

## **Dealing with FATA: Strategic Shortfalls and Recommendations**

By Faryal Leghari

**T**he strategic significance of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan stems from its perceived pivotal role in the stabilization of security in neighboring Afghanistan and the war against terrorism. The region is believed to be a “safe haven” used by the al-Qaeda high command for planning future terrorist acts against the US and the rest of the world. In addition, it has been the backyard for the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and a training ground for terrorists, especially suicide bombers. Recently, Michael Chertoff, the US Secretary for Homeland Security, is reported to have categorically stated that “(al-Qaeda) are using their platform in the frontier areas of Pakistan to train operatives.[1]

In addition Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has stated that any future terror attack against US interests would most likely be carried out by Islamic militants based in Pakistan's restive tribal belt bordering Afghanistan. Addressing a press conference he said that tribal groups with ties to Al-Qaeda in Pakistan's FATA area represent the worst security threat to the United States. He said, "I believe fundamentally if the United States is going to get hit, it is going to come out of the planning of the leadership in the FATA” specifically that of al-Qaeda.[2] Admiral Mullen’s statement underlined the concern about the FATA region being used as the staging area for attacks against United States.

This paper aims to address the concerns about the FATA region, the impact of the indigenous Pakistan Taliban, and their role in aiding the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. It also seeks to understand the nature of the insurgency and the involvement of different actors in the area. The purpose is not to dismiss security concerns as fabricated and/or exaggerated, but to remember that the unrest in FATA is not only due to the Taliban but also to various other factors. The principal causes are the socio-economic deprivation of the people of the area and the failure to reintegrate the mujahideen fighters from the Afghan jihad back into mainstream society. Further, this piece draws attention to the fact that the instability in Pakistan’s FATA region is the result of conflict and insecurity emanating from neighboring Afghanistan, and not vice versa. Lastly, this study will conclude with recommendations regarding shortcomings in current strategies being employed to deal with unrest in the region, as well as chalking out a development plan that promises to mitigate regional insecurity by seeking the involvement of the Islamic states.

FATA, comprising seven semi-autonomous agencies and six settled frontier regions, has historically posed a governance nightmare for successive regimes. Militant tribes inhabit

the FATA, and the rugged terrain of the region is ideal for guerrilla warfare. FATA's 400 km long border with Afghanistan is porous with multiple unchecked crossing points. The close tribal links between the people on both sides of the border have made it virtually impossible to monitor cross border movement. Pakistan's proposals to fence and mine the border have met with strong resistance from the Afghan government which fears that any such tacit agreement would be tantamount to accepting the contentious Durand Line as an officially recognized border.[3]

The prospects of a change in the security situation in the FATA region remain bleak, with overtures to engage the militant groups being met with skepticism and drawing sharp criticism in Washington. In fact, as a result of US pressure, efforts to initiate a dialogue have been shelved at present. This, in particular, relates to the negotiations with the Baitullah Mehsud led Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella organization that includes different militant groups. The key TTP objectives include: enforcing the sharia, uniting against NATO forces in Afghanistan and carrying out "defensive jihad against the Pakistan army." [4] Mehsud has been categorical in declaring his intent to continue the jihad against the international forces in Afghanistan. This prompted the United States to voice its concern to Islamabad about the ongoing negotiations with the TTP. In an interview given to journalists in May 2008, Mehsud expressed his doubts about the future of any deal with the Pakistani government, stating that any such peace agreement is doomed unless the government changes its policies, stops being subservient to the US, and reasserts its sovereignty.

