

*Research and Policy Insight Series*

MAINSTREAMING FATA  
THE WAY **FORWARD**

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*October 2019*

*Islamabad Policy Research Institute*





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



*Mr Fayyaz Ali Khan is a social scientist who was instrumental in organising extensive 'Mainstreaming FATA' consultative workshops which culminated in the signing of 'Amendments in Frontier Crimes Regulation (2011)' and 'Extension of the Political Parties Order 2002', on the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day in August 2011.*

*Amendments made to the century-old FCR gave the people of Federal Administered Tribal Areas, for the first time, the right of appeal against decisions of the Political Agent. Extension of the Political Parties Order 2002 to the tribal areas, paved the way for political parties to operate freely, and present their socioeconomic programmes in the region.*

*During the mid-eighties, Mr Khan worked as a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with the locals in North and South Waziristan and the adjoining districts to settle refugees in their areas. Later, while working with Save the Children, he managed a Child Healthcare Project with offices in the seven tribal agencies and the six Frontier Regions.*



*Research and Policy Insight Series*



# **Mainstreaming FATA: Way Forward**

*by*

**Fayyaz Ali Khan**

October 2019

**Islamabad Policy Research Institute**

# Research and Policy Insight Series

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Drawing on rich data and practical experiences, the Series will harness diverse perspectives, both from within and outside the Institute. While all geographic regions are vital, the main focus of the papers will be on Pakistan and South Asia so that new policy ideas and proposals are generated by opinion leaders and ‘evidence accurate beliefs’ created among those who may not have yet decided where their opinions lie on an issue.



# FOREWORD

*The decision to mainstream the FATA region and its subsequent amalgamation with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is indeed momentous and historic. The process set in motion is arguably challenging and intricate. Therefore, the transition ought to be well-deliberated and implemented timely with due care.*



*The state has multiple challenges on various fronts to deal with when it comes to FATA. Focus on security and basic services provision should remain atop the agenda to ensure rapid social and economic development. The efforts would bear fruit if the security situation complements the endeavours of social and communal rehabilitation programmes – the latter should not be considered secondary since they are integral to community building. The key to streamlining of FATA to serve its intended purpose, in my opinion, will be that obligations on the state are met in letter and spirit.*

*This paper is part of IPRI's new Research and Policy Insight Series meant to provide persuasive arguments and practical policy recommendations on issues of national interest and hence, act as a decision-making tool and a call to action. It is hoped that the Series will present a diversity of perspectives, both from within and outside the Institute.*

*I am grateful to Mr Fayyaz Ali Khan for taking on the daunting task of being the first of what I hope will be insightful and informative Series in the years to come.*

Ambassador (R) Vice Admiral Khan Hasham bin Saddique, HI (M)



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# ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>BISP</b>   | Benazir Income Support Programme    |
| <b>DC</b>     | Deputy Commissioner                 |
| <b>FATA</b>   | Federally Administered Tribal Areas |
| <b>FCR</b>    | Frontier Crimes Regulation          |
| <b>FC</b>     | Frontier Corps                      |
| <b>GoP</b>    | Government of Pakistan              |
| <b>NWFP</b>   | North West Frontier Province        |
| <b>NAP</b>    | National Action Plan                |
| <b>NWA</b>    | North Waziristan Agency             |
| <b>PA</b>     | Political Agent                     |
| <b>PPPs</b>   | Public-Private Partnerships         |
| <b>SAFRON</b> | States and Frontier Regions         |
| <b>SMEs</b>   | Small and Medium Enterprises        |
| <b>SWA</b>    | South Waziristan Agency             |





## **Executive Summary**

Mainstreaming the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is the biggest leap forward towards normalising and stabilising a post-conflict area. This is not only a state's primary responsibility, it is also crucial from a national security perspective. No country can afford to have such a large number of its people (a population of 5,001,676 – according to Pakistan's 2017 Census) expelled from the mainstream, deprived of basic human needs and completely overlooked. It is a historic opportunity to send across a positive message to the nation that the state is not only cognizant of the ground realities and challenges, but also has the ability and capacity to address the core issues confronting its existence and sovereignty.

Continuing with the British policies of keeping the region as a buffer zone, devoid of any meaningful development, the

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*Keeping in view the way reforms are carried out in this country, an out-of-the-box solution of forming an autonomous authority to accomplish the task of mainstreaming the erstwhile FATA is recommended to overcome bureaucratic sluggishness.*

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Pakistani bureaucracy did not treat the Tribal Areas any better and continue to do so. Bureaucracy is a major hurdle in formulating meaningful policies and

materialising integration in letter and spirit. The changes brought so far have been made in a haphazard manner without any homework, disheartening those advocating change. An immediate institutional overhaul is required.

Again, following in the footsteps of our colonial masters, the bureaucracy deemed it convenient to control the tribesmen

through Maliks and Mullahs. These self-seeking conventional leaders in connivance with their bureaucratic patrons pocketed most of the meagre funds available for the development of this region.

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*The government should groom and patronize new leadership (replace Maliks/ Mullahs) who can put forth and offer a counter narrative - that can take away focus from the adversarial position and foster the idea of partnership in development.*

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For historic reasons and due to the recent insurgencies, there is a huge trust deficit between the tribesmen and the state. The first and foremost target of interventions designed for mainstreaming should be to convert this adversarial relation to one of partnership and confidence in each other.

Then, there are the drug dealers, Hawala and Hundi<sup>1</sup> runners and smugglers. These elements have serious stakes in the area and, if need be, would go to any distance to disrupt the integration process.

After the 25<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, beneficiaries of the status quo including bureaucracy, the Maliks, the Mullahs, drug

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*A project implementation unit should be put in place straightway, led by a senior serving or retired officer, preferably from FATA, who has experience of working in or with the planning and finance ministries.*

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barons and smugglers etc. cannot outrightly block the mainstreaming process, but they can create hurdles at every step of the integration process - in most cases by falsely creating an

impression, in the name of customs and traditions, that the

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<sup>1</sup> Forms of money transfer without money movement.



tribesmen are averse to changing their old ways of life, thus, creating doubts in the minds of policy-makers and the population at large. Elected members of local bodies, provincial and national assemblies of the erstwhile FATA should be involved to engage these elements to help the government manage a smooth transition.

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*The area should be opened for all Pakistanis to visit so that the impression of FATA being a black hole is done away with.*

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Anti-state elements, supported by status quo interest groups have not only created doubts in the minds of the target

population, they have been able to create a dangerous divide between the state and its people, especially the youth of former FATA. The divide has reached a point where events like Kharqamar have taken place.<sup>2</sup>

To counter these elements, a comprehensive plan needs to be put in place. Given the low level of literacy, deprivation and criminal neglect by successive governments, these plans need to be widely publicised to generate public debate. Such a debate would help fine-tune the plan, and trigger ownership by all stakeholders, which is of prime importance for the success of this whole process.

The most important pillar of the plan is ownership of the process by the tribesmen. Due to past experiences, the Governor, Chief Minister and the Advisor on Tribal Areas are neither trusted by the tribes nor seen as one of them. Secondly, it seems as if there is a lack of capacity and intellect to handle these areas. They come

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<sup>2</sup> Demonstration at a military check post in North Waziristan that led to the death of 13 locals and one soldier, with 30 wounded.



in army convoys and leave in army convoys. They are seen as people imposed on the locals. To dispel the impression that tribesmen are governed by outsiders, the government should nominate spokesperson/s for the newly formed districts, from among them, who should not only be local residents, but also enjoy a degree of respect and credibility.

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*Trading areas at zero points in all tribal districts should be established for reviving trade.*

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Tribal districts are expected to receive huge funds for development. Whether these funds can be spent prudently is a big

question. There are major capacity issues, and it will be very unfortunate if these funds are returned unspent or misappropriated.

In Tribal Areas, land is the most precious possession. However, there is no individual ownership and the tribes and clans own land collectively. People whose properties were destroyed during the insurgencies, and who are still waiting for compensation should be paid their dues instantly so that they can resume their normal life and that

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*On order, to avoid land disputes, which are bound to erupt with the introduction of the new system of governance, a Land Settlement Commission should be formed forthwith.*

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cash comes in circulation and kick-starts the economy.

As an immediate relief to poorest of the poor, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) should cover those areas of FATA where it has still not been extended. Similarly, the health cards and youth loan programmes need to be extended forthwith.

