

Rise of Taliban in Waziristan

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Abstract

Waziristan is in the eye of the storm since 2001. After the US invasion of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban government in 2002, Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements slipped into this region. The existing ground realities like terrain, tradition, administrative system, lack of political power, religious feelings, and socio-economic deprivation prevalent in Waziristan provided favourable and feasible ground for the rise and spread of Talibanization. The Pakistani troops moved into FATA to expel foreigners and check their further infiltration into the Pakistani tribal land. Military actions developed a sense of organization among the local Taliban in order to protect their friends and fight defensive jihad in Waziristan and hence Taliban groups emerged. NUMBER of groups emerged, and some prominent groups are Naik Muhammad Group, Abdullah Mehsud Group, Baitullah Mehsud Taliban Commandos, Mullah Nazir Group, Jalal-Ud-Din Haqani Group, Hafiz Gulbahadur Group. In 2007 a coherent group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) came on the horizon. Soon a split occurred in TTP and Turkistan Baitanni Group and Abdullah Shaheed Group headed by Zain Ud Din stood against TTP. These groups remain dominant and have established their own regulation and Sharia in their area of influence.

Keywords: Taliban, Waziristan, FATA, Pakistan

Introduction

The seed of Talibanization in Pakistan lies in General Zia-ul-Haq's Afghan Policy. The support of Mujahideen and recruiting the Pakistani youth for *Jihad* in Afghanistan has proven to be a headache for Pakistan. Pakistan provided sanctuary to the Jihadis against the Soviet Union. The later formation of Taliban as an organized force with the help of Pakistani Intelligence Agency the ISI has become now a threat to

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national integration. Waziristani Taliban are the product of the Afghan jihad when Waziristan was used as a launching pad for *Jihad* in Afghanistan. The *Jihad* culture in Waziristan developed in late 19th and early 20th centuries when *Jihad* was used against British imperialism. The *Faqir* of Ipi Haji Mirza Ali Khan, Mullah Pawanda Mahiuddin, Shahzada Fazal Din, Zar Khan *Shaheed*, Gulband Turikhiel, Maulvi Mujibullah Laswandi, Saday Khan Wazir and a number of Mujahideen challenged the British intervention in Waziristan. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the Soviet invaded Afghanistan and Pak-US adopted counter strategies to push back the Red Army from Afghanistan, in which one could see the revival of the spirit of *Jihad* in the border region. The slogan of *Jihad* against the infidel Czarist worked well in which Pakistan and the US had their own axe to grind. Mujahideen from Pakistan joined Taliban movement in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. By the time of the US invasion in 2001, some Taliban from Pakistan were commanding Taliban forces against the Northern Alliance. With the toppling of the Taliban government, the Taliban moved to Pakhtoon dominated areas of Afghanistan and subsequently to Pakistan. Number of their combatant friends of other nationalities slipped into Pakistan. Waziristan was the first place where the movement of foreigners i.e. Uzbeks, Arabs, Chechens, Turkmen and Afghan Taliban elements observed. Among the foreigners, Al Qaeda (accused of 9/11 incidents) and Islamic movements of Uzbekistan elements were prominent. President General Pervez Musharraf under some internal and external obligations sent army to Waziristan to push them out or kill them. The operation against the Taliban and foreign elements developed a sense of organization among the Taliban to fight what they called a defensive *jihad* in Pakistan. The first ever organization of the local Taliban under the leadership of Naik Muhammad emerged in South Waziristan. Naik Muhammad was killed in a drone attack in 2004 (Pakistan claimed the responsibility for his death). Abdullah Mehsud succeeded him. The Taliban movement became popular and spread in different areas. They organized themselves under different local commanders. Baitullah commandos, Nazir Group, Hafiz Gul Bahader group, Sadiq Noor group, Punjabi Taliban group and some other small groups arose as a reaction of army operations and drone attacks. In 2007, a coherent group under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was founded. In the TTP *Shura*, all groups have representation. Nearly 40 groups of the Pakistani Taliban from FATA, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Punjab are part of the TTP. A new layer of suicide attacks against Pakistan army and allied forces in Afghanistan took place after TTP establishment. With emergence of the

TTP, not only the Taliban sphere of influence enhanced but a rise occurred in attacks on army and civilians with in Pakistan, and the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan had been facing difficult times.

Taliban focus has not been limited to fighting against Pakistan army and allied forces in Afghanistan or taking back Afghan government but also the Taliban style rule in the area has been a priority. In Waziristan every group in its area of influence adopted their own rules and regulations. Shaving at barber shops and music is forbidden and administration of justice has been in the hands of the Taliban.

The word *Talib* or Taliban has become a symbol of fear, threat and aggression. Actually, the students of religious schools (madaris) are commonly known as Taliban. But the word Talib or Taliban used in the present scenario refers to the organized militia force which emerged in 1994 in Afghanistan to achieve political power and enforce Sharia law. The 9/11 events transformed the fate of the Taliban and the Al- Qaeda and turned them from the ruler to wanderer. To escape from humiliation at the hands of allied forces Taliban and al Qaeda elements crossed the border and entered Waziristan. Taliban in Waziristan emerged as a resistance force in 2002 and reached its peak in 2007, when small groups organized under the banner of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

*“Talibanization refers to the political and social process following or imitating the political system, religious laws and life style of Taliban out of Pakistan. In the international media, it mainly describes the political and social development in Pakistan, especially, in the north-western tribal areas. This process used to be called Taliban Syndrome”.*¹

Now the concept of good and bad Taliban has developed with the action of the Taliban. There are good Taliban and bad Taliban according to a Pakistani perspective. Good Taliban are those who are not involved in anti state activities. The pro government Taliban who enjoy Pakistan army and intelligence support are called good Taliban. Bad Taliban are those who are involved in anti-state activities and are fighting war against the Pakistan army.

