all types of warfare. Fighting through such terrain demands very different skills to those required in an armored advance. These skills can be acquired, but not overnight; it was extremely unwise to commit troops to footslogging, ambush-prone, classic frontier warfare without extensive and lengthy preparation.\textsuperscript{672}

### 6.6 Indiscriminate use of force

Fighting insurgency through repressive measures can potentially make the population hostile to the counterinsurgents. As Weinstein argued, “Indiscriminate violence can drive civilians into the waiting arms of rebel groups ... Extreme levels of state violence often leaves civilians no other option than to join the insurgents.”\textsuperscript{673} Another expert, Zaidi, contended, “The myopic use of a firepower-intensive approach is a classic flaw in counter-insurgency campaigns, and its indiscriminate use uniquely alienates the target population.”

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{667} Weinbaum, “Hard Choices in Countering Insurgency,” 77.
  \item \textsuperscript{668} Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate,” 22; Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate,” 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{669} Samarjit Ghosh, “Insurgency in the FATA & NWFP: Challenges & Prospects for the Pakistan Army,” Manekshaw Paper, No. 6, Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), 2008, 16.
  \item \textsuperscript{671} “Pakistan and the Taliban: A Real Offensive or a Phony War?,” The Economist, April 30, 2009.
  \item \textsuperscript{672} Ghosh, “Insurgency in the FATA & NWFP: Challenges & Prospects for the Pakistan Army,” 18.
\end{itemize}
In a similar vein, Constantin Melnik argued that “It is necessary to eliminate the negative feelings on which the insurgency is based. However, the use of force and violence runs the risk of increasing these same negative feelings.”

Indiscriminate or excessive use of force in a counterinsurgency campaign is highly counter-productive. Frank Kitson contended that the indiscriminate use of force tends to alienate civilian populations and can potentially harm the counterinsurgency campaign. With a traditional outlook focused solely on fighting a conventional war against India, based on physical destruction and military infrastructure, the Pakistani army adopted an improvised strategy to deal with the insurgency. No efforts were made to change the forces’ orientation towards counterinsurgency practices. Seriously lacking skills and experience in counterinsurgency operations, Pakistan’s military mainly relied on heavy use of force to counter insurgency and that proved counterproductive. Zaidi maintained that, “Conventional warfare has tended to shape the trajectories of Pakistani COIN operations, which had proved unsuccessful.”

Similarly, Kilcullen maintained that in challenging the insurgency the Pakistani army “applied a heavily ‘kinetic’, firepower-based approach,” i.e. heavy use of airpower and artillery.

In addition, during operations, the military resorted to despotic methods involving arbitrary arrests, unfair detentions, economic blockades and the destruction of property. Hasan Abbas termed the Pakistan army’s brutal way of dealing with the tribes in the FATA as reminiscent of the means employed by the army in 1971 in East Pakistan, which later seceded from Pakistan and established an independent country named Bangladesh. A military operation in South Waziristan in 2004 caused heavy collateral damage. A principal of a Public High School in Shin Warsak reflected on the devastation of the school: “Seven rooms completely destroyed. Three other rooms were partially damaged, doors and windows had been shot open with bullets, and documents were littered all over the place. It appeared that our soldiers had conquered my school.” A local tribesman explained the desperation of the tribesmen over the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the military forces: “Tribal people are

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674 Zaidi, “Pakistan’s Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency,” 15.
677 Zaidi, “Pakistan’s Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency.”
678 Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 22.
679 Zaidi, “Pakistan’s Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency,” 15.
angry. Their houses and villages are being attacked. They have no option but to fight back.\footnote{Ismail Khan, “Govt Announces Ceasefire: Jirga to Negotiate Militants’ Surrender,” \textit{Dawn}, March 22, 2004.}

The local people of the FATA affirmed that military operations caused a lot of collateral damage and killed many innocent tribesmen.\footnote{Zaidi, “Pakistan’s Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency,” 10.} During a military operation at the beginning of 2008 in South Waziristan, over 4,000 houses owned by local people were demolished. In addition, more than 60 government school buildings, healthcare centres, telecommunication facilities, and electricity and other infrastructure were also destroyed.\footnote{“Over 4,000 Houses Destroyed in Waziristan Operation: Report,” \textit{Dawn}, November 8, 2008.} Similarly in an operation in Bajaur, over 2,000 houses were destroyed and scores of civilian causalities occurred.\footnote{Anwarullah Khan, “Four-Day Truce Sparks Jubilation in Bajaur,” \textit{Dawn}, February 25, 2009.} Pakistan’s military operations inflicted heavy human and economic losses on the local tribesmen and created strong feelings of alienation.\footnote{International Crisis Group, “Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA,” \textit{Asia Report No. 178}, October 2009, 1.}

The use of conventional force caused serious damage to the lives and property of the local tribesmen that translated into local sympathy for insurgents. Marvin Weinbaum noted that “Heavy-handed military operations always threaten to create additional recruits to militant groups and evoke public sympathy.”\footnote{Weinbaum, “Hard Choices in Countering Insurgency,” 78.} The tribesmen’s alienation translated into sympathy for and cooperation with the insurgents. Moreover, bombardment of the tribal people by long-range artillery guns and Cobra helicopter gunships enraged them and facilitated recruitment by the rebel leaders. Shah explained that “indiscriminate use of force caused numerous civilian casualties”, that aroused the local tribes’ ire and pushed them towards the rebels for protection.\footnote{Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 22.} A former federal law minister described the military’s despotic methods as responsible for fuelling insurgency. He said, “There is seething anger amongst the locals which might well be fuelling support for the militants amongst even those who were otherwise indifferent and whose support could have been critical to the success of the anti-terrorist campaign.”\footnote{International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 15.}

These atrocities were successfully exploited by the insurgent leaders to mobilise local support and create disdain towards the army. A key leader of TTP once said, “If the goal of the Pakistani Army is to make a helpless people cry, make orphans cry, force the displacement of the population, orphan children, martyr old and young men, humiliate the people, and bomb madaris and mosques, then it has achieved its target.”\footnote{Qazi, “Rebels of the Frontier,” 595.} Many young tribesmen joined the insurgents’ ranks, predominantly to exact
retribution for the deaths of family members killed during the indiscriminate bombing of by the army, and despite not approving of the insurgents' ideology. An observer of the FATA insurgency, Aqil Shah, explained that Pakistani army's conventional way of fighting insurgency helped the insurgents’ cause. He said, “Its [Pakistani military] heavy use of artillery and helicopter gunships failed to “flush out” militants or deny them sanctuary. Instead, the indiscriminate use of force caused numerous civilian casualties, angering locals and thus helping the insurgents.”

Similarly, the US forces’ use of Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAVs) to shoot Hellfire missiles at targets inside the FATA is also believed to have caused significant collateral damage, including the death of innocent women and children. This created severe resentment and inflamed anti-US and anti-Pakistan feelings. According to the New America Foundation, between 2004 and 2010, 158 UAV attacks were carried out, causing between 311 to 530 civilian deaths. Other sources reported over 700 civilian deaths in these attacks in 2009 alone. The attacks were considered an important factor in motivating the locals to join the insurgents’ camps in the FATA. This can be best understood through a statement given by Baitullah Mehsud, the most ferocious leader of the TTP, who said, “I spent three months trying to recruit and got only 10–15 persons. One United States attack and I got 150 volunteers!”

6.7 A weak police force

Apart from the military and paramilitary forces, the role of local security forces is believed to be an important factor in deterring or fighting insurgency. A counterinsurgency campaign appears weak when local security forces, such as the police, are incompetent and ill-equipped. The use of military forces is not always possible because of the frequent mobility of insurgent forces. In contrast to the military forces, the police are permanently stationed locally, enabling them to have a better understanding of the threat environment and better local intelligence.

Furthermore, counterinsurgency efforts are often ineffective if the local security forces fail to provide security for local people against the predations of the insurgents. The pursuit of personal safety by the local population appears to be an influential factor in determining their support for either insurgents or counterinsurgents. Inability of the

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692 Ibid.
693 Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 22.
694 Nawaz, FATA — A Most Dangerous Place, 15.
695 Qazi, “Rebels of the Frontier,” 595.
696 Nawaz, FATA — A Most Dangerous Place, 18.
697 Jones, Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, 10.
698 Ibid., 16.
local security forces to provide security to the local population forces the latter to acquiesce to insurgents’ rule.\textsuperscript{700} Local people tend to support the insurgents to avoid any harm by them. Accordingly, support of the local population is a precondition for the defeat of an insurgency. \textsuperscript{701}

Weak police forces in the FATA were simply incapable of providing security to the local people, or fighting the insurgents. As discussed earlier, the Pakistani government had traditionally had weak control of the FATA region. The strength of the local security forces had for a long time been minimal because the tribes themselves were responsible for the security of the tribal territory. In addition, the local security forces had inept training and lacked modern and sophisticated weapons. These local forces proved inefficient and ineffective when the insurgents started challenging the writ of the state. Moreover, the local forces were not capable of providing security to the local people. Many people who were not initially aligned with the insurgents began to be.

The police in the FATA broadly consisted of three forces: the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC), the dominant actor in law enforcement; tribal levies (official tribal militias); and khassadars (tribal police). In addition, the Frontier Constabulary, an armed police force, also operated in an area bordering the FATA and the settled districts. These security forces had poor training and lacked modern weaponry. For example, the Frontier Corps was described as poorly “equipped and badly trained”. \textsuperscript{702} An American scholar, Fair, affirmed that the FC was “inadequately trained and equipped and has been ill-prepared” to protect the indigenous people. \textsuperscript{703}

Similarly, the levies were supplied with small arms and little ammunition, whereas khassadars used their own weapons. \textsuperscript{704} They were also underpaid. For example, levies were paid a monthly salary of Rs. 3,500 (roughly US$43). \textsuperscript{705} It is not surprising that these inadequately equipped, poorly trained and underpaid security forces were unable to maintain law and order and provide protection to the local population. It was only after July 2009 that the government paid attention and began to enhance the strength and the professional capacity of khassadars and levies to prepare them to control areas after the military operations had cleared them of insurgents. Both forces were promised better salaries and improved equipment and training. \textsuperscript{706}

\textsuperscript{701} Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 8,16,54.
\textsuperscript{702} Rashid, “Pakistan’s Worrisome Pullback.”
\textsuperscript{704} Group, “Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA,” 17.
\textsuperscript{706} Ibid.
The growing power of the insurgents and the inability of local forces to take action against them created an environment of fear and insecurity in the FATA. This was particularly the case in North and South Waziristan and Bajaur, where the militants had a strong presence. Fear of the local militants contributed significantly to local acceptance of the insurgents’ rule. Furthermore, the local militants killed many maliks and tribal elders who opposed their rule, or cooperated with the government. This further weakened the existing administrative system and enhanced the status of the local militants in the area. The Interior Minister, Aftab Sherpao, reported to the cabinet that, as of April 2006, the Taliban had killed 150 pro-government maliks in both Waziristan agencies.

Instead of accepting that it was a government failure for not providing security to the tribal elders and maliks, the army officials maintained that the maliks’ assassinations had resulted from tribal rivalries, and not because the state had coopted these maliks. The government’s irresponsible attitude towards the security of the local population further annoyed the tribesmen. In addition, it provided ample opportunity to the insurgents to gain influence over the local population. Ahmed Rashid discussed the military’s failure to provide protection to the local people and the ultimate control of the insurgents, noting that:

FATA is now almost entirely controlled by the Pakistani Taliban militias [FATA insurgents]. . . . The last few years the Army has failed to protect tribal elders, civil society professionals like teachers and doctors, and local people who were all opposed to the Taliban. As a result these people have either been killed by the Taliban or they have fled. . . . The result is that the Pakistani Taliban is in total control.