To make matters worse, in an incident on June 10, a US air attack on a paramilitary check-post killed 11 Pakistani soldiers, including an officer, in the Mohmand Agency. Pakistan reacted angrily even as the US maintained that it had informed them of the air strike conducted to counter an ambush attack on Afghan/coalition forces on the Afghan side near the border. A strongly-worded reaction from the Pakistani army described the attack as "completely unprovoked and cowardly" and "blamed the coalition forces for the violent act and said that the incident had hit at the very basis of cooperation and sacrifice with which Pakistani soldiers are supporting the coalition in the war against terror," adding that "such acts of aggression do not serve the common cause of fighting terrorism." The army emphasized that, "A strong protest has been launched by the Pakistan Army, and we reserve the right to protect our citizens and soldiers against aggression." [5] This attack is expected to have a detrimental effect on the confidence of the Pakistani Army as it relates to the need to cooperate with the Americans in the ongoing war against terrorism.

### **Military Operations in FATA**

Pakistan first deployed its military in the FATA region in 2002 in an effort to expel foreign fighters, mostly those belonging to al-Qaeda and other affiliated organizations, as well as to counter the growing threat posed by local militants. The military operations in the region evolved over three distinct phases. In the first phase, the operations were focused on dismantling the al-Qaeda and Taliban networks. The second phase focused on

the selective scouting of the Taliban, and the third stage dating from 2005 to the present (2008) has consisted of large military operations.

At present the total strength of the Pakistani armed forces deployed along the Afghan border is 100,000 soldiers, with two division-sized forces in Waziristan, despite the lull in military operations. The operations conducted by the armed forces in 2007-2008 included 38 surgical air strikes by the Pakistan Air Force/Army, and 25 ground operations that resulted in 930 militants being killed, of which 508 were foreigners.[6] The withdrawal of the armed forces and removal of all military checkpoints in FATA as demanded by the TTP is highly unlikely. There were rumors of relocation and withdrawal in some areas but the officials have refuted these. At present, Bajaur, North and South Waziristan, and Mohmand – to some extent – continue to be the most troubled of the seven agencies comprising FATA.

### **Nature of the Insurgency in FATA and the Key Players**

In trying to comprehend the evolution of the current situation, it is important to understand the imbalance in the power structures in the FATA region. Prior to 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the power structure in the region had only two elements – the tribes and the Pakistani government. These two powerful elements co-existed peacefully and the governance of the region was designed around them. It was only after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the subsequent hasty departure of the international community from the scene that militant organizations, including jihadist militants of different nationalities, emerged. The traditional power structure was threatened by this violent third element, which led to a power struggle that erupted after the US-led attacks on the Taliban in October 2001. To date, this new element in the power structure has not adapted to nor been accepted by the traditional power setup in the region. In fact, the heavily financed and armed militants outmatched the tribal chiefs who stood up to them. They have killed approximately 120 tribal elders on charges of being spies of the Pakistani government and/or the Americans. It was only when it became clear that these militants had outmatched the Frontier Corps that the army was called in to control the situation.

The main reasons that have led to the emergence of this region as a flashpoint of extremism, terrorism and violent insurgency can be traced to the days of the liberation of Afghanistan and includes several failures on part of Islamabad and the international community. These include:

- 1) The failure to reintegrate the mujahideen (after the Afghan Jihad and ouster of Soviets);
- 2) The failure to provide the people of the region with desperately needed socio-economic resources, including basic facilities in health, education and communications [7]; and
- 3) The failure to initiate reforms both at the political and administrative level in the FATA region.

The cumulative effect of these factors provided a fertile ground for the emergence of several players/groups that had clearly defined stakes in exploiting the situation.

Any effort to tackle the insurgency requires an understanding of the key local players, their strategic objectives and their linkages to other organizations or groups with vested interests.

**Currently we can discern four categories of militants in the tribal areas:**

1) The jihadists, who are called “purists”, and whose chief purpose is to fight jihad. For them, there is no difference between the Soviets and the United States/NATO, as they are all perceived as occupiers of an Islamic state. These people are believed to have no desire to indulge in anti-state or criminal activity. It is understood that these “purists” will cross over into Afghanistan to fight jihad. The particular nature of the regional terrain is conducive to their activities and their cross-border incursions are expected to continue.