The word Talib or Taliban in Waziristan is generally referred to the organized groups that are resisting the Pakistan army (in Pakistan) and fighting against the US and allied forces in Afghanistan. Hence Talibanization can be defined as a socio-religious movement to assume authority and rule the region under Afghan Taliban style *Sharia* law.

Causes of Talibanization

Supporters of the Taliban in Waziristan before 9/11 were present but they had no group except Haqqani's network. Taliban's aides were present in Waziristan but had no influence on the people. They did not try to enforce *Sharia* law or their own regulations. After 9/11, all the existing ground realities like terrain, tradition, administrative system, lack of political power, religious feelings, and socio-economic deprivation prevalent in Waziristan provided favourable and feasible ground for the rise and spread of Talibanization.

(i) *US invasion of Afghanistan*

The United States and its allies' invasion of Afghanistan for overthrowing the Taliban regime and destroying the Al-Qaeda network forced the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda elements to take refuge in the border areas of Pakistan. Not only the Mujahideen of Waziristan, who were fighting in Afghanistan against the Northern Alliance, abandoned fighting but Al-Qaeda, Afghan Taliban, Uzbek, etc. with some prominent leaders slipped into Waziristan. Waziristan has become a safe haven from where they could launch attacks on allied forces. The U.S. attack on Afghanistan was followed by agitation and rallies in Pakistan. In both North and South Waziristan, large numbers of people took part in agitation and the historic march from Kanigurram to Laddah under the leadership of Mualana Muhammad Zaman Burki was the expression of anger of people against the US invasion in Afghanistan. Such marches never took place in Waziristan. The local Mullahs in their speeches and sermons called this invasion an attack on Islam by the US and its allies. *Jihad's Fatwas* were issued by some mullahs in Pakistan. In a society like Waziristan, where the mullahs have influence, they not only provided moral support to Taliban but financial and human resources were also provided. They were given safe havens and their assistance was considered their moral responsibility and a matter of *sawab* (reward from God). The situation created by mullahs in Waziristan provided opportunity to the local people who were fighting in Afghanistan to organize themselves under the local *Amirs* or leaders.

(ii) *Geo- Strategic Location of Waziristan*

Waziristan lies between the river Gomal and the river Kurrum, bordering with the neighboring Muslim country of Afghanistan, touches the provinces of Paktiya, Paktika and Khoust- the hub of

Taliban activities in Afghanistan. “Since the tribal areas are the natural geo-strategic gateway to Afghanistan, South Waziristan was a particularly important supply route for the Mujahideen, helped by the fact that the same tribe (Wazir) live on both sides of the border. After the toppling of the Afghan Taliban regime in late 2001, Pakistani, Afghan, and foreign militants fleeing from the US forces gathered in strength in Waziristan due to the naturally porous borders”.² Waziristan is a buffer zone between Afghanistan and the settled districts of Pakistan. FATA, especially Waziristan had favourable terrain that the Taliban uses as a launching pad against the NATO and ISAF forces.

(iii) *Peoples’ Inclination Toward Islam and Sympathy With Taliban Regime in Kabul*

The Taliban government in Afghanistan 1996 to 2001 was projected as an Islamic government where Islamic laws were implemented. The picture of the Taliban regime, administration of justice and law and order presented by the local Mujahideen who returned from the battlefield of Afghanistan attracted people. During the Russian, Afghan war Mujahideen for fighting jihad in Afghanistan were recruited in the border areas of Pakistan. Due to Mullah dominated role in the society, the inclination of Pushtoons of FATA towards Islam is understandable. Islam is playing dominant role not only in tribal affairs but in the Pakistani social and political life, serving as symbolic unifying element and parameter for public policy debate. Taliban regime’s spillover effect is the radicalization of Waziristan and other regions of Pakistan. Even the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif declared in 1998 that “Taliban justice” is needed in Pakistan.³ In public discussion of border region, Taliban influence was seemed to be so large that they want a Taliban government in the region. M. Zahid Khan quoting Ahmed Rashid writes,

*The Taliban’s close links with Pakistani society, their uncompromising stands on their version of Islamic values and the fact that they represent a new form of Islamic radicalism which is admired by the younger generation of local madrassa students, give them far more clout inside Pakistan than the other Afghan Mujahideen groups. For many the Taliban are inspiration.*⁴

Anti-Americanism in Waziristan is widespread and Taliban (who were involved in resistance against the U.S. & NATO forces) were considered as the heroes of Islam. In such a situation where slogan of “go America go” was chanting in Pakistani society, in Waziristan they could easily exploit the people.