Unchecked by the local security forces, the local militants established parallel administrations in some of the FATA agencies. They organised committees to collect funds, impose taxes on businesses and enforced punishments on local offenders. A well-informed resident of North Waziristan observed, “The [Pakistani] Taliban have established summary trial courts and police the area under their control.” A local journalist observed that the insurgents were recruiting, training and raising money with impunity. Fair explained the rise of the insurgents and their growing control over the local population, maintaining that:

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707 A journalist from North Waziristan, Safdar Dawar (Peshawar), interview by author, January 22, 2014.
711 International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,” 23.
712 A journalist from North Waziristan, Safdar Dawar (Peshawar), interview by author, January 22, 2014.
local militants gradually became a parallel government in the tribal areas.... The traditional *jirga* was formally banned. In its place, aggrieved parties had to seek intervention from the Taliban representative in their village, who performed the functions of police officer, administrator, and judge. Local militants...banned music stores, videos, and televisions and issued edicts that men had to grow beards. They also continued to target pro-government tribal elders, forcing many to flee.  

The local militants often boasted about their growing power. They claimed that “The Taliban [insurgents] in Waziristan are capturing hearts and minds. We see the tribes who were struggling for tens of years accepting arbitration by Taliban [insurgents].”  

6.8 Peace deals as a sign of weakness

As discussed in the theory chapter, negotiations with insurgents without destroying their power may also allow an insurgency to grow and get stronger. Negotiation with insurgents from a position of government weakness is likely to be interpreted by insurgents as a sign of weakness that may embolden them. The Pakistani military signed various peace agreements with the FATA insurgents that provided the latter with enough time and opportunity to consolidate their position. Historically, counterinsurgency campaigns have mostly proven to be more costly, protracted and difficult than estimated at the planning stage. This may have driven the Pakistani government to choose to pursue negotiations. Moreover, conducting military operations in the tribal areas was quite challenging due to the ideological and physical proximity with Afghanistan, as well as “entrenched kinship, tribal bonds, and hostile terrain.”

The inept and ineffective military operation described above caused significant military losses, leading to the government decision to initiate negotiations with the insurgents. An eminent local journalist, Safdar Dawar, maintained that the majority of the military operations were hasty and short-lived, and the larger military campaigns remained mostly inconclusive and ended with the signing of peace agreements. The military brokered peace agreements with the tribal militants in South Waziristan in 2004 and 2005, and in North Waziristan in 2006. After the peace agreements, the government stopped military operations, freed captured militants and announced an amnesty for foreign militants, predicated on conditions such as their registration with the government.

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713 C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, 55.
714 Cited in ibid., 56.
716 Zaidi, “Pakistan’s Anti-Taliban Counter-Insurgency,” 13.
717 A journalist from North Waziristan, Safdar Dawar (Peshawar), interview by author, January 22, 2014.
and the surrendering of weapons. In return, the tribal militants made commitments to the government to renounce violence and refrain from attacking the Pakistani military, as well as cross-border attacks in Afghanistan. However, the tribal militants did not maintain their pledges and soon resumed insurgent activities.

The peace agreements served only to enhance the insurgents’ control over the territory in exchange for fake promises to stop attacking the government’s installations and troops. An eminent scholar, Marvin Weinbaum, contended that “No means were provided to enforce deals, and the Pakistani government accepted at face-value pledges by militants.”\(^{718}\) In addition, Pakistan’s negotiating approach had a fundamental problem: “All the agreements [with insurgents] were reached from a position of government weakness rather than strength.”\(^{719}\) Aqil Shah explained how the Pakistani military strategy of making peace agreements provided the militants with the necessary time to strengthen themselves:

> By giving amnesty to militants and capitulating to their demands, these accords clearly emboldened them to create Taliban-style administrative and judicial structures in the tribal agencies, from which they are now busy spreading their influence into other tribal agencies and the rest of the NWFP.\(^{720}\)

Discussion of the various peace agreements between the government and the insurgents follows.

### 6.8.1 Shakai peace agreement – 2004 (South Waziristan Agency)

After a failed military operation where the army suffered huge losses, the military signed the first peace agreement with the local militant leader, Nek Muhammad, on 24 April 2004.\(^{721}\) During the negotiations, Nek Muhammad put several demands before the government such as the withdrawal of military forces from South Waziristan, compensation for the losses suffered by local people and the release of 163 tribesmen arrested during the military operations.\(^{722}\)

The ensuing agreement further weakened the government’s writ. An eminent journalist, Rahimullah, maintained that the tribal militants chose a time of obvious Pakistani military weakness to formalise the agreement.\(^{723}\) Almost all of the demands were accepted by the government. The peace agreement, also known as the Shakai deal,

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\(^{718}\) Weinbaum, “Hard Choices in Countering Insurgency,” 76.


\(^{720}\) Aqil Shah, “Pakistan After Musharraf,” 23.

\(^{721}\) Fayyaz, “Towards A Durable Peace in Waziristan.”

\(^{722}\) Christine Fair and Jones, “Pakistan’s War Within,” 170–171.

\(^{723}\) Yusufzai, “Militancy: All That Ends Well.”
was signed in the main madrassa in Shakai in the north of Wana, South Waziristan. The following clauses emerged from the agreement that was verbal, not written:

1. The government will release the captured militants before and during the military operation in the area. This led to the release of around 160 militants.
2. The government will pay compensation for the shuhada (martyred/injured persons) as well as for the collateral damage resulting during the military operation.
3. The government will refrain from taking action against Nek Muhammad and other wanted militants.
4. The government will permit foreign mujahideen (foreign fighters) to live peacefully in Waziristan.
5. Mujahideen-e-Waziristan (fighters from Waziristan) will abstain from taking any action against the land and government of Pakistan as well as against Afghanistan.\(^\text{724}\)

The agreement did not use the term ‘surrender’ and it read as “reconciliation between estranged brothers.”\(^\text{725}\) This reconciliation was construed by the tribal people as the “army’s tacit acceptance of their opponents as equally powerful and legitimate.”\(^\text{726}\) Nek Muhammad “pledged his allegiance to a state that barely ruled the FATA anyway.”\(^\text{727}\)

The militants did not surrender weapons, which were rather ‘offered’ to the military as a ceremonial gesture. In addition, the deal-making ceremony was held at a madrassa near Wana, a place chosen by the tribal militants, which showed the militants had the upper hand.\(^\text{728}\) This was taken by the local people as surrender by the army, rather than by the tribal militants. The tribal militants’ leader Nek Mohammad boasted later that “I did not go to them, they came to my place. That should make it clear who surrendered to whom.”\(^\text{729}\) Nek Muhammad negotiated the deal from a position of strength because he had emerged victorious in his fight with the military. “Pakistan’s army was in a weak situation on the ground, and it was an inappropriate time to opt for a negotiated deal,” according to an expert on the FATA.\(^\text{730}\)

As a result, the agreement played a role in the escalation of the insurgency. The tribal militants achieved legitimacy and a higher standing than the traditional tribal leaders in the eyes of the local population. A scholar, Hassan Abbas, contended, “Pakistan’s

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\(^{724}\) Fayyaz, “Towards A Durable Peace in Waziristan.”
\(^{726}\) Christine Fair and Jones, “Pakistan’s War Within,” 171.
\(^{727}\) Puri, Pakistan’s War on Terrorism, 56.
government had accorded them an elevated status by engaging them in negotiations directly.\footnote{ibid., 17.} The tribal militants felt emboldened after the peace agreement and continued to provide shelter to the foreign militants and to assist them in attacking the coalition forces in Afghanistan. The government maintained that the tribesmen had pledged to hand over foreign militants, while the militants denied making any such commitment. Nek Muhammad reiterated his pledge to continue to fight against US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan.\footnote{A local resident of South Waziristan (Peshawar), interview by author, February 5, 2014.} He laid the foundation for defiance against the state by becoming a role model for young radicals of the area. In June 2004, he was killed by a US missile strike near Wana.\footnote{Ismail Khan and Dilawar Khan Wazir, “Night Raid Kills Nek, Four Other Militants,” \textit{Dawn}, June 19, 2004.} However, the insurgency continued to grow in the coming years as the release of the militants stipulated in the deal proved lethal, accelerating the pace of insurgency and intensity of violence. President Musharaf, reflecting on the motivation for making a peace deal with the militants and its failure, said in an interview in 2006:

I think that it did not prove good. But one must not speak with hindsight. You have to apply all instruments. We thought if we reached an agreement that would be the end of it. No, it proved wrong, because the people who got involved on the other side, they double-crossed.\footnote{“President Musharaff Interview on PBS Documentary ‘Frontline: The Return of the Taliban,’” October 3, 2006, www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/taliban.}

In June 2004, the local militants’ continued unwillingness to surrender foreign fighters led to another attack in the Shakai Valley by the Pakistani military, including 10,000 army and FC troops. The operations continued into the fall of 2004, ending with the signing of another peace agreement in November 2004 without defeating the insurgency.\footnote{Puri, Pakistan’s War on Terrorism, 57.} The focus of the November 2004 agreement signed by the military was the Mehsud areas in South Waziristan, where foreign militants had fled after military operation in the Wazir-dominated areas. This peace deal was an attempt by the government to avoid a two-front challenge.\footnote{Ibid.}

\section*{6.8.2 Sararogha peace deal – 2005 (South Waziristan)}

Military operations in the Mehsud-inhabited areas of South Waziristan resulted in huge losses for the military. This ultimately led the military to engage the tribal militants in peace negotiations. A peace settlement was negotiated in 2005 with Baitullah Mehsud,
the tribal militant’s leader. This peace deal was finally signed on 7 February 2005 at Sararogha, South Waziristan.\textsuperscript{737} The terms of this agreement included:

1. Militants (under Baitullah Mehsud) will not harbour or support any foreign militant in the area.

2. Militants undertake not to attack any government functionary, to damage government property, and to allow development work.

3. The government will not take action against Baitullah Mehsud and his militants for previous activities. Any involvement in any kind of terrorist or criminal activities in the future will be dealt with according the prevailing laws in the FATA. Anyone who disrupts this arrangement will be presented before the government.

4. Baitullah Mehsud vowed that if any “culprit” (not from his group) was found in his area, the Mehsud tribe would deliver him over to government authorities in the FATA.

5. Mutual consultation between the political administration and the Mehsud tribe would be the guiding principle to resolve all other issues not covered in this agreement.\textsuperscript{738}

Similar to the Shakai peace deal, this was an unwritten agreement and also lacked any enforcement mechanism. Noticeably, in this agreement the government did not demand that local militants surrender foreign militants and there was no mention of carrying out cross-border attacks in Afghanistan. Financial payments were also made to the local militants, but some claimed that these payments were offered as a way to compensate for property damages in South Waziristan resulting from the military operations.\textsuperscript{739} This agreement further strengthened the militants’ resolve, allowing them to expand their influence. Baitullah continued to provide shelter to the foreign militants and publicly expressed his determination to continue with the jihad against the US-led coalition in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{740} In a press briefing, Baitullah said that the Pakistani military was forced to make the peace agreement, adding that “Pakistan has also realised that fighting tribal people is weakening its ability. … This agreement will last unless the government violates it.”\textsuperscript{741}

Baitullah effectively used this time to mobilise more people to join him. He was successful in raising a force of almost 20,000 militants by the end of 2007.\textsuperscript{742} Mahmood

\textsuperscript{738} Abbas, “Militancy in Pakistan’s Borderland,” 18.
\textsuperscript{739} “Pakistan Pays Tribe Al Qaeda Debt,” \textit{BBC News}, February 9, 2005.
Shah, the former secretary of the FATA contended, “The government policy of appeasement gave Mehsud a free hand to recruit and motivate.” Moreover, Baitullah-linked militants killed those tribal elders who were considered sympathetic to the government. Baitullah also increasingly coordinated with other tribal militant groups which were resisting the government in other parts of the FATA. Finally, Baitullah unilaterally abrogated the agreement with the government on 18 August 2007 and then in December 2007 laid down the foundation for Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

### 6.8.3 Peace deal in North Waziristan – 2006

After the failure of the military approach in North Waziristan, the government decided to employ a political approach to pacify the rebellious tribesmen in the agency. Newly appointed governor, Ali Jan Orakzia, a native Pashtun of the FATA and former XI Corps Commander Peshawar, announced his strategy as being “Three-pronged with a political process and dialogue in the lead, followed by socio-economic development, and military action wherever required.” Orakzia attempted to restore the status quo in the FATA as it was before 2002. He signed a peace agreement with the tribal militants in North Waziristan on 5 September 2006.