Microfinance organisations like Akhuwat are ready to invest in tribal districts if they are allowed to do so. They should be encouraged and supported by the government.

Nation building is a tough ask and due diligence is required at every step. Successfully carrying out such a daunting task requires, more than anything else, Inspirational Leadership. A leadership that can emphatically plead the importance of the task at hand, and make the nation realise its responsibility to generously contribute towards development of the erstwhile FATA.



# Introduction



The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan have rightly been characterised as the ‘crossroads of civilisations’ by Toynbee<sup>3</sup> as one can readily find traces of different empires and civilisations that have traversed these lands. From Herodotus to the present day historians, one observes different accounts of the Aryans (before 500 BC), thereafter, the Achaemenids i.e., Persians (559-330 BC);<sup>4</sup> Graeco-Scythian invasions (324 BC-320 AD);<sup>5</sup> Maurians (313-232 BC);<sup>6</sup> Graeco-Bactrians (185-90 BC);<sup>7</sup> and Sakas (90 BC-395 AD) whose invasions began in 97 BC. Besides, during the first millennium AD, Parthians (247 BC-224 AD);<sup>8</sup> Yue-chi i.e., Kushans (60-225 AD);<sup>9</sup> Sassanids (226-651 AD);<sup>10</sup> White Huns (408-670 AD);<sup>11</sup> and Turks (755 AD)<sup>12</sup> are also cited in various historical annals.

Without mentioning the term ‘Great Game’ it is hard to understand the genesis of former FATA. The British empires’ fear of Czarist Russia’s southward advance and ultimate invasion of India led

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<sup>3</sup> Haq, N. Khan, R. A. and Nuri, M.H. 2005, ‘Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan’, IPRI Paper 10, Islamabad: Islamabad Policy and Research Institute, <http://www.ipripak.org/papers/federally.shtml>.

<sup>4</sup> Farazmand, A. 2002, ‘Administrative Legacies of the Persian World-State Empire: Implications for Modern Public Administration, Part 1’, *Public Administration Quarterly*, 26(3/4), pp. 280-316.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmad, N. 2008, ‘The Laws and Justice System in FATA with Recommendations for Reforms’, LLM Dissertation, Lahore: University of South Asia.

<sup>6</sup> Dani, A.H. 1973, *Alberuni’s Indica, A Record of the Cultural History of South-Asia about AD 1030*, Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Baumer, C. 2012, *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Steppe Warriors*, vol. 1, London: I.B. Tauris.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, V.A. 2008, *History of India: From the Sixth Century B.C. to the Mohammedan Conquest, Including the Invasion of Alexander the Great*, vol. 2, New York: Cosimo Classics.

<sup>10</sup> Farrokh, K. 2007, *Shadows in the Desert: Ancient Persia at War (General Military)*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing.

<sup>11</sup> Enoki, K. 1959, ‘On the Nationality of the White Huns’, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko*, No. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, D. 2010, *A Complete History of the Turks, From their Origin in the Year 755, to the Year 1718*, Michigan: Gale Ecco.



them to wage, from 1838 to 1919, three Anglo-Afghan wars. The third Anglo-Afghan war enabled Afghanistan to declare independence. However, the British reasserted the contentious Durand Line. Unable to conquer the whole of Afghanistan, they, still, secured control of territories to the west of River Indus i.e., the present day province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Resultantly, homes of resistant tribes of FATA served as a buffer zone between Afghanistan and British India, the latter exercising limited authority over it.

Due to the vastness of the Tribal Areas and absence of enough resources to protect it, the British decided to politically manage the them. In 1877, Lord Lytton, the British Viceroy, took away control of the frontier regions' administration and policy from the provincial government of Punjab, and placed it under direct control of the

central government of British India. This was the beginning of the establishment of political agencies in the tribal belt, and the first agency, Khyber was created in 1879. These agencies were administrative units on the pattern of districts in settled areas and a Political Agent (PA) was assigned the same responsibilities as a Deputy Commissioner (DC) in a settled district. The office of the PA was entrusted to administer the agency with the help of tribal levies, militias, Khasadar, Malik and Lungi holders, recruited from local tribes to maintain peace and security. Since enforcement of the Durand Line Agreement, this administrative system created for Tribal Areas during the British Raj and its relationship with the national capital continued, following emergence of Pakistan in 1947. The Pashtun tribes, resisting control were granted so-called autonomy to lead life according to their customs (Riwaj), however, governed under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR).

‘In 1947, the Indian Independence Act annulled the agreements between the British Raj and Tribal Areas and the newly created state of Pakistan had to negotiate new terms binding these areas to the latter.’<sup>13</sup> The government continued extending concessions, privileges and autonomy to Maliks, in return tribesmen pledged loyalty to Pakistan. The Governor General and President of Pakistan, through his agent Governor then-North West Frontier Province/now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, administered these areas. Pakistan’s Constitution of 1973 grants Special Status and the name Federally Administered Tribal Areas, FATA, to this territory.

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<sup>13</sup> NPS, ‘Modern History of Federally Administered Tribal Areas’, Report, Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, [https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/FATA\\_history.pdf/dddf8925-b965-4624-807b-c89f688b81fe](https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/FATA_history.pdf/dddf8925-b965-4624-807b-c89f688b81fe).

This paper makes an effort to identify the core issues confronting smooth implementation of the merger process and suggest a pragmatic, workable mechanism to address the same in phases. It is divided into five sections. The first offers a bird's eye view of FATA's history and its nomenclature. Under the heading 'Vulnerabilities', the issues that would hamper or may cause delay in the mainstreaming process are discussed. It is followed by 'Strengths', which mentions positive influences that if duly considered and factored in would assist in a smooth transition and ultimate integration. Under the title 'Way Forward', which is the real purpose of writing this paper, is again divided into three stages of intercessions. The first stage deals with interventions that must be made immediately to earn confidence of the people of FATA and make them take ownership of the whole process and help kick-start the integration process. These are basically improvements upon existing practices and facilities and are comparatively easy to carry out. The mid-term interventions recommend development projects that if materialised could bring tangible results and open up FATA for meaningful development. The last part of this portion provides details of natural resources and opportunities available in the newly formed districts that if harnessed and developed could, hopefully, help bring FATA at par with the rest of the country. The final section offers some concluding thoughts and reflections.





**History & Name: FATA**

## 1947

**F**ollowing the Indian Independence Act, 1947, agreements and treaties binding the Tribal Areas to the British India, in Delhi, stood abrogated. An independent state of Pakistan replaced British colonial rule and PAs in the tribal agencies secured agreements with the tribal chiefs' (Maliks), pledge of loyalty to the new state of Pakistan.<sup>14</sup> They also committed to remain peaceful, law abiding and to maintain cordial relations with people of the settled districts. In return, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) promised to continue the existing concessions, privileges, and benefits and maintain existing internal arrangements in the Tribal Areas. Assuming jurisdiction directly, the Governor General of Pakistan issued a series of orders and notifications declaring these areas part of Pakistan, with effect from 15 August 1947.<sup>15</sup>

## 1951-54

The GoP entered into revised agreements with the tribal chiefs in 1951-52 acquiring greater control and authority in the Tribal Areas. Agreements with the cooperation of the tribal people were concluded, enlarging the scope of existing agreements. Till the formation of One Unit in 1955, the Governor NWFP as agent to the Governor General of Pakistan administered these areas, exercised immediate authority with his Administration Secretariat, NWFP, headed by the Chief Secretary. Policy directives of the Federal Government were communicated to the Chief Secretary, who furnished compliance reports to them. Since there were no Divisional Commissioners, the PAs and the DCs corresponded directly with the local administration.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Khan, S. 2008, 'Special Status of FATA: Illegal Becoming Licit', *Central Asia*, 63, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar.

<sup>15</sup> Iqbal, J. 2012, 'Controversies Regarding the Accession of Tribal Areas to Pakistan: A Case Study of Khyber Agency', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXXIII (2), pp. 91-110.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103.