2) The indigenous Pakistani Taliban, who have regrouped under Baitullah Mehsud’s Tehrik-i-Taliban, and like-minded smaller organizations and groups. The TTP’s emergence as an independent entity with a sophisticated organizational structure and operational capability was formally announced in December 2007. The group had been active in the FATA region, principally in the South Waziristan, Mohmand, and Bajaur Agencies for some years. The TTP has successfully engaged the Pakistan armed forces and currently supports Taliban operations in Afghanistan against NATO forces. This has resulted in other smaller militant groups, like Lashkar-i-Islam, joining them either as associated partners or as followers. Mehsud’s organization, which is reported to be 5,000 strong, has attracted many disbanded terrorist groups that are not confined to the FATA region. In fact, the TTP’s reach now extends to the settled areas of the NWFP, including the districts of Swat, Malakand, Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat, D.I.Khan, Kohistan and Buner.[8]

3) The criminal groups who have assumed the mantle jihad in order to exploit the situation to the benefit of their criminal activities.

4) The “shadow” group whose identity is yet to be determined. This group is believed to be involved in attempts to reignite conflict when the situation calms down and some headway is being made in efforts to bring peace.

The multi-layered nature of the insurgency demands a similar approach in dealing with the actors involved. There is a need to strengthen the regional security forces including the police, the khassadars and the levies: [9] as an integrated force, they could deal effectively with the criminal elements and the smaller militant groups. In order to ensure the implementation of the strategy to deal with the insurgency, it is crucial to harness the support of the tribes. In fact, the government, by exploiting differences between the Uzbek militants and the Waziri tribes, waged a successful operation in March 2007 that resulted in the killing and expulsion of more than 300 Uzbeks from the area.

**Failings of the US Strategy towards FATA**

It seems that the US has failed in its “winning the hearts and minds” strategy; in fact, it has not even bothered to operate in this context in the FATA region. Conducting air strikes, dismissing civilian (and now military) casualties as “collateral damage”, and then expecting local people to be grateful for development aid seems presumptuous. While development funds are badly needed in the impoverished and radicalized region, the truth is that the tribesmen view any development aid from western quarters as blood money. There is evident hostility towards western aid, a fact exploited by the militants who have termed it *haram* and have vowed to wage all efforts to sabotage any such projects. As a result of the huge socio-economic deficit – a problem that can be partly considered a failure of the Pakistani government and partly of the international community that abandoned the region after the ouster of the Soviets from Afghanistan – the region has tilted towards extremism and terrorism. The conflict in Afghanistan became the cause for the consequent radicalization, terrorism, weapons proliferation and narcotics trafficking.

As if the missile attacks from an unmanned predator aircraft, which caused civilian casualties were not enough – it is now rumored that the Pentagon has planned ground operations in the tribal areas. It is beyond comprehension that Washington seems to have entirely disregarded realities on the ground. Instead, they reveal signs of panic by erring in their policy-making. Their rhetoric about successes in Iraq and control of the situation in Afghanistan is in contradiction to reality, and it seems that the policy makers in Washington are scrambling to take any measure that might indicate some semblance of control over the situation in these two countries.

In order to deter cross-border incursions by al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and to gain logistic support from Pakistan, the US should focus on increasing troops on the Afghan border. The villages that have sprung on the Afghan side of the border have been largely ignored by the coalition and Afghan security forces and are believed to also provide sanctuary and logistical support to the Taliban and others. Besides, the refugee problem (Pakistan hosted about 4 million Afghan refugees, of which about 2 million are still to be repatriated) needs to be addressed on an immediate basis.

The US and its allies should also focus on strengthening the institutional structures in Afghanistan and make concerted efforts to root out criminal and corrupt elements within the establishment. The Afghan Army and police trained by the international forces are expected to share more of the burden of the ISAF at some point later in 2008. However, this is not expected to have much of an impact on controlling the Taliban insurgency, as this is in actuality a nationalist movement. Rampant corruption at various levels within the system, ineffective central governance, and the disillusionment of the Afghan people with the establishment are also contributing factors.