This time, the government involved the political administration as well as the tribal elders in the negotiations process with the militants. In the previous two peace deals, the political administration and the tribal elders were marginalised and the military was at the forefront in making the peace agreements with local militants. The militants were represented by Hafiz Gul Bahadar, Maulana Sadiq Noor, and Maulana Abdul Khaliq. The sixteen-clause agreement included commitments from both sides, the military and the tribes including the tribal militants and the tribal elders. First, the local militants and the tribal elders committed that:

1. No attacks will be made on law enforcement agencies and government property.
2. The writ of the government will not be challenged and there will no parallel administration. The local administration will be consulted to resolve any issue arising out of the implementation of the agreement.

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743 Ibid.
744 Ibid.
745 Lieutenant General (Retired) Ali Jan Orakzia told after relinquishing the post. Puri, *Pakistan’s War on Terrorism*, 60.
3. There will be no cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. Movement across the border is allowed only for trade/business purposes and meeting relatives according to the local norms.

4. No support for militant activity in surrounding agencies of the FATA.

5. All foreigners in North Waziristan will be asked either to leave the area or to live peacefully and follow this agreement.

6. All government vehicles, equipment, and weapons seized during the conflict will be reverted.

In return, the government pledged to:

1. Release all militants and local tribesmen detained during the recent military operation and not to re-arrest them on the basis of previous allegations.

2. Resume providing financial resources to local *maliks*.

3. Abolish all newly established checkpoints on roads and Levies and Khasadars (tribal policemen) will be posted on the old checkpoints, where they existed in the past.

4. Retrieve all vehicles and other items, such as weapons, taken into custody during the military operation.

5. Offer compensation for all collateral damages to the affected families.

6. Remove any constraints on carrying weapons, except heavy weapons, according to tribal norms.

7. Stop military action and to withdraw the Pakistani army from checkpoints to its barracks with the commencement of the agreement. In case of violation of the agreement, however, the government has the right to take necessary actions.\(^{747}\)

The previous two peace agreements had failed to deliver the desired objectives; instead, they had emboldened the militants operating in other parts of the FATA. In regard to this peace arrangement, an expert asserted that “Whoever challenges the government’s writ derives more leverage during negotiations.”\(^{748}\) As with the Sararoga peace agreement signed in 2005, the government paid money to the militants. In addition, 100 middle-level Taliban and Al Qaeda militants, including Arab fighters, were released as part of the deal.\(^{749}\) This peace deal is also believed to have strengthened the local militants.


\(^{748}\) Abbas, “Militancy in Pakistan’s Borderland,” 20.

\(^{749}\) International Crisis Group, “Pakistan’s Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants.”
Hoisting the militants’ flag (al-Rayah) at the stadium where the agreement was signed was a practical manifestation of the growing power and confidence of the militants and represented a mockery of the supremacy of government authority in the area. An editorial in a leading English-language newspaper contended, “[T]he government has all but caved in to the demands of the militants. More ominously, the agreement seems to be a tacit acknowledgment by the government of the growing power and authority of the local Taliban.” After a brief period of time, the militants resumed their anti-state activities and also supported cross-border attacks in Afghanistan. NATO officials believed that there was a remarkable rise in the attacks inside Afghanistan after this agreement. A Defence Intelligence Assessment (DIA) noted that:

Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan remains a haven for Al Qaida’s leadership and other extremists. In a September [2006] accord with the Pakistan government, North Waziristan tribes agreed to curtail attacks into Afghanistan, cease attacks on Pakistani forces and expel foreign fighters. However, the tribes have not abided by most terms of the agreement.

This peace deal was in tatters after a brief period of only ten months. During this time, the tribal militants had extended their network to the tribal militants in South Waziristan and joined the TTP upon its formation in December 2007.

Pakistani officials had underestimated the growing threat of insurgency in the FATA. The Pakistani military committed one mistake after another and, despite the failure of the first agreement, the military made a number of other peace deals that strengthened the insurgency. To quote an eminent analyst, these deals in fact provided “much-needed respite to the militants, enabling them to re-group and re-organise themselves.” The peace deals with the tribal militants undoubtedly increased the power of the insurgents in the tribal areas. A Pakistani Ministry of Interior report commented on the government’s policy: “There is a general policy of appeasement towards the Taliban, which has further emboldened them.” The report further cautioned about a possible expansion of the insurgency from the tribal areas to the settled areas: “Talibanisation [of the insurgency] has not only unfolded potential threats to our

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security, but is also casting its dark shadows over FATA and now in the settled areas adjoining the tribal belt. The reality is that it is spreading.”

Inadequate counterinsurgency skills, and the lack of political will discussed above, served as the basic motivating factors for concluding peace deals with the tribal militants that ultimately served to strengthen the FATA insurgency. The various peace deals were "geared initially toward reducing losses for the military, which was not accustomed to the terrain, lacked weapons needed in the area, and initially was insufficiently motivated to take on militants." In addition, these peace agreements basically aimed at containing the insurgency, not eliminating it. An expert maintained, “Apparently, the purpose of these deals was to limit the conflict zone from expanding, and avoid a head-on collision with the militants. These objectives were far from being achieved in reality, and in fact these ‘deals’ proved to be counterproductive.” As a result of these peace deals, local people were left at the mercy of the local militants. Brigadier Asad Munir (a retired ISI official) acknowledged that:

A focused strategy to deal with terrorists was never followed. In September 2006, the government concluded another peace deal with the Taliban of North Waziristan. Because of this deal, foreign militants started operating openly. The only option for the locals was to accept Taliban rule.

Furthermore, by engaging the armed groups in peace negotiations, the Pakistani state actually provided them with the much-needed legitimacy and marginalised the traditional power elites such as maliks and tribal elders. According to an analyst, Samir Puri:

Bargain with or entering into agreement with an armed group would run the risk of legitimising them and influencing power structures within the armed group in ways that could not be anticipated, such as inadvertently boosting (or perhaps eroding) the standing of those individuals that the state engaged with over those that it did not.

This is what happened in the FATA. The local militant groups were successful in seizing the power previously held by the maliks and tribal elders. As a result of the peace deals, the FATA insurgency became much stronger.

757 Ibid.
758 Abbas, “Militancy in Pakistan’s Borderland,” 23.
759 Ibid., 15.
761 Puri, Pakistan’s War on Terrorism, 65.
6.9 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter serves as an elaboration of the third step of the theoretical model of this thesis, which states that an insurgency is likely to grow when the state employs a weak counterinsurgency strategy against it. This chapter has demonstrated the applicability of this argument to the conflict in the FATA; Pakistan’s poor counterinsurgency strategy allowed the FATA insurgency to grow and develop into a powerful force.

The Pakistani government lacked the necessary political will to take the insurgency seriously. This led to a weak response from the government, contributing ultimately to the rise of the insurgency. As a consequence, the security forces also lacked the motivation to fight the insurgency due to government’s indecisiveness and a lack of public support. Besides the government’s lack of political will, the Pakistani military forces also lacked counterinsurgency skills. The use of conventional forces to fight insurgency proved counterproductive, causing huge losses for the military and civilians. Pakistani forces were largely conventional in their training and equipment and were either incapable or unwilling to adapt to the needs of a counterinsurgency force. The military forces did not develop a counterinsurgency doctrine and largely kept their conventional capabilities intact. This was primarily because of their perennial focus on enmity with India. In addition, the indiscriminate use of force caused civilian damages and human rights abuses that facilitated the success of insurgent recruitment from the local population, thereby swelling their numbers. Inadequate and poorly skilled local security forces were unable to offer protection to the local population against the insurgents. Local communities therefore had to compromise with the insurgents’ rule.

Seeking a political solution is generally considered to be a valuable part of a counterinsurgency strategy. However, the Pakistani government’s approach of holding negotiations and signing peace agreements with the insurgents had a fundamental problem. The negotiations were invariably conducted after the defeat of the military forces. This negotiation from a position of weakness boosted the insurgents’ confidence in their ability and power, and exposed their opponent’s vulnerabilities. All of the above factors allowed the FATA insurgency to escalate and it developed into a powerful rebellious movement. The next chapter demonstrates that an improved counterinsurgency strategy by the Pakistani government after 2009 led to the decline of the FATA insurgency.
CHAPTER SEVEN: STRONG COUNTERINSURGENCY AND DECLINE OF REBELLION IN THE FATA [2009-2015]

7.1 Introduction

The Pakistani government’s initially weak counterinsurgency led to the escalation of the FATA insurgency. However, the far stronger and more effective counterinsurgency implemented since 2009 helps us understand the insurgency’s decline. This chapter demonstrates the application of the third step of the theoretical model; it argues that the execution of a better counterinsurgency by the Pakistani government against the growing FATA insurgency led to its decline.

The chapter begins with the description of how the escalation of insurgency, due to Pakistan’s poor counterinsurgency strategy, became a serious threat to its domestic security. This chapter discusses how the insurgents not only succeeded in establishing effective control over certain agencies of the FATA such as Bajaur, South Waziristan as well as North Waziristan, but that the insurgents also increased their influence in some settled parts of the country such as Swat, which was only 170 kilometres from the country’s capital. The growing ambition and strength of the insurgents created an alarming situation, motivating government officials to take the threat seriously. The chapter then moves on to explain how the Pakistani government’s effective counterinsurgency strategy led to the decline of the FATA insurgency. The main changes in approach included the emergence of a strong political will to defeat the insurgency, adaptation by the conventional forces to the requirements of counterinsurgency through learning and operational flexibility, the application of a far more discriminate use of force to protect the local population, elimination of the insurgents’ political and military infrastructure followed by a ‘clear and hold’ model, and the winning of the hearts and minds of the local population through development projects.

7.2 Waning of the TTP

From around 2009, Pakistan’s counterinsurgency campaign showed significant improvement over the previous campaigns from 2004 to 2008. A better – and far more targeted – counterinsurgency approach by the Pakistani government successfully dislodged the TTP from its strongholds in Bajaur, South Waziristan, and North Waziristan. By 2010, the Pakistani security forces had wrested control of the Bajaur
Agency from the TTP militants and established the writ of the government.\textsuperscript{762} The TTP’s military infrastructure was completely destroyed and many of the militants were killed during the operation.\textsuperscript{763} In addition, a significant number of the militants laid down their arms.\textsuperscript{764} The government forces also dismantled the TTP’s hold in the neighbouring district of the Bajaur Agency, known as Swat.\textsuperscript{765}

Similarly, the TTP’s hold on the insurgents was broken in most of the South Waziristan Agency by January 2010.\textsuperscript{766} The military forces took control of important towns such as Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha which were known as the command and control centres of the TTP.\textsuperscript{767} The insurgents’ sanctuaries were completely wiped out.\textsuperscript{768} Military troops were stationed and checkposts were created to prevent any return of insurgents. The improved counterinsurgency was successful in dismantling the insurgent infrastructure and routing out the TTP from its areas of dominance.\textsuperscript{769} However, some of the insurgents managed to flee and found new sanctuaries especially in North Waziristan, where the military did not launch a full-fledged military operation until June 14, 2014.\textsuperscript{770}

As a result of Operation Zarb-e-Azb launched in North Waziristan in June 2014, hundreds of insurgents were killed and the TTP’s infrastructure was almost completely destroyed. This seriously weakened the insurgent movement. With the waning of the TTP’s strength, it resorted to a number of terrorist attacks on soft targets in big cities of Pakistan. Moreover, the TTP experienced schism within its ranks. Some TTP leaders broke away from the main TTP organisation and formed their own small groups. Most of the militant leadership managed to flee across the border into Afghanistan. However, the TTP hold in the FATA was completely broken. Why did the FATA insurgency collapse and disintegrate? What had changed in the government’s approach? I will now demonstrate that the insurgency was defeated by a range of effective counterinsurgency steps by the Pakistani government and military.
7.3 The Obama administration’s new security approach towards the Pakistan-Afghanistan region

The US-Pakistan relationship took a new turn when the Obama administration took office in January 2009. President Obama regarded the Pakistan-Afghanistan region as the epicentre of international terrorism and a place where another attack against the US homeland might occur. Therefore, the new administration intensified efforts to rout out terrorist groups in both countries. Unlike the previous US administration, the Obama administration was more vocal in publicly criticising the Pakistani government for not honouring its counter-terrorism commitments. The US accelerated its counterinsurgency campaign against the Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan and pushed Pakistan hard for more effective efforts against Al Qaeda militants, and their local affiliates in the FATA.