## **1955-57**

Following formation of One Unit in West Pakistan, in 1955, Governor, West Pakistan as Agent to the President of Pakistan, took over administration of the Tribal Areas, confining the role of Federal Government to policy control alone. This arrangement continued till 1958.<sup>17</sup>

## **1958-60**

A review of the administrative system of the Tribal Areas in October 1958 recommended a more centripetal approach and, consequently, vesting power to administer all of them through the Resident Commissioner from November 1959 to August 1960, thereafter, these areas continued to be administered directly by the West Pakistan Government. The post of Resident Commissioner, however, was abolished, in 1960, since it created problems of dual control between the latter, the Federal and Provincial Governments.<sup>18</sup>

## **1970-78**

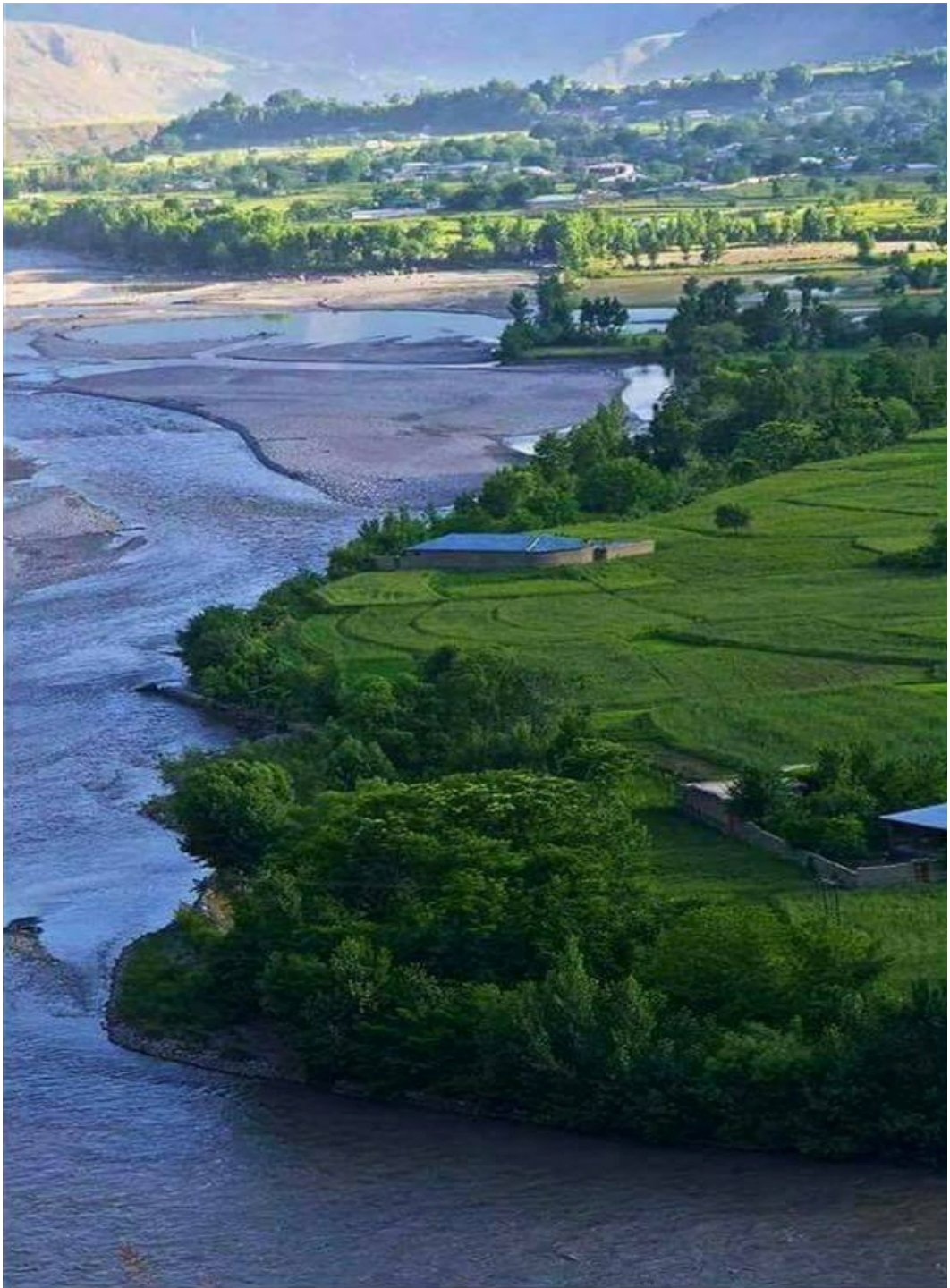
With the dissolution of One Unit, on 1 July 1970, the Tribal Areas/and princely states of Dir, Swat, Chitral, Malakand Protected Areas, and the Hazara Territory, were included in the NWFP/now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and termed as Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). Similarly, the areas of Balochistan, namely the districts of Zhob, Sibi, Loralai and Chagai were made part of this arrangement. The rest of the Tribal Areas, namely the Agencies of Mohmand, Kurram, Khyber, Bajaur, Orakzai, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and the adjoining Frontier Regions

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<sup>17</sup> Pakistan Research Repository 2014, 'Administration of the Tribal Areas after Independence', Higher Education Commission, 27 May, <http://pr.hec.gov.pk/Chapters/1987-4.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.





(FRs) are Kohat, Peshawar, Bannu, Lakki, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan are collectively called the Federally Administered Areas (FATA), in the 1973 Constitution.<sup>19</sup>

### 1979 to Date

Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the ensuing turmoil and aftermath of 9/11 spilled over part of the Afghan conflict into the Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Small militant groups started networking and evolved an organisational structure of their own and succeeded in replacing traditional leadership in these territories.<sup>20</sup> This was the beginning of a protracted reign of terror that crossed all limits when the terrorists, on 16 December 2014, attacked the Army Public School (APS) and brutally martyred 150 innocent children. From the APS tragedy emerged national consensus that translated into a National Action Plan (NAP) to comprehensively deal with the menace of terrorism.

On 24 May 2018, the National Assembly of Pakistan voted in favour of an amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan for the FATA-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa merger which was approved by the Senate the following day. Since the change was to affect the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it was presented for approval in its Provincial Assembly on 27 May 2018, and passed with majority vote. On 28 May 2018, the President of Pakistan signed the FATA Interim Governance Regulation, a set of interim rules for FATA until the merger within a timeframe of two years. The 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment received assent from the President on 31 May 2018, after which FATA was officially merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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<sup>19</sup> Government of Pakistan, Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973.

<sup>20</sup> Abbas, H. 2008, 'A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan', *CTC Sentinel* 1(2), pp. 1-4, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.





## **Vulnerabilities in the Mainstreaming Process**

## **Myth of Riwaj (Customs) and Traditions**

**U**ndoubtedly, customs and traditions are of immense value in any society in general and in a tribal society in particular. Unfortunately, in FATA, the same have been unscrupulously exploited by the bureaucracy in connivance with the local Maliks to prolong their hold on the area. For example, whenever a tribesman can afford to move his family to an urban centre, he would do so, and as soon as possible would admit his children (including girls) in the best schools. However, in the name of customs and traditions, girls have been criminally denied education in FATA. According to the development statistics of 2015, the percentage share of primary schools for males and females in FATA was 2.38 and 2.60, respectively, as compared to 14.37 and 12.67 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.<sup>21</sup> This, and other cultural practices, perpetuated social ills like child marriages, negating the right to vote, denying women the right to inherit land and so on. Similarly, in order to resist extension of the judiciary's jurisdiction to FATA, efficacy of Jirga (council of tribal elders), which as a matter of fact had become an exploitative tool in the hands of the influential such as the Maliks and become ineffective and corrupt,<sup>22</sup> was overemphasised.

Change is inevitable. However, it is in the interest of all the stakeholders to ensure that it is not only a positive one but is also tangible. Having stated that, the fear is that beneficiaries of the

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<sup>21</sup> Federally Administered Tribal Areas, <http://fata.gov.pk>.

<sup>22</sup> Sammon, R.L. 2008, 'Mullas And Maliks: Understanding the Roots of Conflict in Pakistan's Federally Administrated Tribal Areas', The Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, [https://lauder.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Robert\\_Sammon\\_Lauder\\_Thesis\\_April\\_2008.pdf](https://lauder.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Robert_Sammon_Lauder_Thesis_April_2008.pdf).



status quo such as bureaucrats, Maliks and drugs dealers etc., if not outrightly, would want to slow down the process of mainstreaming FATA by falsely creating an impression, in the name of customs and traditions, that the tribesmen are averse to changing their old ways of life, thus, creating doubts in the minds of policy-makers and the population at large.