(iv) *Flaws in Administration System*

The Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) administrative system is centuries old and has been governed by the draconian laws implemented by the British government. FATA continues to be governed under the 1901 Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) laws, which gave extensive powers to political agents in tribal agencies. The Political Agent is the emperor without a crown. Political agent has sole political, judicial and administrative powers. FATA comes under direct control of the president of Pakistan. The President through its agent, Governor of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa administers FATA. No policing authority except *Khassadar* (the dull force in the world) is looking over the criminal activities. The unjust and unilateral decision of political administration has decreased the trust on the system. The people are fed up with this unjust and cruel system of administration. FCR embodied such provisions that not only violating national and international human rights laws but are against laws of nature, like collective punishment, destroying of houses, sending one behind bars without any reason, and not to challenge the decision of the Political Agent in any court of Pakistan. Due to the prevailing system, corruption and abuse of power is common which causes educational backwardness and socio-economic deprivation. Beside these, the government has no control on the border with Afghanistan where the Taliban frequently cross the border from Afghanistan. The “administrative and structural flaws present in the tribal areas provide the justification for and sustainability to the Taliban movement and allowed them to introduce a system similar to the Afghan Taliban”.⁵ Slogan of Islam and social justice provide a better anchor acceptable to all of the deprived sections of society.

(v) *Absence of Political Parties/ Authority*

Political parties not only provide organization but also develop political and social awareness in the people. Unfortunately the people of FATA remain deprived of the right to choose political

party, since the inception of Pakistan till August 14, 2009, when President Asif Ali Zardari extended Political Parties Act to FATA, but till today, it has not been implemented. FATA has representatives in the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan but they have no right of legislation for FATA. The Local Government Act 2002 was extended to FATA but soon was resumed. In the absence of a participatory system of governance at the grassroots level, the bias in favour of the traditional feudal system of the economy and social hierarchy and an inexplicable slavish attitude of the people towards the clerics combine to create conditions favourable for upholding of a cycle of underdevelopment, most favourable to the growth of militancy and conservatism.⁶ The lack of political practices in Waziristan created a vacuum that provide opportunities to the influential elements to exploit situation in their favour. As Khalid Ahmad says,

*“the non-extension of political parties act into (FATA) is but one factor in keeping the region as badland of law and order, a kind of Bermuda triangle of the writ of the state suited for any adventurer like Osama Bin Laden...to make his base there”.*⁷

Taliban took advantage of these intrinsic structural weaknesses in the tribal political and organizational system and build up a ground for their organization.

(vi) *Limited Writ of Government:*

The writ of the government in Waziristan had not existed in true spirit even before the emergence of Taliban's groups. The government writ was limited to roads and the cantonment or the Political 's compound. But in some areas obviously in head quarters- Wana, Miranshah and Mir Ali the political administration could enforce their writ. The political administration was not able to punish the culprit living outside the headquarter area. Kidnapping and killing have become a routine matter. Waziristan has remained a safe harbor for the militants of the settled areas of Pakistan. The British established a system of policing the region through *Khassadar* has not been working effectively. *Khassadars* are tribal police but could only be seen on duty (outside headquarters) when high governmental figure like Governor, Prime Minister or President of Pakistan

visit Waziristan. In such a situation, it was not difficult for Taliban to organize themselves and enforce their own regulations.

Taliban Groups

Taliban were scattered in Waziristan and no one ever thought of their organization. The foreign elements like Al Qaeda and IMU slipped into Waziristan and are living with their local friends. The Pakistani troops moved into FATA to expel foreigners and check further infiltration into the Pakistani tribal land. Military actions developed a sense of organization among the local Taliban in order to protect their friends and fight defensive jihad in Waziristan and hence Taliban groups emerged.

- *Naik Muhammad Group*

The first ever group of Taliban which emerged in South Waziristan was the Naik Muhammad group of Taliban. Before, there was no organizational structure of Taliban and they operated individually in Afghanistan. The Pakistan army movement into Waziristan and skirmishes with foreign and local Taliban compelled Taliban to organize themselves. He emerged as a leader of anti-government Taliban in 2003. The son of tribal head Naik Muhammad left school and joined maddrassa, Jami-Darul-Uloom Waziristan run by renowned scholar and JUF leader Maulana Noor Muhammad in Head Quarter Wana. During the Russian Afghan war Wana was used as a supply base to the Mujahideen, and he joined the struggle against the Red army in Afghanistan. He joined the Taliban as they emerged as a coherent power in their struggle against the War Lords and the Northern Alliance. He remained commander in Afghan Taliban force.⁸ The US invasion turned his fate and came back to Waziristan. He was facilitating Al Qaeda and Uzbek elements in Waziristan in their fight against the US and her Allies in Afghanistan. Pakistan army had launched four operations against him and his visiting friends from foreign countries. Pak Army first raided on June 27, 2002 on a house where foreign elements were residing and second in October 2003 that resulted in killing of Taliban elements. A bloody skirmish took place in January 2004 in which the army did not achieve their targets. Army gave a deadline to Wazir tribe to handover all foreign elements by February 20, 2004 but Tribal elder failed to honour the deadline. Under the Frontier Crimes Regulation “Continuing the crackdown on 'non-cooperative' South Waziristan tribes, the

administration arrested 16 tribesmen including four Yargulkhel and Kakakhel Wazir sub-tribes' elders and the chief of Ahmedzai tribe. Two of the three most wanted men - Naik Muhammad and Sharif - reportedly belong to the Yargulkhel sub-tribe while the third - Maulvi Abbas - belongs to the Ashrafkhel sub-tribe, which was fined Rupees 1.2 million.⁹ On the other hand the Ahmadzai Wazirs were collectively "fined Rs. 5.4 million under the law of collective responsibility for failing to prevent attacks"¹⁰ on army checkpoints. Pakistan army launched forth but massive operation against Naik Muhammad led Taliban faction in which 2000 army and militia forces involved along with the SSG and a Quick Reaction Force based in Tarbela. Nearly, "fourteen helicopters ferried these troops in a 'search and destroy' mission"¹¹ in Kalosha and in Azam Warsak. Economic sanctions were enforced against Ahmadzai Wazir for nine months long that totally damaged their annual budget. Naik Muhammad struck a deal with the Pakistan army, promised to remain peaceful. He became the focus of attention after this deal but soon the truce became ineffective after his death in a drone strike in 2004.