The US policy under the Bush administration had not been successful in countering the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and eliminating its support networks and sanctuaries in Pakistan's tribal region. Before Barack Obama assumed the presidential office, the insurgency in Afghanistan had become a far more serious threat than before. At that time, the US and NATO forces were heavily involved in fighting a resilient insurgency that had secured sustained support from the tribal region of Pakistan.\(^{771}\) Pakistan “was a necessary element of the military and counter-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan”,\(^{772}\) but Washington had previously focussed more on the war in Iraq.

President Obama announced the new US strategy, ‘Af-Pak’, toward Afghanistan and Pakistan on 27 March 2009.\(^{773}\) After coming into office, Obama had resolved to focus on the Pakistan-Afghanistan region more seriously, something which his predecessor had neglected.\(^{774}\) Obama laid out his Af-Pak strategy with one “clear and focused goal”: “to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future.”\(^{775}\) The Obama administration understood that problems in Afghanistan could not be resolved without addressing problems in Pakistan, as the future of both countries was “inextricably linked.”\(^{776}\) Therefore, the new administration announced that the two countries would be treated as part of “one theatre of operations for US diplomacy and one challenge for [Washington’s] overall

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\(^{776}\) Ibid.
The tribal areas of Pakistan were identified as a serious concern because terrorist attacks across the world emanated from this region. In Obama’s words:

…I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of violent extremism practiced by Al Qaeda. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is from here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak. This is no idle danger; no hypothetical threat. In the last few months alone, we have apprehended extremists within our borders who were sent here from the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan to commit new acts of terror. And this danger will only grow if the region slides backwards, and Al Qaeda can operate with impunity. We must keep the pressure on al Qaeda, and to do that, we must increase the stability and capacity of our partners in the region.

The Obama administration noted the “mixed results” of Pakistan's performance in the war against terrorism, and said that America would not give Pakistan a “blank cheque” in the future. In outlining his new policy, President Obama pledged to provide the necessary support to the Pakistan government, contingent on the country’s willingness to “eliminate the sanctuary enjoyed by Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.” In addition, the Obama administration focused on enhancing the partnership through military and economic assistance. To build Pakistan’s capacity, the US Department of Defense allocated almost US$400 million to train and equip the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC). In addition, an amount of US$3 billion was allocated over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan’s army and paramilitary forces for counterinsurgency missions.

Furthermore, the Obama administration also increased military supplies to Pakistan. In March 2010, the US delivered 14 AH-1Cobra gunship helicopters to the country. Washington offered to supply Pakistan with an additional 14 F-16 C/D Block 52 fighter jets in addition to the previous 18 Block 52 F-16 aircrafts. In June 2010, the Pakistani air force (PAF) received three F-16s. The provision of F-16s removed a long-standing...
impediment in US-Pakistani military ties. The United States also offered to provide Pakistan with shadow drones for surveillance. However, to ensure the continuation of the US military assistance, the Secretary of State needed to be sure that Pakistan “has demonstrated a sustained commitment to and is making significant efforts towards combating terrorist groups.”

Apart from enhancing Pakistan’s counterinsurgency capabilities, the Af-Pak strategy emphasised the development of Pakistan’s civilian sector as part of demonstrating its long term commitment to the country. The Af-Pak strategy highlighted the “trust deficit” between the two countries, while stating that the US government “must engage the Pakistani people based on our long-term commitment to helping them build a stable economy, a stronger democracy, and a vibrant civil society.” Obama said:

In the past, we too often defined our relationship with Pakistan narrowly. Those days are over. Moving forward, we are committed to a partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual trust.

The civilian assistance to Pakistan included “long-term capacity building, agricultural sector job creation, education and training, and on infrastructure requirements”, as well as supporting its efforts to “hold and build” in insurgency-ridden areas after they were cleared of terrorist insurgents. The core of the new US policy for Pakistan, manifested through the Enhanced Partnership Act 2009 (also known as the Kerry—Lugar Bill), aimed at tripling US economic assistance to Pakistan to US$1.5 billion a year between 2010 and 2014.

The Obama administration also took into account Pakistan’s less-than-impressive performance and unsatisfactory assistance in the war on terrorism. It kept up pressure on Pakistan to expedite its efforts against terrorism by pointing out that actions should be taken indiscriminately against all kinds of terrorist groups. In November 2009, the US National Security Advisor James Jones delivered President Obama’s letter to Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, warning that Pakistan’s policy of using some terrorist groups to gain regional objectives “cannot continue,” and calling for “closer collaboration against all extremist groups, including Al Qaeda, the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani

787 “Pak to Get 18 F-16s, Shadow Drones Likely Within a Year,” The Indian Express, 2010.
790 Kronstadt, “Pakistan: Key Current Issues and Developments,” 8.
792 Miller, “How to Exercise U.S. Leverage Over Pakistan,” 38.
network, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the TTP. The Obama administration perceived that the weakening of the Pakistan-based terrorist groups “will pose less of a direct threat to US, Indian, or Afghan interests. They will become less relevant to Pakistan’s own regional strategic calculations.” To motivate Pakistan to take on these militant groups, President Obama assured Pakistan in the same letter of “an expanded strategic partnership”, including “an effort to help reduce tensions between Pakistan and India.”

Furthermore, Obama’s strategy brought a significant change in the US-led counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. The strategy emphasised using “all elements of international power—diplomatic, informational, military and economic” in addition to the use of military force, to achieve the core strategic objective of defeating Al Qaeda and its allies in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the Obama administration increased US troops in Afghanistan under the troop surge policy. The first increase was announced in March 2009, consisting of 21,000 troops (including 17,000 combat troops) supplemented by another major increase of 30,000 more troops in December 2009. Washington was demonstrating its determination not to allow the Taliban to capture power in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had previously provided space to Al Qaeda who launched terrorist attacks against the United States. President Obama’s hard stance, followed by a better counterinsurgency approach in Afghanistan, helped shape Pakistan’s counterinsurgency approach in the FATA.

Since 2009, the Obama administration has significantly increased US drone strikes in the FATA region to target Al Qaeda and its allies. The FATA had not only emerged as the epicentre of international terrorism, but also proved crucial in providing sanctuary to Al Qaeda militants and their allies fighting in Afghanistan against the Afghan and US security forces. The Obama administration clearly realised that the insurgency in Afghanistan could not be controlled without eliminating its support base in the FATA. President Obama said, “For the American people, this border region [FATA] has become the most dangerous place in the world.” To tackle this problem, the Obama

795 Young, “U.S. Offers New Role for Pakistan: A Broader Partnership.”
798 Kfir, “U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan and Afghanistan under the Obama Administration.”
802 Quoted in Kfir, “U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan and Afghanistan under the Obama Administration.”
administration approved a significant increase in drone strikes in FATA. This policy was devised to destroy the terrorists’ safe havens without waiting for Islamabad to act. According to Fair, Washington increased drone strikes in Pakistan because of the unsatisfactory performance of the country in the war against terrorism and its continued relationship with the Afghan Taliban groups.\textsuperscript{803}

There was an exponential increase in drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal region. Obama ordered his first drone strike in Pakistan within two days of taking the presidential oath.\textsuperscript{804} According to the New America Foundation, 44 drone strikes had occurred in the tribal areas of Pakistan between 2004 and 2008, during the second term of President George W. Bush.\textsuperscript{805} In contrast, during President Obama's first year in office alone, 53 drone strikes targeted the tribal region, with another 118 drone attacks recorded in 2010.\textsuperscript{806} The US drone attacks in the tribal areas such as South and North Waziristan and other agencies led to the death of several Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders, including Baitullah Mehsud, who had emerged as a hard-core insurgent leader against Pakistan.

As a result of this increased pressure and the Af-Pak strategy, Pakistan intensified its counterinsurgency campaign in the FATA.\textsuperscript{807} In October 2009, Pakistani security forces launched a major operation in South Waziristan against Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the umbrella movement of the Pakistani Taliban, which significantly damaged the organisation’s training and military capabilities. The military operations have continued since early 2010 and been extended to other tribal agencies of the FATA. Pakistani security agencies have also provided assistance to the US forces to arrest some important leaders of the Afghan Taliban, including its chief military commander, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.\textsuperscript{808} Moreover, Pakistan launched an intensive counterinsurgency campaign in other agencies of FATA especially in North Waziristan (June 2015), which had emerged as a last sanctuary of Al Qaeda militants and other Pakistan-based terrorist groups. As a result of sustained and better counterinsurgency efforts by the Pakistani state, the TTP and Al Qaeda militants’ sanctuaries were destroyed, considerably weakening the FATA insurgency.

\textsuperscript{806} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{807} Ahmad, “The U.S. Af-Pak Strategy: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan,” 196.
\textsuperscript{808} Ibid.
7.4 The TTP as a growing challenge

As discussed in the previous chapter, Pakistan’s weak counterinsurgency in the pre-2009 period allowed the FATA insurgency to grow. A number of militant groups, hitherto operating independently, united to form the TPP umbrella organisation in December 2007, with Baitullah Mehsud as its first leader. The better coordination and sharing of resources which followed the formation of a single coherent organisation, allowed the insurgents to increase their influence and hold in the FATA. In addition, they also began challenging the writ of the state in the settled districts (outside the tribal territories) of Pakistan adjoining the tribal areas. For instance, the TTP provided assistance to its allied group in challenging the writ of the Pakistani state in some districts of the Malakkand division, which was only 170 kilometres away from the capital of Pakistan.\(^809\) The international community, especially the United States, was alarmed over the growing power of the FATA insurgents because of their role in the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan.\(^810\)

Some security analysts even warned the Pakistan government about the seriousness of the TTP’s threat to Pakistan’s stability. Ahmed Rahsid, for example, contended that “Pakistan’s biggest threat comes from the Pakistani Taliban and their Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban allies. It does not come from India.”\(^811\) Another security analyst, Hassan Abbas, commented, “Dismantling the TTP and bringing its leadership to justice is critical for Pakistan’s internal security.”\(^812\) A journalist, Jauhar Ismael, remarked that the battle between the TTP and the Pakistan government represented “a fight for the very future of Pakistan.”\(^813\)

Due to the TTP’s increasing terrorist attacks, some analysts suggested a serious military approach to counter the militants. General (Retd.) Talat Masood said that “We are facing a huge internal threat. One of the measures to get rid of this internal threat is an army operation to flush out militants. Half-hearted retaliatory actions would not do any good.”\(^814\) The exponential increase in the strength and influence of the TTP in the FATA, and their increasing involvement in terrorist attacks in mainland Pakistan, propelled the Pakistani ruling elites to pay serious attention to the problem of the insurgency. This led to a shift in the government’s perception away from India as the primary threat to the country to a focus on the FATA insurgency.\(^815\) The change in

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\(^809\) See the editorial “60 Miles From Islamabad.”
\(^810\) Parsons, “Obama Prepares to Meet with Leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan.”
\(^815\) Mullick, “Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban,” 6.
Pakistan’s threat perception was accompanied by a change in public mood that was becoming increasingly anti-TTP.