### **The Bureaucracy**

In addition to myriad other contentions, one major cause of the present dismal socioeconomic condition of FATA is its treatment by the bureaucracy as its fiefdom. Due to lack of vision, myopic approach and for purely selfish reasons, no one ever bothered to improve upon the system inherited from the British. In the absence of the jurisdiction of courts, unaccounted for funds and a population devoid of fundamental human rights to rule, the Political Agents (PAs) were like demigods with unbridled powers.<sup>23</sup> This post, and that of Assistant Political Agents and Tehsildars (tax officers) etc. were literally sold and given to the highest bidders. It was openly admitted in bureaucratic circles that someone who serves as a PA of Khyber Agency once, could provide for his next seven generations.

The story does not end here. According to various news sources, recently due to the ever increasing number of complaints against corruption, a secret cell was created on the directives of the Additional Chief Secretary FATA to probe corruption cases. Allegedly, officials of the Frontier Corps (FC) and other agencies were equally involved in loot and plunder. Why would any beneficiaries of such plunder not want to continue to milk this cow for as long as possible? This mindset of the bureaucracy is going to be a major hurdle in

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

formulating meaningful policies and materialising integration in letter and spirit.

### Malik & Mullah

The British introduced the Maliki system to control the tribesmen through their own elders. According to the Pakistan Study Centre at the University of Peshawar, after their departure, succeeding rulers found it convenient to continue with this system. Courtesy of the ‘Sandeman System’, the British raised tribal levies/Khasadars, which were retained after 1947. However, in the absence of a robust security mechanism that could establish the writ of the government in the Tribal Areas and failure to provide livelihood opportunities, the Maliki institution with support of the Mullahs<sup>24</sup> was not only allowed to continue but was patronised by the political establishment. For most part, the PAs and their staff, while pocketing major chunks of the meager funds available for administration and development gave away paltry amounts to the Maliks, and later on to the Mullahs, to curb voices of dissent. This practice, over the years, helped evolve an elite class, and more worryingly, created a dependency syndrome. These Maliks are mostly from major clans and wield considerable influence. These elements would resist, to the extent possible, changes that threaten their status.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Caroe, O. *The Pathans, 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*, London: Macmillan, p. 401.

<sup>25</sup> Sammon, R.L. 2008, ‘Mullas and Maliks: Understanding the Roots of Conflict in Pakistan’s Federally Administrated Tribal Areas’, The Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, [https://lauder.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Robert\\_Sammon\\_Lauder\\_Thesis\\_April\\_2008.pdf](https://lauder.wharton.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Robert_Sammon_Lauder_Thesis_April_2008.pdf).



## **Drug Dealers, Havala & Hundi Runners and Smugglers**

People falling in the above categories pose the most serious challenges to mainstreaming of FATA as their lucrative businesses are the hardest, if not impossible, to replace. While Pakistan has its own issues of poppy and cannabis cultivation, it is a major transit route for drugs produced in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup> In the erstwhile Tribal Areas, these businesses are run by the whole extended family,<sup>27</sup> and different members are assigned different tasks to handle. According to research by the Punjab University, some of these elements have mafia-like rings that are spread all over the country and beyond. Due to the nature of these businesses, they cannot be moved elsewhere, and hence, may go into hiding that would greatly destabilise the arrangements made under integration of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### **Long Porous Border**

As reported in the daily Dawn of 28 January 2019, work on the 900 km portion of a total of a 2,600km border has been completed. The total cost of the project, including the surveillance gadgets is PKR 70 billion. Though, this rather long Pak-Afghan border, popularly known as Durand Line, is being fenced, there are areas where families are split across the border.

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<sup>26</sup> Global Security n.d., 'Drugs in Pakistan', <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/drugs.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> RefWorld 2006, 'RRT Research Response', Refugee Review Tribunal, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4b6fe2d2d.pdf>.

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*Interestingly, many local people have their homes and hujras (guest houses) on the Pakistani side of the border and their agricultural land or property on the Afghanistan side of the Durand Line. On certain occasions, e.g. the Muslim festivals of Eid or funeral and marriage ceremonies, the associated events take place on both sides of the border.*<sup>28</sup>

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In normal circumstances, these relations would have been an opportunity to promote cross-border trade and nurturing people-to-people relations with a neighbourly country, but due to conflicting interests, and repeated instances of terrorism on both sides of the border, fencing is a good initiative.

### Trust Deficit

It may not be to the liking of many, but the fact remains that there is a huge trust deficit between the tribesmen, the state and security institutions. The history of this trust deficit can be traced back to the times of the British or even beyond. There are numerous reasons that cultivate a feeling of alienation amongst the tribesmen. The first and foremost is socioeconomic deprivations.

The literacy rate in FATA is 33.3 percent and 11.8 percent of youth (age 15-24) are unemployed.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, according to the 2013-14 survey, only 8.9 percent of the estimated population has access to drinking water; only 38.3 percent of FATA households have flush latrines; only 6.3 percent houses had underground drainage system; and only 29.5 percent of births were attended by skilled health personnels. In addition, 0.7 percent children (age 2-9) had at least one disability in the region.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Shah, S.W.A. 2013, 'Fencing the Durand Line', *Internationales Asienforum* 44 (1-2), pp. 85-103.

<sup>29</sup> GPP 2015, 'Fata Development Indicator Household Survey Report FDIHS, 2013-14', Governance and Policy Project, Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



Emergence of the Taliban further deteriorated the situation wherein a large number of tribal elders were assassinated by them, changing the social fabric of the tribal society. This was followed by different military operations launched by the security forces displacing a large number of tribesmen, women and children.<sup>31</sup>

The emergence of dissenting voices, such as that of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), is but a manifestation of this trust deficit. The origin of such voices can be traced back to the Khudai Khidmatgar movement led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who on learning that the Indian Congress had agreed to the partition of India propounded the idea of an independent Pashtunistan in June 1947. These sentiments of alienation strengthened as there were no electoral politics for two decades after the creation of Pakistan and the Pakhtun nationalists were being supported by India and Afghanistan.<sup>32</sup> Although the 1973 Constitution was agreed upon by leaders of all four federating units, dissolution of the provincial governments of Balochistan and the then-NWFP culminated in the initiation of Hyderabad Conspiracy case against the nationalist leaders from both provinces.<sup>33</sup> General Zia's Islamisation policy led to the establishment of thousands of madrassahs (religious schools) in the Pashtun areas emphasising

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<sup>31</sup> Zulfqar, S. 2017, 'An Overview of Pakistan's Security Situation after Operation Zarb-e-Azb', *Journal of Current Affairs* 2(1), pp. 116-136.

<sup>32</sup> Khan, A. 2013, 'Pashtun Ethnic Nationalism, From Separation to Integration', <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1f49/5f654173c1108434c1ed5a2a9f011788a822.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Majeed, G. and Hashmi, R.S. 2014, 'Baloch Resistance during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Era: Causes and Consequences', *South Asia Studies* 29(1), pp. 321-331, [http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/24%20Ghulshan%20Majeed\\_29\\_1.pdf](http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/24%20Ghulshan%20Majeed_29_1.pdf).

the importance of religious identity over ethnic identity.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, the Pakhtun nationalists by sharing power with the ruling political party at the time lost most of their nationalist credentials by one account:

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*The Pukhtun nationalists have by now completely integrated into the state system of Pakistan and their main concern now is their place in the power hierarchy rather than their ethnicity.*<sup>35</sup>

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However, that is partly true as political workers and Pashtun intellectuals who feel left out and betrayed by their nationalist leaders, with tacit support from Afghanistan and India, who time and again try to point out economic disparities amongst the federating units of Pakistan and invoke rebellion against the state. It must be borne in mind that unless taken care of, which will not be an easy task, anti-state elements, the forces favoring status quo and other vested interests will use this deficiency of trust to a great disadvantage of this whole process of mainstreaming FATA.

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<sup>34</sup> Shah, K.M. 2019, 'The Baloch and Pashtun Nationalist Movements in Pakistan: Colonial Legacy and the Failure of State Policy – Analysis', *Eurasia Review*, 3 August, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/03082019-the-baloch-and-pashtun-nationalist-movements-in-pakistan-colonial-legacy-and-the-failure-of-state-policy-analysis/>.

<sup>35</sup> Khan, A. 2013, 'Pashtun Ethnic Nationalism, From Separation to Integration', <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1f49/5f654173c1108434c1ed5a2a9f011788a822.pdf>.