- *Abdullah Mehsud Group*

One-legged hardliner commander, Abudullah Mehsud was one of the attractive personalities who commanded the Taliban. Born in Nano village of South Waziristan in 1974, he studied at a Government College in Peshawar. He hailed from the Mehsud sub tribe Saleemi Kheil joined Afghan Taliban in early struggle against War Lords. He had fame in guerrilla warfare and become hero in Waziristan. He had become active in Waziristan after coming from the world notorious prison house 'Guantanamo Bay'. Earlier, he fought alongside "the Taliban in Afghanistan where he lost a leg. Captured in Kunduz in December 2001, he was transferred to Guantanamo Bay where he posed as an Afghan and was released after 25 months as a person of little importance. In March 2003, he returned to his native Waziristan to become one of the main leaders of the insurgents".¹² His real name was "Muhammad Alam" and was an active anti American fighter. He was nominated the head of Taliban in Waziristan after the death of Naik Muhammad. He preached anti Americanism in Waziristan and tried to convince people by telling the stories of US cruelties in Guantanamo Bay jail. He was a dual passport holder of Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹³ The

Afghan passport helped him to be released from US custody. He aspired to shoulder military responsibilities. He “had turned to militancy after failing to obtain a commission in Pakistan army in the early 1990s”.¹⁴ He was involved in kidnapping Chinese engineers from the Gomal Zam area in October 2004. He was replaced with Baitullah Mehsud because of his hard belief in jihad against the Musharraf Government and the Pakistan army, whom he called friends of infidel America. He never made any peace deal with the Pakistan army. In an interview he said “I will never surrender and prefer to embrace martyrdom while fighting till the last drop of blood”.¹⁵ He kept to his word till his death and never surrendered. He went to Afghanistan to fight a jihad against the US and allied forces. He was on his way back to Waziristan from Qandahar when he was encountered by Pakistani forces in Zhob where he had stayed. On the morning of July 24, 2007, after an exchange of fire with forces, he exploded himself to avoid being arrested by Pakistani forces.¹⁶ Zain-ud-Din was nominated the head of his cadre. His group is now pro-Pakistan and supports the Afghan jihad only.

- *Baitullah Mehsud Taliban Commandos*

The son of *Pesh-Imam* (prayer leader), Baitullah Mehsud was born in Nargosa village of South Waziristan and shifted with his family to Landi Dhok near Bannu. He got little religious education in Miranshah Pepal Madrassa where he came in contact with Mujahideen and joined the Afghanistan jihad.¹⁷ In the wake of the US invasion of Afghanistan, Baitullah came to Waziristan to escape US forces. He was unknown figure in Waziristan till 2004 just before he became commander of the Taliban in South Waziristan. The army operation had shifted to Mehsud area. On September 9, “at least 50 terrorists, including some Chechens, Uzbeks and Arabs, were reported to have been killed and 120 others were wounded during an aerial raid on their training camp at Bad Awaz Garang in the Kaikhel area of South Waziristan”¹⁸ but most of them were civilians who rushed to rescue the injured and were killed in the second Aerial attack. Skirmishes had taken place between Baitullah commando and security forces till Sararogha Truce.

He got reputation when he signed a deal with Pakistan government at Sararogha in 2005 after long skirmish with army and became *commander of peace*. The deal lasted for several months, both accusing each other for violating the agreement.

His group was called “Taliban commandos”. Initially he took steps to punish all kidnappers, thieves and sellers of illegal drugs like *hashish*. Kidnapping for ransom was common and his step to punish kidnappers helped him to gain public support. He forbade the barbers to shave and music shops were closed and even banned music in vehicles. His cadres stood to bring peace to the war ridden society and this tactic worked well. They started to collect taxes from the people in the name of protecting people and maintaining peace. Baitullah Mehsud had set up his own judicial system where the Pashtoon tribal approached him for delivery of justice and in most of the cases he intervened to resolve them.¹⁹ In short span of time, he became so powerful that no one could even speak against his rulings. The people joined his cadres to get favour in resolving their disputes. Female education was forbidden and girl schools were closed in his areas. He became de facto sovereign in his area of influence. He first believed in jihad against the US forces in Afghanistan but later he became the preacher of jihad against the Pakistan army. No military operation got success against his cadre. He adopted harsh methods like beheadings, kidnappings and suicide attacks or *Fidai attacks* against the Pakistan army to deter operations in Waziristan. He is believed to be leading command 5000 to 10,000 Taliban.²⁰

His group kidnapped Paramilitary forces several times and a few were subsequently killed. In August 2007, nearly 300 Pak army personnel were forced to surrender near Kanigurram. In January 2008, operation *Zalzala* (earth quake) was launched against Baitullah in which nearly 200,000 people were displaced.²¹ Khalid Aziz, former KPK chief secretary and expert on Tribal affairs, said the displacement was "one of the biggest in tribal history" adding that human cost of the conflict in Waziristan "has gone unrecorded".²² Baitullah Mehsud offered peace truce in February 2008 and On May 21, 2008, Pakistan signed a peace agreement with Taliban fighters.²³

He reached to such fame that he was named in “100 most influential people in the world” by Time Magazine and Newsweek called him “more dangerous than Osama Bin Laden”. He was chosen the first head of newly established group known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) by Taliban’s Shura in December 2007. He rose from a cadre of guerilla fighter to lead the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), a worldly well known organization, by dint of his intelligence and organizational abilities. He headed

TTP for about two years till he was killed in a US missile strike on August 5, 2009. A split occurred in the TTP on appointment of new head and subsequently Hakeem Ullah Mehsud was nominated his successor.