The linkages between narcotics production and the insurgency are often discussed but have yet to be fully addressed. There is strong evidence that narcotics serve as the crucial financial supply-line for the Taliban and al-Qaeda. A hard-hitting strategy for narcotics eradication complemented by a viable alternative livelihood plan for the opium farmers is the need of the hour. In addition, the vested interests of international organized criminal

groups, specifically the narco-mafia, in an unstable Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be ignored.[10]

As for the Pakistani perception of the “War on Terror”, the truth of the matter is that the Pakistani people, in general, do not consider it their war; they feel they have been dragged into it. Despite being subjected to a wave of suicide attacks and the spread of Talibanization, they feel these are reactions to the government’s support of US policies. Instead of aggravating an already volatile situation by staging ground operations to hunt down al-Qaeda, the US should place the onus on the Pakistani military and beef up the regional security forces with technical training and intelligence support. Any air strikes to hit “high value targets” must be conducted only by the Pakistani armed forces, and these should be kinetic strikes with minimal civilian casualties. Pakistani intelligence services are already in close collaboration with the US and other allies, where intelligence information is shared with about 50 countries on a daily basis. This intelligence cooperation could be enhanced with added focus on the development of human intelligence in the area (FATA and other identified sensitive areas in Pakistan) aided by technical surveillance.

In reaction to the constant haranguing from Western sources regarding the role of the ISI and elements in the armed forces in helping the Taliban, Pakistan has recently issued a strong denial of such activities. It has taken particular exception to the report issued by the RAND Corporation entitled “Counter Insurgency in Afghanistan” which claims that there are Taliban sanctuaries inside Pakistan and that elements within the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and Frontier Corps (FC) are providing arms and financial assistance to Taliban. Pakistan has also categorically denied that any of its officials or troops is helping insurgents and has rejected the report’s allegations. A statement issued by the Pakistani military denounced the report, stating that it, “is misleading, factually incorrect and based on propaganda to create doubts and suspicion in the minds of (the) target audience about Pakistan’s role in supporting the coalition forces in Afghanistan.”[11]

As far as Pakistan is concerned, efforts to catch some of the key al-Qaeda planners and operators have met with considerable success in the past. However, the struggle promises to be a long one, for the organization has now grown into a movement. The strategy in the War on Terror should be to avoid the high-handed approach and the use of language that has generated hatred and extremism against the West in the past. It is naïve to expect that the unilateral use of force could lead to the eradication of terrorism. Recommendations have been made at the international level to address the root causes of grievances and injustices (perceived or real) that lead to radicalization and extremism. However, the growing spread of radicalization not only among the so-called madrassah trained youth but also among the educated classes portends that the problem will not be an easy one to resolve. In fact, there is a clear lack of strategy as well as a lack of commitment to implement and sustain plans geared towards resolving the region’s problems; the lack of understanding of the people, their culture and beliefs is another major problem.

On the other hand, as part of a comprehensive strategy, the US has planned to contribute over \$2 billion, with a special development package worth \$750 million including the

establishment of Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs) in the FATA region. The US has also drawn up a Security Development Plan estimated to cost \$400 million for enhancing the capability of the Frontier Corps, thus improving security in the region.[12] These are commendable initiatives and are expected to yield dividends for the local people. However, as seen in the past, the implementation of such projects has faced obstacles, with a major portion of the funds going towards consultants' fees in western capitals and very little trickling down to benefit the locals. Afghanistan is facing the same problem where reconstruction funds amount to a meager \$7-8 billion compared to military costs of \$80 billion. Implementation of such projects can be made acceptable to the people by involving Muslim countries that can play instrumental roles; this will be discussed below in more detail.