## **Strengths for Smooth Transition**



Many scholars argue that diverse preferences and coordination failure stemming from high ethnic diversity results in high social frictions, leading to sociopolitical failure.<sup>36</sup>

## **Homogeneity**

Except for Kurram, where there is a serious sectarian divide, the rest of the districts in FATA have a more or less homogenous population. Homogenous groups tend to get along easily and have a tendency to make collective decisions willingly. In homogenous societies, individuals, having a sense of belongingness, are inclined to contribute to voluntary work. Moreover, due to shared cultural and moral values – people know what to expect in most situations. Crime rate is usually lower in such societies. It is believed that this homogeneity of the tribal society in their respective districts would be of immense help while carrying out development work and mustering support for mainstreaming FATA.

## **Improved Security Situation**

Security and development are inextricably interlinked. This nexus becomes even more important in a post-conflict situation. Security concerns could affect the direction, cost and pace of development. As a matter of fact, the present day, relatively, secure environment should guide policy-making, and not the past and/or anticipated insecurity. This would help in tackling security issues head on, and also be instrumental in having a sustainable development model.

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<sup>36</sup> Soysa, I. and Noel, C. 2018, 'Does Ethnic Diversity increase Violent Crime? A Global Analysis of Homicide Rates, 1995–2013', *European Journal of Criminology*, May.

## **Availability of Basic Infrastructure**

Though not adequate to begin with, recent operations against the Taliban and other anti-state elements have further damaged infrastructure in the tribal belt across all sectors including education, health, water, roads and irrigation.<sup>37</sup> However, basic infrastructure does exist e.g., by 1998, electricity supply covered some 62 percent of the households, and though low, road density was 0.17 per square kilometer of the area.<sup>38</sup> It is presumed that development in the past has been mainly guided by two considerations: first, population concentration; and second, strategic importance. The existence of basic infrastructure should not only help in saving precious time but also help policy-makers in prioritising development interventions. However, utmost care needs to be taken to discard redundant and politically motivated projects of the past.

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<sup>37</sup> United Nations Development Programme, FATA Transition and Recovery Programme.

<sup>38</sup> Government of Pakistan, FATA Sustainable Development Plan, 2007–2015.



**Way Forward**

Ideally, massive development work needs to be undertaken in the erstwhile FATA region in all spheres simultaneously to have meaningful impact. However, anticipating that paucity of funds, resistance by vested interest groups, difficult terrain and political considerations etc. would not allow interventions on a grand scale, a phased plan is propounded having a roadmap for immediate, mid-term, and long-term interventions as follows:

## **General Guidelines**

### *A Realistic Road Map*

Overall development of FATA districts would only be maintainable if it is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Development of the newly formed districts should neither be demand based nor left to the whims and caprice of policy-makers only. Instead, planners and implementers of the FATA mainstreaming project need to sit together and come up with a doable roadmap of all the present and future projects.

In January 2019, the Senate Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) was informed about the government's plan to initiate 18 new development projects in the erstwhile FATA. A sum of PKR 186 million has been allocated for the construction of small dams, skills development, technical education, industry, mineral exploration and research development schemes. Furthermore, according to the Business Recorder, the Committee was informed about the allocation of PKR 3,434 million for the 114 ongoing schemes of the FATA Development Authority.

This holistic roadmap should include projects in all the sectors i.e., education, health, potable water, irrigation, agriculture, horticulture, livestock, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and so on. It must be worked out to the minutest details including locations, sources and flow of funding, executing departments, work plans, timelines, development indicators, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and staffing etc. Having a detailed plan would help in realisation of the funds to be generated and prioritising their allocation by the government, attracting private investments, encouraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and most of all mustering support of all the stakeholders in general, and the ultimate beneficiaries i.e., the FATA locals, in particular, which is the key to sustainable development.

### *Massive Campaigning*

Vested interest groups and naysayers are already creating doubts in the minds of the target population. For example, one of the political parties that has a reasonable presence in the erstwhile tribal districts, termed it as ‘an agenda of foreign countries and organization.’ To counter negative propaganda, especially given the extremely low levels of literacy – 33.3 percent as compared to 58 percent for Pakistan; 12.7 percent for females as compared to 47 percent for the rest of Pakistan<sup>39</sup> - and the deprivations of the past, the above mentioned plan needs to be widely publicised. The government needs to organise and encourage a threadbare public debate by the elected members of the provincial as well as national assemblies, the academia, policy and governance experts, security

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<sup>39</sup> United Nations Development Programme, ATA Transition and Recovery Programme.



experts, political analysts, the civil society, the media and all other concerned to help improve upon the plan. Such a debate would not only help fine-tune it, inculcate ownership of the plan by all stakeholders, but most of all would create an environment of hope amongst the target population.

## **Immediate Interventions**

### *Low Hanging Fruits*

While FATA was never treated at par with the rest of the country, there were some meager incentives provided to the tribesmen e.g., admission quota for FATA students in other educational institutions of the country<sup>40</sup> or quota in the federal jobs, which at present is 4 percent. These incentives must not be discontinued till better alternatives are found to replace the same. Besides, the following few steps would not require significant funds, but would definitely touch a positive chord with the local population:

### *Extension of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)*

Ironically, residents of FATA, probably the most deserving, were ignored by the authorities of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Inclusion of deserving persons of FATA would send across a positive message to all and sundry. This is something that should be and could be initiated immediately.

### *Targeting Decades' Long Key Issues*

Allocation of funds and announcement of emergency schemes to resolve decade-long basic issues is vital. Constructing small dams

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<sup>40</sup> Recommendation no.65 in the 'Report of the Senate Standing Committee on SAFRON', No. 6, Government of Pakistan.





to store rainwater and employing other innovative ideas, ensuring water availability in Khyber and Mohmand would be highly welcome initiatives. Furthermore, in order to provide quick access to educational and health facilities to the people of those areas where these facilities are non-existent, the road network should be improved on fast track basis. These and other such quick fix initiatives would garner grassroots level support for the mainstreaming process.

### *Linking Inaccessible Areas*

As mentioned above, there are many areas in FATA that are considered inaccessible.<sup>41</sup> The British had divided the region into two parts:

1. Administered Areas
2. Tribal Areas

The Administered Areas were linked by roads and provided government facilities such as schools and hospitals,<sup>42</sup> whereas, the rest were more or less on their own. These are the most backward areas. In most of these areas, basic facilities like health and education are unimaginable and even potable water is brought by women from far-flung areas. Linking these areas on a priority basis with the existing road networks would give people access to available facilities in the surrounding developed regions. This would be a low-cost investment as one road could provide access to many villages to the existing facilities that would make an

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<sup>41</sup> IPS 2009, *Situation in FATA: Causes, Consequences and the Way Forward*, Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies.

<sup>42</sup> Mohmand, R.S. 2018, 'Manifold Challenges Lie ahead after FATA Merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa', *Global Village Space*, 9 July.

immediate impact with far-reaching consequences.

### *Trading Zones near the Border Town*

The government has announced keeping the Torkham border open 24/7 which is step in the right direction.<sup>43</sup> The same should be announced for all other crossing and trading points such as Ghulam Khan and Chaman. A large number of cattle heads are smuggled to Afghanistan.<sup>44</sup> To begin with, weekly, if not permanent, cattle markets should be established to counter cross-border cattle smuggling and encourage cattle farming in Pakistan in general, and in the newly formed districts in particular.

### *Extension of Banking Services*

It is not only important that banking services be provided as soon as possible all over the newly formed districts, banks should be asked to come up with special products that suit the requirements of the local population and offer pragmatic alternatives to the existing practices of cash transactions in these areas. Interest is forbidden in Islam, and tribesmen, being extremely religious, abhor giving and taking interest. Islamic banking models would face least resistance and might even become popular. Besides, in order to increase acceptability, banks must immediately come up with schemes of lending small loans to traders and others. Banks may be reluctant to extend their services mainly for security reasons, but to expedite and add credibility to the mainstreaming process, it is imperative that

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<sup>43</sup> Shinwari, I. 2019, 'Pakistan to Keep Torkham Border Open Round the Clock', *Dawn*, 5 August, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503412>.

<sup>44</sup> Baloch, S. 2010, 'Thousands of Cattle Smuggled Daily', *The Express Tribune*, 21 September.

special arrangements are made to persuade them to provide these services.