### 7.5 Public support for action against the TTP

There was also massive public support for military operations against the TTP. Because of the numerous large-scale terrorist activities carried out by the TTP militants across the country in mosques and market places, public opinion had turned significantly against the Baitullah Mehsud faction and its affiliated groups.\(^8\) This broad political support for military operations further strengthened after the TTP militants occupied important towns such as Buner and Shangla on the outskirts of Swat in 2009. Public opinion also swung behind the government after the group declared Pakistan's constitution to be un-Islamic. This helped in building popular perceptions that any Pakistani offensive was driven by the growing insurgent threat, not by pressure from the United States.\(^8\)

The majority of Pakistanis therefore demanded military operations against the TTP. The World Public Opinion poll conducted in 2009 put anti-TTP sentiment among the Pakistani public at 81 percent. A Pew Research Poll, carried out in August 2009, showed that 77 percent of the public supported military operations against the Pakistani Taliban.\(^8\) In addition, some religious political parties, such as Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Pakistan and Ahl-e-Sunnat, also emerged in support of military operations against the TTP militants.\(^8\) Beryman and Salman argued that “Growing revulsion against the Pakistani Taliban's outrageous behaviour is one of the major factors underlying improved public support for the Army's counterinsurgency offensives.”\(^8\)

This popular support for the war against the insurgents also played a considerable role in boosting the morale of the security forces, which was quite low as a result of previous failed counterinsurgency operations. Boosted by wide political and popular support, military operations were launched with new vigour against the insurgents.\(^8\) The military were also able to capitalise on anti-Taliban sentiments among people in the FATA because of the insurgents' outrageous behaviour. The anti-Taliban sentiments provided

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the military with improved human intelligence that helped to distinguish between the insurgents and non-combatants, thus avoiding the killing of innocents. As a result, in the following years Pakistan adopted a strong counterinsurgency that caused the decline of the TTP.

7.6 A strong political will

Without strong political will, success against an insurgency cannot be achieved. A strong political will on the part of counterinsurgents involves the allocation of the necessary resources to defeat the insurgency. Pakistan’s political and military elites demonstrated a strong political will to defeat the insurgency from 2009. In an interview with the German magazine Der Spiegel, General Shuja Pasha, the head of Pakistan’s chief spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), said that “terror [TTP insurgency] is our enemy, not India.” Pakistan’s Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani termed the war against insurgents “a war of the country’s survival.” The government also adopted an unprecedentedly strong anti-militant rhetoric to garner public support for the military operations. Moreover, the military began to see the TTP as an existential threat to their country; one replacing India. The change of threat perception was quite evident throughout the military’s culture.

Their growing political will became clear when the Pakistani government abandoned its strategy of holding negotiations with the insurgents. As discussed, the government’s negotiations with the insurgents had previously strengthened the insurgents’ hold. By the end of August 2008, the government had realised the ineffectiveness of its strategy of negotiations and outlawed the TTP. Zaidi observed that “the realization had perhaps dawned in government circles that the negotiation process had not yielded many dividends.” He noticed further a change in the government’s stance towards the militants, saying that “The continuous peace deals and their unilateral revocation by the militants sapped the negotiating will of the government, which banned the Tehrik-e-Taliban [Pakistan].” In addition, there was a discernible hardening of the government’s stance towards the insurgents in other arenas. Adviser for the Ministry of

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822 Mullick, “Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban,” 22.
824 Ucko and Egnell, Counterinsurgency in Crisis, 16.
828 Former DG Inter-Services Public Relations, Maj. General retired, Athar Abbas (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
829 Zaidi, “The United States and the Counterinsurgency.”
830 Ibid.
831 Ibid.
Interior, Rahman Malik, announced a bounty on militant commanders and made the militants’ surrender a condition of any future talks.

The military’s approach in conducting operations in Bajaur also demonstrated a much stronger political will to defeat the insurgents. The military operation in Bajaur was conducted with improved planning and more force than previous military operations launched in the FATA.  

Carlotta Gall, a Western reporter, wrote that “Bajaur is perhaps the most significant stronghold of militants from the Taliban and Al Qaeda who have entrenched themselves in the tribal areas.” More than 20,000 troops took part in the operation in Bajaur assisted by helicopter gunships, tanks, artillery, and local fighters who numbered around 3,000. Zaidi contended that “The Bajaur operation was pursued much more vigorously than previous ones had been.”

Similarly, significant military resources were devoted to defeat the insurgents in South Waziristan. The “intensity of efforts and vastness of means are essential” to show resoluteness on the part of the counterinsurgents. The military operations in 2009 were carried out with better planning and resources, fielding approximately 30,000–60,000 troops. Helicopter gunships, tanks and heavy artillery were used during the operations. In addition, two Special Services Group battalions and two infantry brigades were deployed along with Frontier Corps units. Pakistan also utilised armour units with battle tanks, and infantry units equipped with heavy artillery and mortars for conducting foot patrols. Moreover, the Pakistani army diverted some troops, such as seven combat brigades, from the Indian border and deployed them in South Waziristan in order to support the military operations. This showed that the FATA insurgency was being treated as the country’s most important security threat, even surpassing India, at least momentarily.

This commitment to defeating the TTP has been sustained. The June 2014 military operation in North Waziristan, Zarb-e-Azb, was also conducted vigorously. The military’s spokesperson, General Asim Bajwa, marked the operation as a “war of survival.” To Gen. Asim Bajwa, “this is the biggest and most well-coordinated operation ever conducted against terrorists. It is the beginning of the end for terrorism in the country.” He added further, “We have surrounded the entire agency and sealed the

835 Zaidi, “The United States and the Counterinsurgency.”
836 Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, 55.
837 C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, Counterinsurgency in Pakistan, 72.
838 Ibid., 74.
180km border with Afghanistan, as well as the boundary with South Waziristan, making it impossible for terrorists to escape.\(^842\)

The military troops, FC forces, intelligence operatives and the Pakistan Air Force jointly conducted the operation in North Waziristan.\(^843\) At the heart of Zarb-e-Azb was the 7th Infantry Division, considered the Pakistan army’s “oldest and the most battle-hardened division.”\(^844\) Two battalions of Special Services Group (SSG), the Pakistan army’s special operations force, also took part in the operation. In addition, the 17th Mechanised Infantry, the 37th Mechanised Infantry, the 45th Engineers, the 31st and 32nd Army Aviation (with their Cobra attack helicopters) and Pakistan Air Force fighter bombers were used to carry out the operation.\(^845\) As a result of these far more dedicated operations, the military was finally successful in routing out the TTP from its strongholds in the Bajaur, and South and North Waziristan agencies.

### 7.7 Improving the military forces’ counterinsurgency training and skills

As discussed, the right kind of forces equipped with counterinsurgency skills and weapons are also required to achieve success against insurgents. Success in counterinsurgency operations is contingent upon the military’s ability to adapt its organisational structure and strategy from conventional warfare to counterinsurgency warfare.\(^846\) A counterinsurgency requires a different kind of military doctrine and training than conventional warfare. Harnessing the military forces with the necessary counterinsurgency training is imperative to achieve victory against insurgents.\(^847\)

Apart from adapting to the counterinsurgency warfare needs, the counterinsurgency forces need to be continuously flexible in responding to situations in the field.\(^848\) This requires the counterinsurgency forces to “learn and adapt” based on realities on the ground.\(^849\) Operational flexibility and the adaptive approach stress the need for counterinsurgency forces to adjust or adapt continuously in line with the unique and evolving challenges of each counterinsurgency campaign.\(^850\) In regard to counterinsurgency warfare, the British document *Keeping the Peace (Duties in Support*
of Civil Power), stated that “there is no place for a rigid mind. . . . Although the principles of war generally remain the same, the ability to adapt and improvise is essential.”

Pakistani military elites now had a clear understanding and realization that the military forces lacked counterinsurgency skills, which had in turn led to a poor and inefficient performance against the insurgents. Due to this poor performance in the field, the morale of the military forces also deteriorated. In an attempt to address these weaknesses, Gen. Ashfaq Kiani, the then chief of the armed forces, focused on improving their counterinsurgency strategy through new arms procurement choices and a changed military curriculum. By calling 2008 “The Year of the Soldier” and 2009 “The Year of Training,” Gen. Kiani also initiated reforms in the Directorate of Military Operations (the army’s strategy think tank) and intelligence operations to meet the needs of counterinsurgency warfare. The Frontier Corps (FC), a paramilitary force, was given counterinsurgency training to enhance their fighting capabilities. In addition, the FC forces were provided with modern counterinsurgency weapons, along with better salary packages and promotions. These measures transformed the FC into a modern fighting force appropriate for counterinsurgency.

Moreover, in 2009, the Pakistani government accepted counterinsurgency training assistance from the United States. United States Special Forces (USSAF) personnel conducted counterinsurgency training for Frontier Corps (FC) officers. In the past, the Pakistani military leadership had refused American offers for such training for the Pakistani forces. Military officials had questioned the utility of counterinsurgency training with the contention that the country’s main security threats emanated from India, not from the TTP. However, with a change in threat perception, Pakistan’s counterinsurgency capabilities were significantly enhanced. A US intelligence assessment affirmed the considerable improvement in Pakistan’s counterinsurgency approach, saying that “Pakistan has added more border posts, begun counterinsurgency training, [and] fenced portions of the border and seeks to obtain counterinsurgency equipment while also expanding para-military forces.” These adaptations

851 Cited in Ucko and Egnell, Counterinsurgency in Crisis, 10.
853 Former DG Inter-Services Public Relations, Maj. General retired, Athar Abbas (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
856 As of November 2008 the training was limited to the select number of senior Frontier Corpsmen who would impart training to the rest of the force. Jason H. Campbell and Jeremy Shapiro, Brookings’ Afghanistan Index: Tracking Progress and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan (Brookings Institution, 2009), 34.
857 Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate,” 22; Maples, “Annual Threat Assessment: Statement Before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate,” 12.
enhanced the forces’ capabilities to better fight the insurgents and ultimately defeat them.

The Pakistani military also improved its counterinsurgency approach through the process of “learning by doing.” Based on the experience of the Bajaur counterinsurgency operations during ‘Operation Shirdil (Lion Heart)’ in August 2008, junior officers were made part of decision-making process – especially Frontier Corps officers, who had traditionally been considered incompetent because of their training and due to their ethnic links with the predominantly Pashtun militants. In addition, input from the junior officers in the field convinced Gen. Tariq, the commander of the operation, who changed his approach towards the counterinsurgency considerably. Instead of employing the “out-terrorizing the terrorist” model, Gen. Tariq Khan used the population security approach, emphasising troop patrols and supporting tribal lashkars (militias) and jirgas (tribal councils). The best counterinsurgency practices advocate “deploying smaller and more dispersed units, patrolling to protect the population, and raising local police forces to sustain operational gains.”

‘Learning by doing’ or battleground experiences and significant input from junior officers brought about a radical change from the previous Pakistani counterinsurgency campaigns in the tribal areas. The newly acquired tactics and better use of human intelligence allowed a more discriminatory use of force to protect the civilian population. The local population of Bajaur was evacuated to allow airpower and heavy artillery to be used more effectively to force the militants out of their hide-outs. After attacking the insurgents’ forces with intensive airstrikes and artillery fire, ground forces were mobilised to chase and apprehend militants.

Learning in the field significantly improved counterinsurgency tactics which in turn helped to dry up the insurgents’ local support base, thereby making easier the job of apprehending the insurgents without alienating the local population. A better use of counterinsurgency tactics resulted in losses for the insurgents. This helped the forces to regain and boost troop morale which had been lost in the previous counterinsurgency operations. Low morale stemming from the troops’ inability to defeat the insurgents was a significant factor in the previous poor counterinsurgency performances. “If we

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860 Ibid., 19.
863 Ibid.
864 Mullick, “Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban,” 19.
can’t win … gain back territory … then troop morale goes down … but now we’re winning every day… and everyday morale goes up,” explained Lt. Col. Naseer Janjua.  

7.8 Discriminatory use of force to protect the population

The previous heavy use of force by the Pakistani military had contributed significantly to the airing of anti-state and anti-military feelings among the local tribesmen and driven them to join the insurgents’ ranks. A firepower-intensive approach in a counterinsurgency campaign is seldom productive. Samarjit Ghosh contended that “The use of brute force instead of low-intensity strikes is a classic flaw in counterinsurgency campaigns: its military effectiveness is suspect, and it invariably embitters the local population.”

The security of the local population is very important in any counterinsurgency campaign. This can be achieved by a minimum or discriminate use of force during military operations. Paul Dixon suggested a less coercive approach to counterinsurgency, or using ‘minimum force’ as a way to avoid civilian damage. From mid-August 2008, the Pakistani military adopted a better counterinsurgency approach that saw a shift from the outright indiscriminate use of force to a more targeted use of force, protecting the civilian population. The consideration of civilians’ security in targeting the insurgents through a more discriminate use of force helped to reduce collateral damage. This was a significant departure from the previous counterinsurgency approach.