### **Pakistan's Strategy towards FATA: Suggested Amendments**

The effort to use military deployment as a means of political negotiation and a facilitator of economic development has been absent from the strategy to deal with the situation in the tribal areas. A political strategy, drawn up in consultation with tribal elders, to spread awareness among the local tribes could clear up any misconceptions and mistrust created by the militants. At this point the *presence* of military forces in the region as a means to apply sustained pressure to deter any sabotage attempts is important.

Historical facts show that the unilateral use of the force has never been an answer to resolve the FATA's problems. Though a military presence in the FATA eventually became a necessity, this has had an adverse effect on the administrative set-up as the authority of the political agent has been eroded.[13] Taking punitive action against the tribes, including blockades and mass arrests, will not work and will likely lead to a worsened situation. In fact, the militants have welcomed blockades of the area as it deprives the locals of the area of their basic economic needs.

In order to rectify the present situation, there should be a graduated response. Political and administrative reforms need to be introduced with the possible merger of the region into the NWFP. (The government has proposed renaming the province, from NWFP, to 'Pukhtookhwa' as a first step in addressing the perceived neglect of the region). Until such time, the authority of the political agent must be restored.

As for negotiations with militants and peace agreements, the government needs to show resolve in standing by its objectives of not tolerating any type of activity against the state apparatus or violence against its citizens. Pakistan has expressed its inability to control incursions into Afghanistan on its own. It is only fair that Pakistan and Afghanistan should share the responsibility to stop such incursions. Further, NATO must act upon the government's proposals to the ISAF command to post extra troops and check movements on the Afghan side of the border. While curtailment of the use of force against groups like the TTP is not a likely option in the foreseeable future, there should be a continuous effort to keep channels of communication and dialogue open with such groups.

### **Socio-economic Development in the FATA Region**

The provincial government in the NWFP plans to initiate a \$4 billion development fund for the Frontier province including the FATA region. This is in addition to the \$2 billion Sustainable Development Fund (SDP) for the FATA region that could not be implemented due to a lack of resources and funds.

A key factor in the implementation of any development work in the region is consolidating and strengthening local support. It is important to reach an effective agreement with the tribes in the FATA region in order to implement development projects. This in turn will have far reaching implications, as the tribes will realize the benefits of these projects for their areas.

A comprehensive regional development plan encompassing training and provision of jobs, infrastructure, education, health, agriculture and trade development is urgently required. However, for immediate impact, providing jobs to the people from the area either locally or internationally is vital.

Any future development plans for the FATA should include the Islamic states, principally the GCC states, as integral partners with a leading role. This would be immensely beneficial in two ways. Firstly, it would counter the widespread hostility in the area towards western aid and the fears of a broader ‘design’ to subvert the people of the area from their religion and beliefs. Secondly, the locals, who would perceive these projects as an Islamic initiative, would resist sabotage attempts by militants. The projects would also address the concern about unemployed youth being drawn into extremism, as they would aim to provide jobs to young people. [14] Much of the large youth population (approximately 15 percent in Waziristan alone) could also be provided jobs in the Gulf States with strict monitoring from the Pakistani side. Understandably the Gulf States would have security concerns as well, which would need to be addressed by Pakistan.

In fact, the export of labor from these areas to the GCC States would add to employment opportunities. The local tribes can be apportioned a quota that could be flexible and based on performance and good behavior. Providing training opportunities in remote areas could facilitate the recruitment of locals for un-skilled and semi-skilled labor. Mobile training teams would travel throughout FATA with tribal support in order create awareness among the local population about opportunities. The Political Agent and the tribal elders could also be involved in the process in order to facilitate the endeavor in addition to propagating the initiative regionally.