- *Mullah Nazir Group*

In the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe, “there were 14 groups of Taliban until November 2006 but after the appointment of Mullah Nazir as commander, all of them were brought under one leadership. Two Taliban commanders, Ghulam Jan and Ifthikar, do not accept Mullah Nazir as commander”.²⁴ A popular commander in Ahmedzai of Wana- Nazir is a very sensible, farsighted and good strategist. He is born in a middle class family of Wazir, in Birmal, South Waziristan Agency in 1975. Getting *Madrassa* education, he joined Afghan jihad in mid 1990s till 2001 in Afghanistan. With the fall of Taliban emirate in Afghanistan, he came back to Wana.²⁵ After the death of the Naik Muhammad he became the leader of the Taliban faction of Wana. He got popularity when he expelled Uzbeks and their local allies from Wana. Rivalry took place between the two groups one is led by Mullah Nazir and the other by Tahir Yuldashev commander of outlawed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Haji Omer Wazir a local commander sided with Uzbek while Nazir was backed by local *lashker* and government of Pakistan. The government wanted a place from where Waziristan affairs could be handled and Wana is the place that serves the strategic interest of the Pakistan army. Strong support was given to Nazir against the Uzbeks. The Political Administration convinced tribal elder to raise a *lashker* against the foreigners and strengthen Nazir’s hand. The immediate reason of rivalry was the killing of two Arab fighters, “Saiful Asad and Sheikh Asadullah (a Saudi bagman), both guests of Mullah Nazir”.²⁶ Besides, the Uzbeks were involved in killing of local tribal heads (Maliks) and other people. The hospitality proved head ache for the locals and they turned against the Uzbeks. A public announcement was made urging the locals to shoot Uzbek militants that they come across. In three weeks long skirmishes “250 Uzbeks and 50 tribal militants have been killed”.²⁷ The Uzbeks and their local supporters left for North Waziristan and Baitullah dominated area of South Waziristan. The soft and pro government Taliban faction of Mullah Nazir legitimized fighting against foreign

troops in Afghanistan. His faction is fighting in Afghanistan against allied forces and recruiting people for this cause.

He had differences with Baitullah Mehsud which was “most open to cooperation with foreign fighters and non-Deobandi movements, which has caused ideological friction within the umbrella organization following the case of Mullah Nazir who fought the Uzbek salafists of the IMU”.²⁸ The discrepancy reached such an extent that they forbade each other faction members not to enter their sphere of influence. On request of Mullah Omer, they agreed to set aside the differences. However, “Baitullah Mehsud, Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur met in February 2009 ... formed a new 13 member council, *Shura Ittihadul Mujahideen*, to run the affairs of the new alliance”²⁹ and buried their hatchet. Mullah Nazir is presently in peace with the government of Pakistan.

- *Jalal-ud-Din Haqqani Group*

Jalal-ud-Din Haqqani’s group is the oldest group in Waziristan famous for recruiting jihadis for Afghanistan from Waziristan. Haqqani belong to Zadran Tribe of Eastern Afghanistan. During Russian- Afghan war, Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani was a favorite commander of the American and the Pakistani intelligence agencies and Arab benefactors because of his organizational and leadership capabilities.³⁰ Haqqani got fame as a Mujahideen leader during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s and is still enjoying leadership role in Pakistan and Afghan Taliban. He served as Minister of Tribal Affairs in the Taliban regime of 1996-2001, is believed to be closer to Al Qaeda than to the ousted Taliban leadership in part because one of his wives is purportedly Arab.³¹ He has been considered responsible for bringing Arabs, Uzbeks and Chechen into the Afghan jihad. Former Minister in Taliban government in Afghanistan has widespread network in North Waziristan- Miranshah, Mir Ali and some other villages. He enjoyed a support base and ran madaris around Miramshah and Mir Ali. He had public school in Miranshah and a hospital where most of injured Mujahideen got treatment. Since Russian invasion in Afghanistan, Haqqani group is active in recruiting people for jihad. Haqqani’s network is active in North Waziristan and in “the Afghan provinces of Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni, Logar, Wardak, and Kabul and provides support to Taliban networks in Kunar, Nangarhar, Helmand, and Kandahar provinces”.³² Haqqani’s group is posing

serious threat to allied forces in Afghanistan and has been called responsible for and linked with the bulk of suicide attacks in the Afghan capital of Kabul, including the bombings of the Indian Embassy, the Serena hotel, and, most recently, the attacks on ISAF's Bagram Air Base and CIA compound in Khost. Haqqani network is the central vein of communication between Al Qaeda, Afghani and Pakistani Talibans. His eldest son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, is active figure in waging jihad against the allied forces. Once US right hand in recruiting people for Afghan jihad is now considered the worst enemy by USA. Haqqani base in Waziristan "has been repeatedly targeted in September and October 2008 by the U.S",³³ and still he is on the hit list of the CIA. The USA has been repeatedly asking Pakistani government to operate against Haqqani network. Like Baitullah network, Haqqani has been held responsible for attacking the NATO and US forces. Hamid Karzia government and the USA tried to bring him to negotiation table but Haqqani bluntly refused. It was reported that Karzai had reached out on two occasions in 2007 and 2009 without any success. However, Haqqani group denied any meeting with Karzai or his associates.