Furthermore, the local population from the insurgency-stricken areas was cleared out to separate them from the insurgents and to achieve the targeted use of force. After isolating the population, the Pakistani military used air power to soften up the insurgents’ targets, which was followed by the entry of ground forces in order to secure the area from the militants. Haider contended that “[Pakistan] has made a significant but tenuous move toward a hybrid approach that relies on killing the enemy but minimizing collateral damage.”

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870 Lalwani, “Pakistan’s COIN Flip,” 5.
872 Lalwani, “Pakistan’s COIN Flip,” 5.
873 Ibid., 7.
The military operation ‘Sherdil’ in Bajaur saw improved strategy and planning, with the targeted use of force avoiding collateral damage. Gen. Tariq, the commander of military operations, significantly changed his approach and mostly relied on the ‘population security’ approach.\textsuperscript{875} Collateral damage was significantly decreased because of the more discriminate use of force. However, it increased the troops’ vulnerability leading to increased Pakistani military casualties.\textsuperscript{876} At the same time however, the FC emerged as a more competent and useful localised force, able to strike the fleeing insurgents more effectively without alienating the local population.\textsuperscript{877}

Similarly, the Pakistani military launched Operation Rah-e-Nijat (Path of Salvation) on 17 October 2009, with the stated objectives of securing of population centres and dismantling the TTP organisational infrastructure in South Waziristan.\textsuperscript{878} The military attempted to reduce collateral damage by evacuating the population before launching the attack and by using tactics learnt through local experiences.\textsuperscript{879} Several hundred thousand displaced people sought refuge in the neighbouring districts of the FATA, such as Tank and Dear Ismail Khan.\textsuperscript{880} The military also imposed a blockade around the target area for two months before the ground assault to cut-off the insurgents’ supply lines.\textsuperscript{881} Intelligence resources rooted in the area were utilised to launch air strikes targeting the insurgents’ sanctuaries and infrastructure.\textsuperscript{882}

The Pakistani military also used psychological techniques to isolate the TTP militants from the larger population, another advance over the previous campaigns. Leaflets from local religious authorities and tribes were circulated to inform the youth of “false jihad” and blaming the militants for bringing destruction to the tribal areas.\textsuperscript{883} A letter was sent from the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani to the tribal elders of the Mehsud tribe informing them about the motivations behind this operation. The letter explained that this military operation was aimed at the local and the foreign militants and not at the Mehsud tribes.\textsuperscript{884} A security analyst contended that “The focus on conducting psychological and information operations, amassing popular support, and dividing

\textsuperscript{875} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{877} Former DG Inter-Services Public Relations, Maj. General retired, Athar Abbas (Rawalpindi), interview by author, April 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{878} C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Pakistan}, 71.
\textsuperscript{879} Pakistan’s military Brigadier who served in South Waziristan (Kharan, Punjab), interview by author, June 24, 2014.
\textsuperscript{883} Cloughley, “Insurrection, Terrorism, and the Pakistan Army,” 20.
\textsuperscript{884} Iftikhar A. Khan, “Kayani Writes to Mehsuds, Seek Tribe’s Support,” \textit{Dawn}, October 20, 2009.
insurgents to limit the scope of operations all factored into the moderately successful outcome.  

The military continued their attempts to target their use of force to reduce collateral damage. Gen. Athar Abbas, the chief military spokesman revealed the military strategy, saying that “We are trying to shape the environment before we move in for the fight. We are also trying to minimize the loss of life. When we do move in, it must only be against Baitullah and his group. We cannot afford to provoke a tribal uprising.”

However, a major dislocation of almost 200,000 locals occurred in South Waziristan. Some locals complained that the government’s arrangements to deal with the displaced people were inadequate. Steve warned against this saying, “The Army appeared still not to understand that protection and care for internally displaced civilians in counterinsurgency operations is at least as important as restraint in the use of indirect fire.” Similarly, before launching the military operation in North Waziristan in June 2014, the government deliberately evacuated the local population to protect them and to minimise collateral damage.

7.9 Eliminate the insurgents’ infrastructure, clear and hold

A true victory against an insurgency cannot be achieved without dismantling the insurgents’ military capability and other related infrastructure. Melshen argued that “If the infrastructure is not destroyed, the insurgent organization will either survive as it is, or adapt to the current counterinsurgent pressures on the organization.” In addition, stationing of troops is a necessary component of a triumphant counterinsurgency to prevent any possibility of the insurgents’ return and to rob them of any opportunity to regain a hold of the area or the local population.

During the more recent counterinsurgency campaign, Pakistani military forces focused on eliminating the insurgents’ infrastructure. The military operation Sherdil began in Bajaur in August 2008. It aimed to target and dismantle the nerve centre of the TTP in the agency. Gen. Tariq Khan, the commander of the North-West Frontier Province Frontier Corps (FC), stated that the military operation would target the insurgents’ headquarters, their communication centres and the leadership. The well-equipped and trained insurgents offered severe resistance to the military forces. Gall noted that

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886 Salman, “Reaping the Whirlwind: Pakistani Counterinsurgency,” 76.
888 Salman, “Reaping the Whirlwind: Pakistani Counterinsurgency,” 76.
891 Cloughley, “Insurrection, Terrorism, and the Pakistan Army,” 17.
officials were not expecting such levels of resistance and the sophistication of the militants’ tactics, weapons, and communications was also surprising. One military official was quoted by Gall as saying that “Their tactics are mind-boggling and they have defences that would take us days to build. It does not look as though we are fighting a ragtag militia. They are fighting like an organized force.” 892

During the operation, the military destroyed the insurgents’ hide-outs and other infrastructure. The forces dismantled the huge tunnels constructed by the militants and recovered large stockpiles of weapons and ammunition and other materials such as guerrilla-warfare manuals and bomb-making instructions.893 The militants had used these tunnels to protect themselves from aerial bombardment. Habibullah Khan, a top official in the FATA Secretariat, noted that “These tunnels are called asmasta and some of them are about half a mile, and insurgents can stay there a long time to protect themselves from security forces’ shelling.” 894

The military authorities finally claimed to have destroyed the insurgents’ military infrastructure in Bajaur in 2010. The military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, contended that the military had destroyed the militants’ infrastructure completely and wrested back control of 95 per cent of the Bajaur Agency and established the writ of the government.895 Inspector General Frontier Corps (IGFC) General Tariq Khan affirmed that the military capability of the insurgents had been completely destroyed, disabling their ability to carry out further resistance.896 After eliminating the insurgents’ military strength, the military forces conducted search operations to apprehend the fleeing militants. Gen. Tariq said that “The Bajaur operations have now more or less ended as dedicated military operations. We will switch our posture to policing operations.” 897

The Pakistani military had to face serious challenges while conducting military operations in South Waziristan. The TTP in South Waziristan was considered highly adept in executing guerrilla warfare.898 Some analysts attributed their ferocity to “their fanaticism, ruthlessness, ability to withstand huge losses conjoined with their familiarity of terrain, and mastery of the tactics and weapons of guerrilla warfare.” 899 In addition, a sizeable number of Punjabi Taliban and Uzbek fighters had reinforced the capability of

892 Gall, “Battle of Bajaur: A Critical Test for Pakistan’s Daunted Military.”
895 “Forces Regain Control of Bajaur.”
897 “Forces Regain Control of Bajaur.”
898 Gunaratna and Iqbal, Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero, 73.
the TTP in South Waziristan for resisting the military. As one Pakistani military official noted, “It’s going to be a tough fight for these places.”

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Pakistani military made significant progress against the insurgents in South Waziristan in October and November of 2009, and wrested back control of important towns and villages. The military operations targeted the TTP strongholds such as Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha that had served as the command and control centre of the TTP militants. After stiff resistance from the militants, the military finally gained control of these areas. The houses of militant commanders, such as Wali ur Rehaman and Shabeeb Khan, and other suspects were also demolished. The insurgents’ sanctuaries were completely wiped out. In addition, the security forces seized large quantities of arms and ammunition from the hideouts of fleeing insurgents, including 49 anti-aircraft machine-guns of 12.7mm calibre, 15 machine-guns of 14.5mm calibre, 38 RPG 7, 16 heavy machine-guns, 592 rifles of various types, 45 small machine-guns, three artillery guns, one Russian-made missile launcher, 32 pistols, five recoilless rifles, as well as truck-loads of ammunition including 203886 bullets of 12.7mm anti-aircraft machine-gun, 9,000 rounds of 14.5mm machine-gun, 830 rockets of RPG 7, 11 Russian-made missiles, 106 rockets of recoilless rifles and 140 rockets of SPG 9. By January 2010, Pakistani forces had cleared most of the South Waziristan Agency of insurgents. The military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, finally announced the military victory against the insurgents, saying that “The myth has been broken that this was a graveyard for empires and it would be a graveyard for the Army.”

Similarly, during Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan conducted in June 2014, the Pakistan Air Force launched airstrikes to destroy the militants’ military capability. The Pakistani air force targeted the militants’ hideouts with precision weapons to destroy the insurgents’ infrastructure and weaken their overall capability. During the operation, the military recovered a huge cache of weapons and ammunition. According to the Commander of the Zarb-e-Azb Military Operation, Maj. Gen. Zafar Ullah Khan, the arms recovered from the militants could have been sufficient to continue the conflict for another 15 years. The recovered weapons and ammunition included 6,752 rifles with 0.99 million ammunition, 2,470 sub-machine guns including sniper rifles with 0.67

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900 Gunaratna and Iqbal, *Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero*, 73.
901 “Street Battles Rage in Uzbek Militants’ Stronghold.”
902 Hussain, “Laddah, Sararogha Cleared; Street Fighting in Makin.”
904 Hussain, “Laddah, Sararogha Cleared; Street Fighting in Makin.”
906 “Four Militants Killed in South Waziristan Operation.”
908 Masood, “Military Operation in North Waziristan — An Overview.”
million ammunition, 293 machine guns and light machine guns with 0.24 million ammunition and 111 guns (12.7mm and 14.5mm) with 0.25 million ammunition. In addition, 389 rocket launchers and recoilless rifles with 5,481 rockets, 68 mortars with 5,667 rounds, 3,821 hand grenades and 4,991 IEDs besides, along with another 132,000 kg of explosive material were also recovered.\footnote{Ibid.} The Pakistan army cleared 90 percent of the North Waziristan Agency by June 2015, an operation that involved killing 1,198 terrorists.\footnote{Ibid.} Pakistan’s army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, said, “We have successfully dismantled their infrastructure and created significant effects. We as a nation are determined to take this surge to its logical end, whatever it may take.”\footnote{“Editorial: Military Operation,” \textit{Dawn}, June 9, 2015.} After the first year of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, North Waziristan was believed to be largely free from insurgent control. A Pakistan newspaper noted that “The stronghold of the notorious Haqqani Network and TTP, is no longer their command and control center. The combined air and land offensive has decimated the sanctuary.”\footnote{“Grading Zarb-e-Azb; One Year and Counting,” \textit{Pakistan Today}, June 14, 2015.} Another security analyst and journalist, Zahid Hussain, maintained that “The battle for North Waziristan may not be over yet, but Zarb-i-Azb has proved the sceptics wrong. It has blown away the myth about the invincibility of territory and the graveyard of the forces.”\footnote{Zahid Hussain, “Beyond Zarb-i-Azb,” \textit{Dawn}, June 17, 2015.} This was followed by massive ground offensives to occupy territory.