### *Establishment of Courts on Priority Basis*

In the past, the most disturbing aspect of FATA management was the absence of the writ of the judiciary. The tribesmen suffered for a long time under the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) that invoked collective responsibility, inflicting suffering on many innocent people. Though the decision has been taken to extend the jurisdiction of courts to the previous agencies, the implementation process, especially infrastructure development, is painstakingly slow. Decision-makers need to bear in mind that this is not an ordinary situation, and the usual dragging of feet would only jeopardise the whole process of integration of FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## **Mid-term Interventions**

### *Development of City Centres (Cantonment Style)*

Land is scarce and the most precious possession in the former Tribal Areas. 'Land in the tribal area is owned collectively; there are no individual land holdings'.<sup>45</sup> To lay a solid foundation, it is important to initiate sustainable development, and most of all in order to boost the local economy, highly planned City Centres at the district and sub-district level should be developed, in partnership with the tribes in possession of the land.

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<sup>45</sup> Mohmand, R.S. 2018, 'Manifold Challenges Lie ahead after FATA Merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa', *Global Village Space*, 9 July.



The government might develop the best possible infrastructure in all the sectors, the real challenge would be to staff, run and maintain these facilities. Except for stationing large number of troops, these City Centres should be built and managed on cantonment models. This is not only for the people who live in the cantonment, but also for civilians who get the necessary protection whenever there is a threat of any kind to their lives or property.’<sup>46</sup> The proposed Centres should be equipped with all the modern amenities where the residents not only feel safe, their families have access to ideal health, education, sports and recreational facilities. Provision of such facilities, coupled with other incentives, would help make serving in the newly formed districts prized postings and attract capable staff from all over the country. These city hubs would not only lend visibility to the development process, they would also encourage PPPs, which should be the key mantra of the mainstreaming process.

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<sup>46</sup> Parveen, A. 2009, ‘Importance of Cantonments’, *Dawn*, 26 August, <https://www.dawn.com/news/866467/importance-of-cantonments>.

### *Local Bodies' Elections*

Participation of the target population, being the most important stakeholder, is a prerequisite for any development initiative to succeed. The most effective way to include majority of the beneficiaries in the development process is through their elected representatives. Though it is expected that in the near future elections for the provincial assembly seats will be conducted, involvement of the target population at the grassroots level would only be possible through the local elected representatives. An effort should be made to hold local bodies' election as soon as possible and United Nations and other international agencies should be involved to build the capacity of these elected representatives.

### *Special Programmes for Youth*

With such a big cohort of youth and almost non-existent jobs and other occupational opportunities, there is a dire and urgent need to initiate projects that can cater to their needs. Two practical and realistic solutions are as follows:

#### **1. Loans with Feasible Projects**

Unfortunately, Pakistan's past experiences with small lending has been discouraging at best. In the past, small loans whether for farmers, youth or others have been more like political bribes than having any real plan. However, microfinance has been a great success in many countries and if properly planned could deliver tangible dividends.

The government needs to prepare numerous feasibility reports for nurturing the cottage industry and SMEs.<sup>47</sup> Taking into account availability of funds, skills and experience levels, and a robust mechanism of progress monitoring, FATA youth should be generously provided small loans to engage them and encourage entrepreneurship. There should be a specialised unit within the lending organisation which instead of handing over cash to the lenders sets up businesses for them, and then, regularly monitors their progress.

## **2. Imparting Marketable Skills and Export to International Job Markets**

Though equally true for the rest of Pakistan, unfortunately, a very large number of FATA residents are working unskilled labourers in the Middle East and different urban centres of Pakistan. Emergency short courses of three to six months should be initiated to train willing youth in employable skills. However, the training courses should have a very small portion of theoretical knowledge; with primary focus on hands-on trainings. The most important aspect of this intervention should be to tailor the training courses according to the needs of the country where they might be employed. Qatar, Malaysia and Germany are some of the countries where, at present, there is a serious demand for skilled labour.

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<sup>47</sup> PCSIR Peshawar has hundreds of such reports for viable projects.



The ideal training centre should be on the model of a simulator where the trainees are not only trained in the required skills, but are taught the language of the target country as well. Approximately, 200 sentences would suffice to help the trainee to be at ease in the country of employment because ‘If you learn only 800 of the most frequently-used lemmas in English, you'll be able to understand 75 percent of the language as it is spoken in normal life.’<sup>48</sup> Besides, the training courses should include brief account of the cultural practices, communication and roads networks, and traffic rules etc. of the country of destination.

In Pakistan, one serious impediment in moving towards large-scale industrialisation is the scarcity of skilled labour. Although, Pakistan has technical education centres in almost all the district headquarters, their performance is dismal.<sup>49</sup> Those who graduate from these institutions can hardly compete in the international job markets. International development agencies, particularly GIZ of Germany should be contracted to provide training to youth in these new districts with some concrete arrangements for placements. Also, the same trained workforce should be employed in the industries to be set up in these newly formed districts.

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<sup>48</sup> Sagar-Fenton, B. and McNeill, L. 2018, ‘How Many Words do you Need to Speak a Language?’, 24 June, *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44569277>.

<sup>49</sup> Raza, A. and Khalid, M.I. 2017, ‘Obstacles in the Enhancement of Technical Education in Pakistan: Views and Reviews’, *Bulletin of Education and Research* 39(1), pp.117-127.



## **Long-term Interventions**

### *Incentivising Development of Economic Zones and Exploiting Mineral Wealth*

In 1988, during the drive for eradication of poppy cultivation, the government established an Industrial Estate in Gadoon Amazai area of Swabi district. The government provided incentives, which included tax exemption, low interest rates on loans and exemption of duties on imported machinery and raw material. A large number of industrialists from all over the country rushed to avail the opportunity and some 325 industrial units were established in the area with an investment of PKR 53.836 billion. While some 133 units closed down once the incentives were withdrawn, the Gadoon Amazai Industrial Estate remains one of the biggest Industrial Estates in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkwa.<sup>50</sup>

Along the same lines, the government needs to not only establish Industrial Estates in these newly formed districts but declare the whole of previous FATA as an 'Export Oriented Industrial Region'. Till arrangements are made to extract and utilise the different minerals, mentioned ahead most of the industries in these Industrial Estates should use imported raw material and the target market for the finished products should be neighbouring Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond.

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<sup>50</sup> Nawaz, F. Azam, M.F. and Noor, N. 2015, 'The Dilemma of Gadoon Amazai Industrial Estate, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa', *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 6(9), pp. 313-327.

Afghanistan, being a landlocked country, imports almost everything from abroad. However, it does produce different fruits, therefore, fruit processing industries would be of special interest to them as most of their produce perishes in extreme hot weather. Also, there are a large number of Afghan traders who have requisite funds, but very few opportunities for investment. It is assumed that, if provided adequate incentives, they may be more than willing to invest in these Industrial Estates as they already have their marketing channels in place inside Afghanistan and beyond. Such Afghan traders are very influential and have a great say in the affairs of their country. It is presumed that in case they are persuaded to invest in these Industrial Estates, they would end up having a stake in Pakistan, which could contribute towards strengthening ties between the two countries.

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*Authorities have so far identified 19 different minerals in tribal areas. These include copper, manganese, chromite, iron ore, lead, barite, soapstone, coal, gypsum, limestone, marble, dolomite, feldspar, quartz, silica sand, bentonite, marble, emerald and graphite. In addition, the South Waziristan tribal region is rich in copper, gold, chromite, marble, granite, oil and gas.*<sup>51</sup>

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The region's mineral wealth can be beneficial for re-building its own infrastructure, and can also be exported to other countries. It is a million dollar question why a country, having such vast natural resources has not progressed in leaps and bounds. There is certainly something drastically wrong with the way

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<sup>51</sup> Daily Times 2017, 'Civil-Military Huddle Orders Speedy Implementation of Reforms in FATA', 18 October, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/epaper/18-10-2017>.

industrialisation and other wealth creation opportunities have been employed. There is an obvious need for structural transformation. Pakistan should seek international help to develop the newly formed districts' industrial minerals. This will help rebuild, reinvigorate and possibly bring an economic revolution in these areas.

### *Structural Transformation – Start with the New Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*

In addition to suggesting a comprehensive strategy to approach development of the newly formed districts, it is pertinent to briefly comment on what has caused stagnation of Pakistan's economy. The country's economy and governance both need sweeping structural transformation as, due to the reasons best known to the rulers, of all hues and colors, Pakistan never succeeded in becoming an industrial country or produce high value or technologically sophisticated products. Due to disinterest of policy-makers, lack of technological innovations and improved inputs, the agriculture sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which has long been and still is the mainstay of our economic growth, is shrinking by the year and the manufacturing sector has made little progress. Resultantly, not only has the economy become sluggish, unemployment is also on the rise.