(vi) *Hafiz Gulbahadur Group*

Hafiz Gul Bahadur one of the prominent Taliban commanders, comes from Madda Khel, North Waziristan. He took part in the Afghan civil war and fought against the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Hafiz received world "attention in the month before the 9/11 attacks when he threatened to attack monitors the United Nations planned to deploy to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region to halt the flow of weapons to the Afghan Taliban".³⁴ Bahadur strongly opposed the deployment of such monitors, which would decrease the support of Taliban from Pakistan and raised a lashkar of hundreds of volunteers.

The US Afghan invasion provided a logical ground for Hafiz to organize its militia and to fight against what he calls the enemy of Islam i.e. America and its allies. His fighters have been reported to be in several thousands. Hafiz a Torikhiel Wazir has the ability to combine political insight and charisma with local tribal ties gave him a strong foundation for acquiring power.³⁵ He stood against social evil and said, "Opium and alcohol have destroyed the youth. Obscenity, video and satellite dishes are everywhere. The government is not taking the responsibility to eradicate these evils therefore we decided to put an end to it."³⁶

Bahadur directly came in conflict with security forces once the military began focusing on North Waziristan in early 2005 (even in 2004 in Shawal valley), due to an increased focus on Al-Qaeda and other foreign militants in that area.³⁷ He achieved his prominence with signing a peace deal with government in September 2006 that ended the skirmishes and operation in exchange for expulsion of foreigners. In summer 2007 this agreement lost its existence when Ahmadullah Ahmadi the spokesman of Bahadur announced that they could not abide by the agreement in the presence of continued drone attack on them. Skirmishes took place in NWA between the Taliban and the security forces. The establishment of TTP reduced differences between Taliban leaders and Hafiz was nominated deputy to Baitullah. Like Nazir his focus is on the Afghan jihad and he does not want to be at draggers drawn with Pakistan security forces. Bahadur and Nazir however had disagreement with Baitullah about the fighting with Pakistan army and they formed their own alliance but later all of them joined hands on pressure of mullah Omer.

He is a very diplomatic and tactical leader and never tries to estrange his relations with others. Charlie Szrom writes that “Bahadur has maintained on-again, off-again relationships with both the Pakistani government and Baitullah Mehsud over the last several years...Bahadur opposes any perceived infringement upon his territory and power, and he has thus constructed short-term arrangements, rather than full-fledged peace treaties, to force both sides to seek his support”.³⁸

Establishment of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

The Taliban felt the need of a platform where they could jointly decide about war and peace and have some common rules to agree upon. They had a common enemy in Afghanistan and had a similar threat from the Pakistani forces. The common interest, goals and ideology led them to organization where every party would have a voice. The new alliance of the Pakistani Taliban emerged with the common goal to fight the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan and face collectively Pakistani forces. On December 15, 2007, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was established under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud.³⁹ It is a loose body of *Shura* representing all groups. TTP has representative from FATA and settled districts of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Punjab. Baitullah Mehsud has been chosen supreme commander of the TTP by the Taliban *Shura*. The main objectives of TTP on which the *shura* agrees are;

- To unite different pro-Taliban groups in Pakistan,
- To give a hand to the Afghan Taliban in its conflict across the Durand Line;
- To set up a Taliban-style Islamic state in area of influence in Pakistan⁴⁰, and
- To coordinate and take joint decisions on talks with the government.⁴¹

They agreed on these objectives and pledged to support each other in time of need. It was a sort of collective security unit, where they can resolve differences and fight for their common goals. The emergence of new group, TTP was viewed by Pakistan, Afghanistan and USA as new threat emerging on the soil of Pakistan. This umbrella group has members from different parts of Pakistan and is considered to be an alliance of some 40 factions of militants. TTP was banned by the government of Pakistan in August 2008. The ban did not affect its organizational structure and is actively working in FATA.

The TTP has hold in all FATA Agencies of South and North Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur and Darra Adamkhel. In Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, TTP organized members are working in Swat, Dir, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan and Kohat and in Southern Punjab. In settled area they could not operate openly but secretly they are involved in threatening governmental authorities. The adjacent districts to South Waziristan are Tank and D.I. Khan where TTP has been encountered by the pro-government factions of Haji Turkistan Bhatani and Zain-ud-Din Mehsud (head of (late) Abdullah group) under the patronage of the Pakistan army. The local *Amirs* could act independently and freely without the prior permission of central authority but to abide by main principles. This independent and distributive nature of TTP network is the main reason of its success. TTP established recruitment centers in Waziristan and other agencies for new members.

With the inception of TTP a new layer of reaction was observed in Pakistan and Afghanistan. There was an increase in bomb blasts, target killings and suicide attacks both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Their reaction seems to be more organized and coherent. The Al-Qaeda and Uzbek militants groups got protection under the TTP wings and no member of *Shura* even Mullah Nazir (who had expelled and banned them in his area of influence) insisted on their exclusion from the region.