After destroying the insurgents’ infrastructure, clearing the area of the remnants of insurgency is essential. As discussed near the start of this chapter, one of the main improvements in Pakistan’s counterinsurgency approach involved the implementation of a ‘clear and hold’ model. After clearing areas from the insurgents, military troops were stationed to hold the territory to eliminate the chance of the insurgents’ returning.\footnote{C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, \textit{Counterinsurgency in Pakistan}, 81.} Haider noted that Pakistan’s recent counterinsurgency strategy had “executed a presence-oriented approach: cleared areas, established small bases inside populated areas (instead of going back to large forward operating bases).”\footnote{Mullick, “Helping Pakistan Defeat the Taliban,” 21.} During the previous counterinsurgency campaign, the forces had not adopted a ‘clearing and holding’ approach which permitted the insurgents to stage a comeback and regain hold of the area. The new approach, Haider contended, “created [military] presence after “clearing” an area, and supported local intelligence and militias for continued success.”\footnote{Ibid., 14.} After wresting control of the Taliban-dominated areas in Bajuar, the military held the area which effectively prevented the return of the insurgents. In their previous approach,
the military had cleared areas from the insurgents and then moved forward, leaving a vacuum that enabled the militants to stage a comeback and get hold of the population again. The military maintained its permanent presence with small bases and troop patrols to inhibit any re-infiltration by the militants.\footnote{918} A high military official explained how the new approach differed from the previous one: “The Pakistan army decided to maintain a permanent presence in all cleared parts to keep logistics routes clear, enhance public support, and improve intelligence-gathering.”\footnote{919}

These holding tactics were repeated in South Waziristan. After dismantling the insurgents’ infrastructure and wrestling control of the Taliban-dominated areas,\footnote{920} military troops were stationed to prevent the return of the insurgents. The President of Pakistan, Asif Zardari, announced the government would continue with the counterinsurgency campaign to eliminate the insurgent threat forever. Zardari said, “[T]here was no turning back from it until the complete elimination of the militants.”\footnote{921}

After defeating the insurgents in North Waziristan, the government announced it would garrison the area to prevent the return of insurgents. Army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, said that the “army won’t go back from the area till the job is done.”\footnote{922} The military also deployed troops to forward positons in mountainous and forested terrain such as Shawal and Dattakhel to attack the fleeing insurgents.\footnote{923}

7.10 Winning the hearts and minds of the population in the FATA

Apart from military measures, a successful counterinsurgency also needs to win the hearts and minds of the population by alleviating the causes of their grievances. This can be achieved primarily by improving governance through social and economic development.\footnote{924} An important aim of a counterinsurgency is to reclaim government sovereignty and legitimacy in an area within its borders that was once under the control of an insurgent group. To achieve this goal, the government must “re-establish institutions and local security forces,” and focus on “rebuilding infrastructure and basic services,” all in efforts to “[establish] local governance and the rule of law.”\footnote{925}

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item\footnote{918} Ibid., 21.
\item\footnote{919} Nadeem Ahmad, “Coin in Peace-Building: Case Study of the 2009 Malakand Operation,” \textit{Prism} 2, no. 4 (2011): 129.
\item\footnote{920} A statement from the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) of the Pakistan Army. “Waziristan Myth Busted, Says ISPR.”
\item\footnote{922} “Terrorists Thrown out From Fata for Good: Army Chief,” \textit{Dawn}, September 17, 2015.
\item\footnote{924} Dixon, “Hearts and Minds? British Counter-Insurgency,” 362.
\end{itemize}}
After defeating the insurgents militarily, the Pakistan government attempted to win the hearts and minds of the people by introducing development projects in the tribal areas. For instance, after clearing areas from insurgents in Bajaur in 2010, the military undertook various development projects such as building schools and local health units. The government also initiated projects to develop road infrastructure in the agency. In addition, the military also helped the local people in building houses and in the rehabilitation process.926

The government launched the Sustainable Development Plan (SDP) for the FATA in 2006. The SDP was a long-term strategic plan, covering the years 2006–2015, to create social and economic development in the region including the development of infrastructure and the commerce and industrial sectors.927 In addition, the government established the FATA Secretariat, a FATA Task Force and the FATA Development Authority to identify the development needs of the region and to develop short, medium and long term strategies to achieve the development goals. However, many of these plans were not fully implemented until recently.

As a result of operation Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014, a huge displacement of the local population occurred. It has been estimated that around two million local people were displaced, around seventy percent of whom were women and children.928 The lack of civilian-led governance in the FATA made the situation more challenging and increased the vulnerabilities of the people. Since 2015, the government has attempted to address this problem. The government released Rs. 5 billion to the FATA Secretariat for the repatriation and rehabilitation of the internally displaced people of the FATA. In addition, the government announced financial assistance to the local people in rebuilding their homes. Four lakh Rupees would be given to build new houses and Rs.1,60,000/- would be given to repair partially damaged houses.929 The military has even helped the locals to build their houses.

In March–April 2015, the government of Pakistan announced a strategy for the rehabilitation of the people of the FATA. The rehabilitation strategy aims to reconstruct damaged facilities, rebuild education and health facilities as well as improve local governance. The strategy laid out five main areas to focus on. These included (i) rehabilitating physical infrastructure, (ii) strengthening law and order, (iii) expanding government service delivery, (iv) re-activating and strengthening the economy, and (v)

926 Pakistan’s military Brigadier who served in Bajaur (Kharian, Punjab), interview by author, October 10, 2013.
929 “FATA Secretariat Receives Rs 5 Billion for Repatriation and Rehabilitation of IDPs,” Pakistan Today, August 30, 2015.
strengthening social cohesion and peace building.\footnote{Muhammad Khan, “Rehabilitation, Reconstruction in FATA,” \textit{Pakistan Observer}, 2015.} The government announced a goal of complete rehabilitation within two years.\footnote{Ibid.} To achieve these objectives, the civilian authorities, the FATA Secretariat, the federal government and the armed forces are to work together through enhanced coordination.

The government also initiated a programme to develop a professional police force. Accordingly, 11,789 levies forces personnel along with 17,800 khasadars will be provided training and modern equipment to develop on the lines of a professional police force.\footnote{Iftikhar Firdous, “Roadmap to FATA: Rehabilitation Strategy to Be Presented Today,” \textit{The Express Tribune}, April 6, 2015.} Such a police force will help significantly in improving security as well as the law and order situation in the tribal areas. In addition, the Pakistani military has built a road network across the FATA and helped the people in the reconstruction of their damaged properties.\footnote{Khan, “Rehabilitation, Reconstruction in FATA.”} The construction of 1,020 kilometres of roads in the FATA will link the remote tribal areas with the main roads of the tribal agencies. The government has allocated Rs. 2,700 million for this project.\footnote{“Peshawar: Construction of Road in FATA,” \textit{Dawn}, January 24, 2015.}

However, challenges remain. Most notably, the government has not taken any significant step to integrate the FATA into Pakistan’s polity. Because the FATA is being directly controlled by the federal government, it lacks the institutional capacity to plan and execute development projects. The government of Pakistan needs to integrate the FATA politically and economically to realise true development in the region. According to an expert on the FATA, Brigadier (Retd.), Shaukat Qadir, true development in the FATA cannot be achieved without introducing political reforms in the FATA.\footnote{Shaukat Qadir, retird Brigadier of Pakistan’s Army (Skype), interview by author, December 4, 2015. (n.d.).}

There are proposals to merge FATA into the KPK or establish it as an independent province, but the government lacks the political will to change the semiautonomous status of the FATA.\footnote{Ibid.} The government must consult the local people of the FATA when deciding the political future of the region.\footnote{Ibid.} Ayaz Wazir warned that “One agrees with the need for reforms in FATA but this process should not be done in haste at the risk of a disaster, which is likely if people’s [tribesmen] participation is not ensured.”\footnote{Ayaz Wazir, “From FATA to PATA,” \textit{The News}, September 16, 2015.} If the political status of the FATA is not resolved, governance will remain a problem in the region. A security analyst and journalist Zahid Hussain maintained, “A major challenge for the civil and military leadership will be the rehabilitation of approximately 1.2 million IDPs. It is not enough to drive out the Taliban; it is also important to bring the agencies
into the mainstream and give them economic and political rights just as any other area of the country.”

Brigadier (Retd.) Shaukat also contended that “The virtual absence of a holistic governance response to the counterinsurgency strategy leaves a vacuum that, if left unfilled, would doom the state’s efforts to pacify militants permanently.”

### 7.11 Weakening of the TTP

As a result of a more effective counterinsurgency by the Pakistani government, the TTP’s hold in the FATA was broken. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the TTP’s hold and infrastructure was dismantled in Bajaur and South Waziristan and the Pakistani government established its writ. However, the militants’ leadership and some foot soldiers managed to escape these military assaults and sought refuge in North Waziristan. As a result, the military launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan on June 15, 2014. Operation Zarb-e-Azb severely damaged the TTP infrastructure in its last refuge, forcing them to flee across the border into Afghanistan. In addition, the military operation significantly reduced the operational capability of the TTP as evidenced by the reduction of terrorist-related incidents in Pakistani cities, particularly in the FATA. For example, during 2014 the total number of causalities in the FATA was 2,863, but the rate reduced to 411 for the first three months of 2015.

Ongoing and more effective assaults on the TTP have led to factionalism and instability within the organisation. Fazlullah emerged as the leader of the TTP amid a leadership crisis created after the death of the then leader, Hakimullah Mehsud, in a drone strike in November 2013. However, Fazlullah did not gain wide popularity within TTP ranks because he did not belong to the Wazir or Mehsud tribes of the FATA. The TTP’s leadership had previously always hailed from these tribes. Since Fazlullah assumed the leadership, the TTP has faced a number of factional conflicts. The process of factionalism accelerated after military strikes in June 2014. Several leaders of the TTP formed a new faction called Jamaat-ul Ahrar in September 2014. Moreover, in October 2014 several other leaders broke away from the Fazlullah-led TTP and pledged adherence to the head of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

In the face of territorial losses and internal factionalism, the TTP has engaged in a number of activities which can best be understood as missteps. In particular, attacking

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939 Hussain, “Beyond Zarb-I-Azb.”
soft targets has backfired on the organisation. A number of militants belonging to a TTP faction led by Mullah Fazlullah attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, killing 142 people, primarily school children and some staff members. This attack was called “Pakistan’s 9/11.” According to Michael Semple, the former deputy European Union envoy to Afghanistan and expert on the Taliban, “Fazlullah’s latest outrage reflects his weakness.” Another attack was carried out at the Pakistan-India border crossing near Wagah, Lahore, on 2 November 2014 by an affiliated group of the TTP known as Jamaat ul-Ahrar. Around 55 people were killed. Similarly, another attack was executed in early 2016 by a faction of the TTP led by Mullah Mansoor at the Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, 20 miles from Peshawar. This attack killed 20 people including students and teachers.

These attacks demonstrate a deep frustration within TTP ranks over the huge losses suffered as a result of the Zarb-e- Azb campaign in North Waziristan, which inflicted severe damage on the organisation's capabilities. This frustration is reminiscent of the 2004 school hostage carnage in Beslan in North Ossetia, the Russian Federation, where Chechen rebels killed 330 people, mostly school children. This massacre was partly motivated by Russian military operations in Chechnya that had inflicted enormous losses on the rebel movement.

Due to the lack of Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation and Afghanistan’s lack of complete control over its territory, the Afghan provinces adjacent to the FATA emerged as new sanctuaries providing refuge to the militants fleeing the Zarb-e-Azb offensive. The existence of these safe havens has enabled the militants’ leadership to survive and plot terrorist attacks within Pakistan. The latest upsurge of TTP violence suggests that security in Pakistan cannot be achieved without establishing security in Afghanistan.

7.12 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a strong counterinsurgency by the Pakistani government has successfully dislodged TTP from its strongholds in Bajaur, South Waziristan and North Waziristan, bringing an end to the insurgency, even though remnants of the insurgents still remain at large. This affirms the broader theoretical proposition that a

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949 Ibid.
strong counterinsurgency strategy can lead to the decline of an insurgency, or prevent its escalation.

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States changed markedly with the beginning of a new US presidency under Barack Obama. The Obama administration declared the Pakistan-Afghanistan region as the centre of international terrorism, as well as a greatest threat for the American security, and intensified efforts to achieve the objective of eliminating these threats. The Obama administration’s approach was a significant departure from the policy under the Bush administration. It pushed hard for a more effective Pakistani effort against local and foreign militants in the FATA region, coupled with an intensified US military campaign in Afghanistan. A change in security approach by the Obama administration was a significant factor in pushing Pakistan to mount a better counterinsurgency campaign in the FATA.