Industrial policy-making in Pakistan, just like most other policies, could at best be defined as farcical and/or an utter failure. Structural

transformation is only possible if dedicated teams of experts burn the midnight oil and come up with doable and easy to implement policies.

To begin with, Pakistan needs to target two areas. First, it must work on gaining self-sufficiency in the production of agricultural inputs and machinery. Second, according to the World's Top Exports (WTEx) report of March 2019, 'China imported USD 2.135 trillion worth of goods from around the globe in 2018', Pakistan being a neighbour needs to look into production of goods that could be exported to the country. However, unless the GoP pinpoints the most binding constraints to economic growth and fixes them, substantial socioeconomic growth would always escape our country. In addition to realistic policies, the following are some of the impediments that have, thus far, stalled Pakistan joining the club of developed countries and if remedied could turn the economy around:

### **1. Disconnect between Businesses and Policy-makers**

There is a serious lack of understanding between the government and the business community. The government's interaction with businessmen through different chambers and other bodies is merely to address problems such as electricity and gas supply, access roads, ease-of-business etc. which should not have been there in the first place. Structural transformation is only possible if the business community, scientists, researchers, the banking sector/investors, are facilitated by the government to come

up with innovative, researched-based and value-added products in different sectors, especially the non-traditional ones. To begin with agro- processing and light engineering could be targeted.

### **2. Skilled Labour**

One major constraint in developing a meaningful industrial base is a serious scarcity of skilled labour in Pakistan. As mentioned above, the available institutions imparting technical education are inadequate and ill-suited to the modern day requirements. There must be an exclusive department that has a comprehensive plan to produce the required skilled labour. Instead of leaving this all important task in the hands of the existing institutions, contracts should be awarded to reputed firms to train and produce skilled labour. As mentioned earlier, GIZ, a German development agency is highly recommended for the task.

Most binding constraint to development: Inefficient, unprofessional and corrupt bureaucracy is the most binding constraint to Pakistan's socioeconomic development. To be on the trajectory of sustainable development and good governance, it is imperative to make thoughtful structural changes in the bureaucratic set-up of Pakistan.

However, bringing such a change is a Herculean task that would require protracted and consistent effort. But, in the case of mainstreaming and developing the newly formed districts,



time is of the essence and an out-of-the-box approach is recommended to have tangible results and the desired impact promptly and efficiently.

### **3. New Districts' Development Authority (NDA)**

To avoid the prevalent red tapism and circumvent the cumbersome present process of projects' implementation, a New Districts' Development Authority (NDA) should be established with exclusive powers to plan, execute and disburse funds for the proposed projects. For obvious reasons, and rightly so, the political government would want to take credit for mainstreaming former FATA. To allow the elected government to have its due share of the credit they should be tasked to legislate for the formation of the proposed New Districts Development Authority with some of the following general terms of reference that were employed by the Capital Development Authority.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Government of Pakistan, CDA Ordinance 1960.

## **Box-1**

### **New Districts' Development Authority Terms of Reference**

1. Prepare a Master Plan for development that includes projects related to:
  - a) Land use, zoning and land reservation.
  - b) Public buildings.
  - c) Industry.
  - d) Transportation and communications, highways, roads, streets, railways, aerodromes.
  - e) Telecommunication, including wireless, television, radio, telephone.
  - f) Utilisation of water, power and other natural resources.
  - g) Community facilities including water supply, sewerage, drainage, sewage, disposal, electricity, gas supply and other public utilities.
  - h) Preservation of objects or places of historical or scientific interest or natural beauty.
2. No planning or development scheme shall be prepared by any person or by any local body or agency except with the concurrence of the Authority.
3. Finances: New Districts Development Authority Fund
  - a) There shall be formed a fund to be known as the "New Districts Development Authority Fund" which shall vest in the Authority and shall be utilized by the Authority to meet charges in connection with its functions including the payment of salaries and other remuneration to the Chairman, members, officers, servants, experts, and consultants of the Authority.
  - b) To the credit of the New Districts Development Authority fund shall be placed:
    - Grants made by the (Provincial/Federal Government);
    - Loans obtained from the (Provincial/Federal Government];
    - Grants made by local bodies;
    - Sale proceeds of movable and immovable property and receipts for services rendered;
    - Loans obtained by the Authority with the special or general sanction of the [Provincial/Federal Government];
    - Foreign aid and loans obtained from the International Lending Agencies or from any other source outside Pakistan, with the sanction of, and on such terms as may be approved by, the [Provincial/Federal Government]; and
    - All other sums receivable by the Authority.



## **Conclusion**

**W**hile the expression ‘better late than never’ is an apt fit here, the proverb ‘better safe than sorry’ should be the guiding principle when formulating FATA’s mainstreaming plan. A half-cooked and/or half-hearted intervention would backfire with grave consequences.

Security and development are interrelated. Heavy presence of security apparatus might be politically opposed, but the ordinary residents of the erstwhile FATA would welcome it as it is a prerequisite for life to normalise in this insurgency-infected region. Also, a secure environment would attract investors and development partners to share the government’s burden in accomplishing this gigantic task.

First and foremost, the political leadership needs to unravel the trust deficit between the state and the tribal communities. They have suffered for too long and are hurt at being alienated. To build trust, their representatives must be involved at every step of the mainstreaming process. Besides, the pre-merger concessions like admissions for students in professional and other educational institutes of the country and job quotas etc. available to the local populace should be enhanced or at least maintained.

Development of the erstwhile FATA must not be taken as business-as-usual. If left to the whims and caprice of the existing machinery of the government, large sums of money would be siphoned off, the quality of the development work would be poor and the pace of development sluggish. There is no bar on making

special arrangements for the development of a thus far neglected region. As suggested earlier, a New Districts' Development Authority (NDA) should be established to manage the affairs of these districts. The NDA should be mandated for a ten-year period to work on war footing and bring the region at par with the rest of the country. The NDA should have clear goals and objectives along with the required paraphernalia and funds.

A key challenge would be staffing the new health, education and other government facilities with capable staff. In the past, most of the government facilities were either in name only or run by the locally recruited lower staff. Quality living conditions, coupled with lucrative incentives, have to be employed to create conducive environment making working in the region alluring.

The erstwhile FATA is a region of immense geopolitical importance and is the gateway to Central Asia. Declaring it a free trade and industrial zone has the potential to attract huge investments from both local and international entrepreneurs.

A tougher challenge than development itself would be sustaining it. The local economy is weak and the province in which it is merged is not economically strong enough to bear the additional load. For sustainable development, it is imperative to energise the local economy by exploring and putting to good use the vast mineral resources of the region.





## **Annexures**

## Map of Bajaur Agency



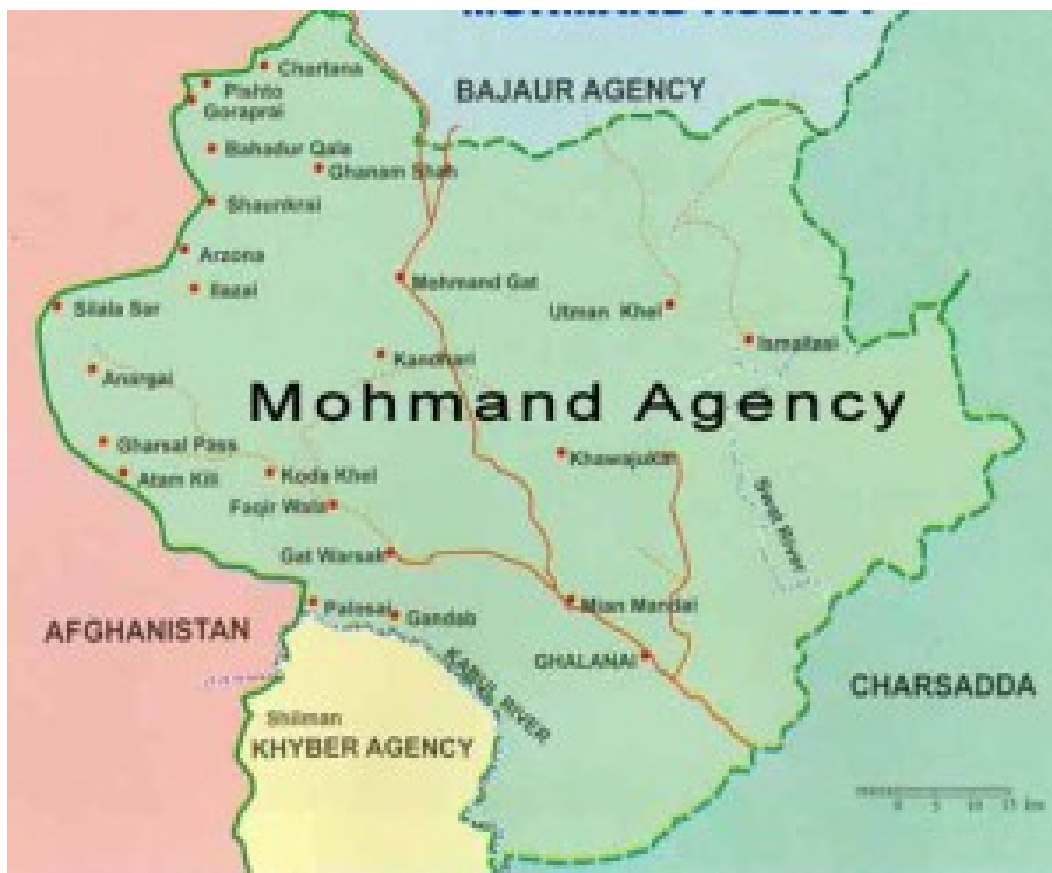
Source: FATA Development Authority, Government of Pakistan.