Splits occurred in Baitullah led TTP in South Waziristan. Zain-ud-din Mehsud the head of Abdullah Mehsud faction and Haji Turkistan Bhatani disagreed with Baitullah policies of fighting against the Pakistan

army and suicide attack on Pakistani soil. They had differences with TTP in internal administration and power structure. Turkistan Bhatani led his own Taliban group of Bhatani tribe when he was thrown out from TTP by Baitullah. Soon he was joined by Zain-ud-din Mehsud in a struggle against Baitullah cadre. They declared jihad against western power in Afghanistan and abandoned fighting against the Pakistan army. To kill Haji Turkistan Bhatani a suicide bomber on his mission sent by Baitullah blew himself in a hotel in Jandola but Haji got no injury and remained completely safe. Very soon Haji got support of Pakistan army against Baitullah. He was given access to Tank and Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) districts with a task to wipe out Baitullah supporters. Numbers of TTP members were killed in Tank and D.I. Khan. They (anti TTP group) organized their offices in Tank and D.I. Khan and established armed groups called *Aman Committees* (peace committees) in several part of both districts. These groups enjoy powers not less than the army of Pakistan in settled districts. They could take a person wanted for them and imposed taxes or a sort of *qalang* in their area of influence (but tax policy was resumed later on). They killed several people and punished for their crimes like what had been happening in Waziristan. Qari Zainuddin, “a major figure opposed to Baitullah Mehsud’s former hegemony over the Pakistani Taliban, was shot dead on 23 June 2009 by one of his bodyguards, alleged to be working for Mehsud”.⁴² He was succeeded by his brother Misbahuddin. For the last few months the movements and activities of the two groups have been restricted in the area. It seems that army is not any more interested in facilitating the anti TTP Taliban groups.

Table 2.1: Taliban Groups in Waziristan Region

No	Name	Sect	Tribe	Head	Area of Concentration
1	Baitullah Group	Deobandi	Mehsud	Baitullah Mehsud	SWA
2	Shehryar Group	Deobandi	Mehsud	Shehryar Mehsud	SWA
3	Said Alam Group		Mehsud	Said Alam	SWA
4	Mullah Nazir Group	Deobandi	Ahmadzai Wazir	Mullah Nazir	SWA
5	Abbas Group	Deobandi	Ahmadzai Wazir	Commander Abbas	SWA
6	Noor Islam Group	Deobandi	Ahmadzai Wazir	Noor Islam	SWA
7	Haji Sharif	Deobandi	Ahmadzai	Haji Sharif	SWA

	Group		Wazir		
8	Haji Omer Group	Deobandi	Ahmadzai Wazir	Haji Omer	SWA
9	Ghulam Jan Group	Deobandi	Ahmadzai Wazir	Ghulam Jan	SWA
10	Javed Group	Deobandi	Karmazkhe el Wazir	Commander Javed	SWA
11	Awal Khan Group	Deobandi	Bhittani	Commander Awal Khan	Jandola, SWA
12	Angaar Group	Deobandi			SWA
13	Bhittani Group	Deobandi	Bhittani	Asmaatullah Saheen	Jandola, SWA
14	Gul Bahadar Group	Deobandi	Utmanzai Wazir	Qari Gul Bahadar	NWA
15	Daur Group	Deobandi	Daur	Sadiq Noor	NWA
16	Khaliq Haqani Group	Deobandi	Daur	Abdul Khaliq Haqani	NWA
17	Wahidullah Group	Deobandi	Utmanzai Wazir	Wahidullah	Spalga, NWA
18	Saifullah Group	Deobandi	Turi khel Utmanzai Wazir	Commander Saifullah	
19	Abdul Rehman Group	Deobandi	Daur	Abdul Rehman	Mirali, NWA
20	Manzoor Group	Deobandi	Daur	Commander Manzoor	Eidaq, NWA
21	Haleem Group	Deobandi	Turi kheil	Haleem khan	Mirali, NWA

Source: Muhammad Amir Rana, "Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan: A Counterinsurgency Perspective," PIPS, Islamabad: 2009.

Taliban Mini State

The administration of justice is based on the Islamic law as they projected. With the establishment of TTP and even before it, the people were tried in the established courts. The head of this court (as practically does not exist) is the local *Amir* or commander of the area or locality and need no qualification. Some time even the *Amir* nominates a *Jirga* to resolve the issue between two families or groups. No proper body of judicial system exists in Taliban system of rule in Waziristan. The decisions taken by Taliban are final, must be bound of and no way of retreat from their judgments. The judgments are influenced by the support present in Taliban force. The internal conflicts in tribes or families convince them to join Taliban and subdue the opposite tribe or family through Taliban threat. So the internal conflict in tribes and families is strength of Taliban force. One party once said that "we are

asked to argue before a teenager (about 17 years old) on our conflict” and called it “dishonoring the local *Maliks* or heads of families”.⁴³ Unfortunately, When Taliban commits crime they are not tried as the civilians. The killing of 13 people in 2007 in house raid of Attiq ur Rehman Shah brother of the then Political Agent of Khyber Agency in which two guests also died by Qari Hussain group the victims are still begging for justice. In administration of justice Islamic laws were projected and local traditions were sidelined. In the time of peace when they got leisure time from cross border fighting or operation they summoned the concerned parties to finish the problem. In all their judgment the element of fear is dominant due to which the parties would abide by their ruling. The traditional system of *Jirga* lost its influence in Waziristan. *Malik*, who had a leading role in resolving disputes, were sidelined. Nearly 200 *Maliks* or leaders have been killed in Waziristan. Nobody is allowed to speak against them and their decision otherwise he/she would face penalty so freedom of expression is denied.⁴⁴ However some long standing conflicts were resolved by Taliban in Waziristan. Their justice was swift and the poor who could not afford the *khaloot* (expenses given to arbitrator) were benefited from their judgments. Taliban enjoy supreme authority in the administration of justice.