The TTP’s increasing hold in the FATA and adjacent settled areas, and their tactics of indiscriminate terrorist attacks posed a serious threat, persuading the Pakistani government to pay serious attention to the menace of the insurgency. A majority of the Pakistani people also came around to supporting military operations against the TTP as the government demonstrated a strong political will to fight the insurgency. A better counterinsurgency strategy and tactics were employed that helped to defeat the FATA insurgency. The security forces were exposed to training which improved their counterinsurgency skills. An emphasis was also placed on tactical adaptations through learning by doing in the field, and disseminating and sharing this information to improve the overall counterinsurgency strategy. These adaptations helped to achieve a more discriminatory use of force to target insurgents and to reduce collateral damage. Moreover, local populations were evacuated before launching military operations, providing the military with freedom to use heavy force to destroy the insurgents’ infrastructure.

Considerable military resources were devoted to these operations. An increase in the number of troops equipped with sophisticated weapons enabled the military to destroy the insurgents’ sanctuaries and their military capability. Following airstrikes, the military launched ground operations to capture the fleeing insurgents and to seize weapons and munitions. Most importantly, the clear and hold model was followed to consolidate the gains made against the insurgents. Military troops were permanently stationed after clearing areas of insurgents. This not only helped to restore public confidence in the state, but also inhibited the insurgents’ attempts at re-infiltration. The government also employed a ‘winning hearts and minds’ approach by making arrangements for the IDPs to return to their homes, as well as launching various development schemes to improve the socio-economic conditions in the region. Due to the weak civilian government in the
region as a result of its semi-autonomous status, the military has undertaken most of the reconstruction work, building schools and health units and helped locals build their homes. However, there remains an urgent need to initiate political, economic and social reforms in the FATA to prevent the resurgence of insurgency. Without winning the hearts and minds of the population, the threat of insurgency cannot be eliminated forever. There are plans underway for the political integration of the FATA region into mainstream Pakistan, but the government has largely showed a lethargic response to this.

As a result of Operation Zarb-e-Azb launched in June 2014, the insurgents were routed from their last refuge in North Waziristan. The remnants of the TTP insurgents fled across the border to Afghanistan. In addition, the TTP suffered internal splits. A number of commanders have established themselves in borders areas beyond the control of either government. With a drastic weakening in TTP strength, the organisation has resorted to a number of terrorist attacks on soft targets in the major cities of Pakistan. The most spectacular of these were an attack on an army-run school in December 2014, resulting into the killing of 135 children and staff members, and the attack on Bacha Khan University in January 2016, killing 20 students and teachers. The recent TTP attacks clearly show the frustration among its ranks over the loss of their territorial control and their diminishing strength.

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950 Yusufzai, “Zarb-E-Azb: Findings and Conclusions.”
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

This thesis has addressed both an empirical and a theoretical puzzle. The empirical puzzle is why an insurgency erupted in the FATA after decades of stability throughout most of the post-colonial period. The broader more theoretical puzzle is related to the timing of an insurgency: if a weak state is the best predictor of insurgency, as is contended in a great deal of insurgency literature, then why does rebellion emerge when it does, and not before? The FATA case shows that the leaders and communities of the region remained content over long periods of time despite – perhaps because of – the weak control of the Pakistani state. Even after the influx of Al Qaeda militants and the Afghan Taliban into the FATA in 2001, there was no rebellion until 2004. Why did rebellion occur in 2004, and not before? How did the rebellion grow so powerful and why did it decline when it did? This thesis has proposed several answers to these questions in the form of an empirically-supported theoretical model.

Notwithstanding the insights of the weak state theory of insurgence, it does not explain why some weak states undergo civil war and other such states manage to avert it; nor why some regions within a weak state rebel while others remain quiescent. In particular, it does not answer the question of why some regions remain ostensibly at peace over long periods and then suddenly erupt in rebellion. In other words, it does not tell us about the timing of an insurgency in a weak state.

To resolve these theoretical and empirical puzzles, this thesis proposed a three-step model which explains the timing and duration of an insurgency in areas under the weak control of a state. The first step of the model hypothesises that weak state control does not necessarily cause an insurgency in a potentially rebellious region, particularly if the central government maintains a form of modus vivendi with local leaders and communities. This is particularly the case if the government allows local leaders to maintain a form of autonomy in maintaining traditional power structures. If it does so, then rebellion is unlikely. The second step of the model proposes an explanation of insurgency timing. I contend that conflict between the state and the region is likely to occur only when the state disrupts that status quo, most notably by undermining the authority of local leaders.

Whether the insurgency escalates or is quickly contained is addressed by the third step of the model. A poor counterinsurgency allows an insurgency to grow. As outlined, there are many potential problems with a government’s counterinsurgency efforts which may contribute to the escalation of a rebellion: a lack of the necessary political will, a lacklustre performance by security forces due to inept counterinsurgency skills, the indiscriminate use of force, the signing of peace deals with insurgents from a position of
weakness, and an inability of local security forces in providing security to the local population. On the other hand, a strong counterinsurgency characterised by a strong political will, a retraining of military forces in appropriate techniques, the targeted use of force in order to avoid civilian damage, destruction of insurgent infrastructure and holding territory, and the winning of hearts and minds of the local population may bring insurgency to an end. In this thesis, this model was applied to the FATA Insurgency.

This study builds on the theory of insurgency, and makes an original contribution to the literature. The timing of insurgency has largely been ignored by weak state theory and many other explanations of conflict which emphasise static structural factors such as regional inequality, political injustice and state weakness. This study also broadens our theoretical understanding of the rise and decline of an insurgency. The FATA case demonstrates that there is no path-dependent relationship between state weakness and rebellion. Rather, the counterinsurgency approach taken by a government decides whether a rebellion rises over a protracted period of time, or is quickly contained and defeated.

Despite only weak control by the Pakistani state for decades, there was no rebellion from the FATA tribes. The FATA tribes had posed severe resistance whenever the British attempted to enhance their control by encroaching on tribal territory, or interfering in the tribes’ affairs. As a result, the colonial administration offered the tribes a great deal of autonomy to manage their own affairs. Independent Pakistan continued with the British style of limited administration. The Pakistani government recognised the semiautonomous status of the tribal areas and pledged to continue with the subsidies and allowances given to the tribes under the British government.

Successive Pakistani governments maintained tribal autonomy so as to appease the tribal groups because of Afghanistan’s hostility towards Pakistan. Afghanistan declined to accept Pakistan as an independent state and laid irredentist claims to Pakistan's Pashtun-inhabited areas, including the tribal areas. Any attempt by Pakistani governments to change the status quo in the tribal areas may have allowed Afghanistan an opportunity to incite these tribes against Pakistan. In addition, the Pakistani government’s covert campaign to fight the Soviets after their invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 also necessitated the maintenance of this status quo in the FATA. The lack of interference by the Pakistani government in the FATA explains the lack of rebellion in the region for such a long period of time.

This state of affairs began to change after the United States invaded Afghanistan following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The Taliban regime was overthrown and they, along with foreign militants including Al Qaeda, moved across the border to the FATA where they were welcomed by the local tribes due to their common Pashtun ethnicity and a
sense of Islamic brotherhood. Despite facing pressure from the international community, particularly the United States, to take action against the foreign militants within its territory, the Pakistan government was well aware of the ferocity of the tribes' independence and remained reluctant to interfere in the tribal areas. However, under growing pressure from the United States, during 2002-03 the Pakistani government employed a strategy of dialogue with the local leaders and the tribes to resolve the issue of foreign militants in the tribal areas.

US pressure intensified in 2003, forcing the Pakistani government to conduct a number of search operations to expel the foreign militants. The search operations created some tensions between the government and the tribes. Despite these tensions, there was no rebellion because the local leaders' traditional authority and the region's traditional autonomy were not seriously damaged. The local leaders still believed that the Pakistani government had largely maintained the status quo, which effectively avoided rebellion. This explains why the tribes did not revolt against the state during this time, despite the influx of Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.

However, in early 2004, the Pakistani government succumbed to growing American pressure and launched an intensive intervention in the tribal areas. These military operations caused the insurgency for several reasons. The FATA tribes interpreted the government's actions as a violation of their longstanding agreements; they termed it as an invasion of the tribal areas by the state. The indiscriminate use of force caused many human rights abuses. Most notably, the authority of the local leaders was undermined. The sanctity of the tribal territory and tribal independence became a thing of the past. The government also stopped paying subsidies and allowances to the tribes. As a result, the tribes resisted the state and fought back against the security forces, inflicting heavy losses on the military. Initially, the revolt was limited to the Wazir-inhabited areas of South Waziristan but soon engulfed the whole of the South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Bajaur agencies.

The nature of the Pakistani government's counterinsurgency strategy then determined whether the insurgency grew or declined. As I have contended in this thesis, the FATA insurgency became forceful and vigorous because of a range of poor counterinsurgency tactics pursued by the Pakistani government and military. However, subsequently, a stronger and more effective counterinsurgency brought an end to the insurgency.

Initially, the government had underestimated the militant threat in the FATA and also did not have the necessary political will to fight the insurgency. The security forces' performance was lacklustre, as they believed they were fighting America's war. A majority of the Pakistani people also did not support the government counterinsurgency because of anti-American feelings. Moreover, fighting the insurgency through
conventional forces rendered the campaign ineffective. Collateral damage, resulting from the indiscriminate use of force, created anti-government and anti-military feelings which then translated into support for the insurgents. Furthermore, the government signed peace deals with the insurgents from a position of weakness. This further emboldened the insurgents and raised their standing among the tribal populations. The security forces in the FATA were unable to provide security to the local population, further propelling the latter to submit to the insurgents’ rule. All these factors led to a far more powerful insurgency.

However, the Pakistani government improved its counterinsurgency strategy in the following years which helped to bring an end to the insurgency. The new US administration under Barack Obama and its AfPak policy, which focused on the Pakistan-Afghanistan region, was a significant factor in pushing Pakistan to shore up its counterinsurgency drive to eliminate the foreign militants and their local allies. The increasing power of the insurgents forced the Pakistani government to acknowledge the enormity of the threat and generated stronger political will for counterinsurgency. The government provided the necessary resources, equipment and training to fight the insurgents. Techniques were improved through learning in the field.

To avoid civilian damage the forces attempted to apply force in a discriminate and targeted manner and evacuated the local population from insurgency-stricken areas. After clearing areas of insurgents, the troops garrisoned the areas and established checkpoints to hold territory. The government has now taken steps to facilitate the safe return of the displaced population and introduced some development projects to win the hearts and minds of the population. There is still work to be done; there are complaints that finances are insufficient to make a major impact on the region after years of neglect.

A more targeted and effective counterinsurgency by the Pakistani government has, nevertheless, not only deprived the TTP of its territorial control but also seriously dismantled its organisational structure and military capability. Fazlullah, from Swat, is apparently heading the organisation but in reality the movement has lost an effective central command structure. In addition, the TTP has suffered a series of splits and a number of dispersed factions have emerged, many located across the border in Afghanistan. Most TTP fighters are now following a more autonomous pattern of warfare. Each commander has maintained a group of fighters who are conducting independent operations. The different factions of the TTP have conducted terrorist attacks on soft targets in Pakistan, most notably a military-run school in Peshawar. Such activities are certainly the response of an organisation in decline; a reaction to a loss of territory and internal factionalism.
However, without adequately addressing the grievances of the FATA population, a permanent end to insurgency cannot be achieved. This is the right time for the government to integrate the tribal areas into mainstream Pakistan, by either making them part of nearby KPK province, or by declaring them an independent province. The grievances of the population cannot be addressed without giving them their due political, economic and social rights. These areas will remain vulnerable to insurgent influence unless the government pays the required level of attention to the local population.

Further studies of weak states and insurgency should focus on the question of timing, and the rise and fall of the conflict. My model requires further empirical testing through a comparative study with variance in outcome and government approach. In addition, a study of weak states which have not experienced insurgency would be very profitable to see if this allows the status quo – and peace between the state and potentially restive areas – to remain in place. I hope that my modest study of an area previously known as ‘the most dangerous place on earth’ may provide some assistance to the accumulation of knowledge in the study of rebellion.
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