## Map of Kurram Agency



Source: Tribal Times, <http://thetribaltimes.com/>.

## Map of Mohmand Agency



Source: FATA Development Authority, Government of Pakistan.

## Map of South Waziristan Agency



Source: Tribal Times, <http://thetribaltimes.com/>.

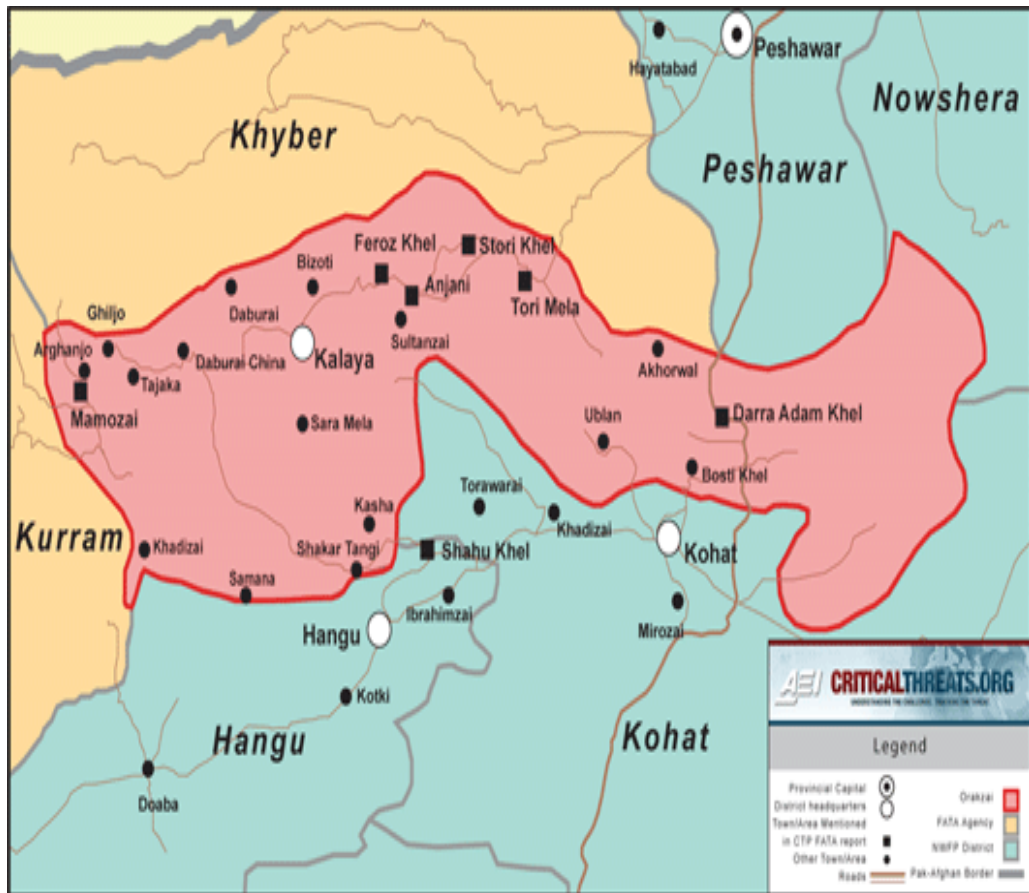


## **Map of North Waziristan Agency**



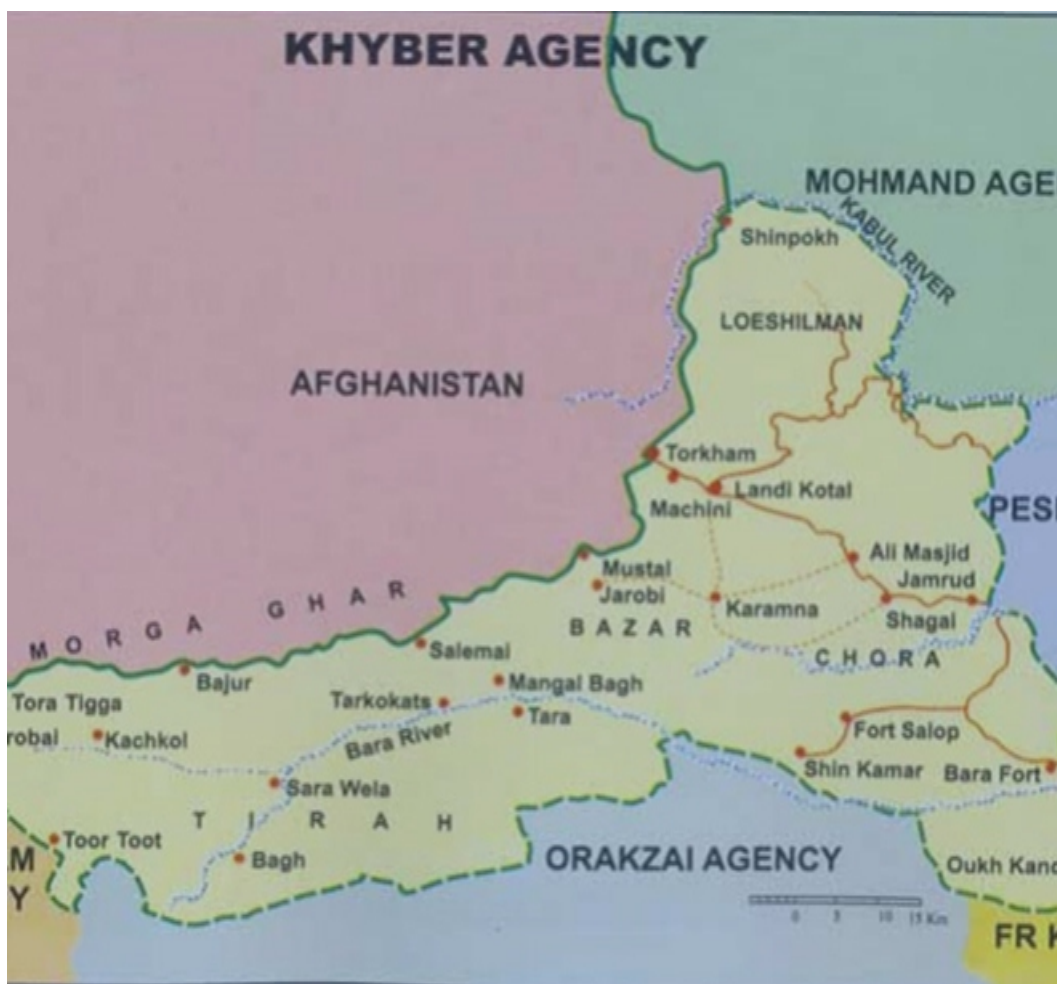
Source: FATA Development Authority, Government of Pakistan.

## Map of Orakzai Agency



Source: Critical Threats, Critical Threats.org.

## Map of Khyber Agency



Source: FATA Development Authority, Government of Pakistan.



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