A new trend of target killing and beheading of people has started after 9/11. Many people have been beheaded for spying for the US and “attached notes with the dead bodies and warned that all collaborating would face the same fate”.⁴⁵ The secret agencies provided further impetus to this phenomenon. Those who tried of reconciliation and peace in the region faced the wrath of either Taliban or security forces. Prominent leaders and *Maliks* were killed by unidentified terrorists. Approximately, 200 tribal elder like Khandan Mehsud, Kalu khan, Tooti Gul Dawar, Faridullah Wazir and Loi khan have been killed in Waziristan.

Taliban have set up check posts on road to look for wanted people and foreign agents or spies in vehicles. They check every vehicle in their areas of influence to search out members of opposite groups. In almost every office Taliban has set up jails where criminal are punished. The central jail of TTP in South Waziristan located in Makin area, where criminals from different regions get punishments. As mentioned above the decisions are not always taken by qualified *Qazi* or judge. Ahmed Rashid says rightly that “Taliban represented nobody but themselves and they recognized no Islam except their own.”⁴⁶ They have banned music, traditional drum (*dool*), closed CDs centers, and warned barbers for harsh consequences for shaving of beards. Only *Naats* are allowed to be

played in buses and at public places. Female educational institutions are closed to discourage female education. Some are blown up by the Taliban and due to continual military operation both male and female schools remain closed for months and years.

The financial resources depend on taxes and assistance provided as a generosity. Every group has devised its own policy of taxation. Most commonly, they imposed taxes on local transports for surveillance of roads. In South Waziristan, Baitullah cadre collects money from the transporter even in the settled districts. One the Taliban commander said that “our financial affairs wing collect taxes from the transporter, where Rs. 2500 from Exvitor/ Loader owner, Rs.1500 from ten wheelers and Rs. 1000 from six wheelers have been collected annually”.⁴⁷ Besides, this many people donated them in the name of jihad. Even the commander said that the people from Punjab have supported financially. In other groups almost the same trend is found for collection of fund. In the financial matters, TTP deal very amicably and imposed conditions on all groups to contribute 50% of their income in major jihad fund. The Taliban factions since by the end of 2009 facing serious problem when the businessmen were threatened by the government for support of Taliban. Mehsud oversees an annual budget of up to \$45 million devoted to perpetuating regional militancy.⁴⁸

To establish the writ of the government and destroy the epicenter of TTP network, troops build up started in June 2009 while the Jandola road was blocked months earlier. On October 17, a massive operation Rah-i-Nijat has been launched in Waziristan against TTP strong hold in Mehsud dominated Area of South Waziristan from three directions. In operation ground troops with heavy artillery and jet air craft was used to achieve their target in a limited time. The people were forced to vacate the area. According to the UNHCR, owing to clashes in South Waziristan, it (UNHCR) has registered 350,000 IDPs in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank districts of North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa).⁴⁹ By the end of 2009, the Pakistan army declared victory in South Waziristan but still the army has filed to make the region safe and kill any prominent Taliban leader. After 15 months long displaced life, the rehabilitation of South Waziristan IDPs started in late December 2010.

Conclusion

Talibanization of Waziristan is the result of Russian invasion in 1979, the US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and subsequent military actions by Pakistan security forces strengthened the process of Talibanization. Taliban organizations in Waziristan spread from South to North like

epidemic. Their organization and activities brought Waziristan to the world attention. On one hand they claimed *Sharia* but at the same time the principles of *Sharia* are violated by them. The Talibanization is not only a challenge for law enforcement agencies and government of Pakistan but the local socio-economic and political system got disturbed. The widespread and independent network of the Taliban helped them to deter Pakistani forces. The domination of the Taliban and challenging the writ of the state in Waziristan was not acceptable to the government and number of operation took place in Waziristan. In reaction Taliban attacks on civilian and religious places and killing of innocent people and religious leader. The beheading of agents and number of other illegal action of Taliban labeled them as militant and terrorist in media and political discussion. So the respect and support of Taliban decreases with the passage of time and now the word Talib is hated in our society. In the struggle of domination not only Taliban or military personnel but many innocent civilian have lost their lives. Beside Taliban the army behavior toward the people in Waziristan is full of indiscriminate hatred and anger. The firing and bombardment of the security forces reduced the respect of the Pak Army in the region. The British Political Agent, Crump saying about their behavior with Mehsud would rightly apply to Pak-army attitude toward the people. Crump wrote, "At present the Mehsud is treated as an out caste, with suspicious and hatred. He is a byword for treachery".⁵⁰ The people are in doldrums situation and are treated with hatred and brutality. The people of Waziristan are loyal citizen of Pakistan and soldier of Islam. There is need to change attitude toward the people and they must be treated as human being and faithful Pakistani as they always remain Pakistani and fought wars alongside Pakistan army. Had there been no US invasion in Afghanistan, Taliban would not have been back to Waziristan and there would be no military operation and disturbance in Waziristan.

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