The existing recruitment centers in the Frontier Province and other parts of the country could be utilized for providing further training in various fields to those who have had some basic education and other technical training. It is expected that there will be a larger turnout for labor recruitment in the construction and services sector. This would be mutually beneficial for the FATA area and Pakistan as well as the Gulf States due to booming construction and real estate development in the Gulf. [15]

A key area in dire need of resources is the transportation infrastructure, specifically roads. Any development in the roads network would have an immediate impact on the people’s lives and make the region more accessible. This would also boost trade and

commerce in the region. Home to 3.96 million people, FATA suffers from a lack of development in the education, health, energy and agricultural sectors. The literacy rate for FATA is a mere 17.42 percent, according to a 1998 census, compared to 43.92 percent for the rest of Pakistan. The female literacy rate at three percent is the lowest in the country. [16]

Similarly, the health sector also demonstrates poor indicators. The total number of hospitals in the entire FATA region is 33, with a further 301 dispensaries. Sadly, there is only one doctor for a population of 6,970. [17]

The agriculture sector has also been neglected due to a lack of resources. Addressing the issues of water scarcity, land reclamation and forestry development, the introduction of tunnel farming for off-season vegetables and fruits, and livestock farming could give a boost to overall development in the region. Similarly, the mining of coal, marble and other important minerals is a potential goldmine waiting to be tapped. The region also badly needs energy for village electrification and irrigation purposes. Additionally, tapping sources of hydroelectric power and solar energy is another area that could be explored.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan's military cooperation with the US and coalition forces in Afghanistan is likely to continue despite the June 10 air strikes that have elicited a sharp reaction and created tension. However, the air strikes by US aircraft and coalition forces must be curtailed in the larger interest of winning this war. As stated earlier, it is advisable that Pakistani forces carry out any air strikes on targets inside Pakistan. The criticism of Pakistan's efforts being aired in Washington has caused confusion leading to a debate in the country on whether or not the current situation is part of an induced destabilization process aimed at denuclearizing the country.

In any case, a genuine effort to completely root out extremism requires that the West revise its strategy. It is also mandatory that the internal dynamics of the FATA region be incorporated in any strategy that seeks to deal with the conflict situation.

Pakistan should step up efforts to implement political, administrative and judicial reforms in keeping with tribal traditions. There must be a concerted effort to dispel the feeling among the people that they are not part of the mainstream in the country. More importantly, the government should address their frustration and sense of socio-economic deprivation. As stated earlier, the use of military force should only serve as a supporting tool for implementing the political and economic strategies discussed above. However, it would also help to thwart the militants' goal of exploiting the situation and recruiting people for extremist activities.

It is hoped that the international community, including the US, the EU, and especially the GCC states, will reach out to extend cooperation for the development of the FATA region. It should be kept in mind however, that there is no short cut to achieve the final objective. While measures implemented on an immediate basis could generate results

and change perceptions, a multifaceted strategy that would work on different levels would need a long-term commitment and sustained resources. This is the responsibility the international community must commit to; for Afghanistan's example is a stark reminder of how an unattended situation can disintegrate into chaos.

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## Notes:

[1] BBC World News, June 1, 2008.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7429699.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7429699.stm)

[2] Geo Television Network, June 11, 2008.

<http://www.geo.tv/6-11-2008/19148.htm>

[3] The Pak government, in the face of belligerent Afghan posturing about sending its forces to hunt down Taliban leaders like Mehsud and Mualvi Umer (there was an ambiguity about which "Umer" Karzai referred to, there is the Taliban leader Mullah Umer (Afghan) and then there is Maulvi Umer who is the spokesman of the TTP (Mehsud's); had also propositioned NATO to increase vigilance on the Afghan side of the border. Border monitoring has to be a collective responsibility in this case and must be shared equally between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the International Coalition Forces.

[4] Daily Times, December 16, 2007.

[5] The News, June 12, 2008.

[6] Information obtained from interviews with some high level Intelligence Officers in Islamabad, May 17, 2008. Identity cannot be disclosed as per prior understanding.

[7] This socio-economic deprivation has led to rise in extremism and radicalization. As a result the Taliban and other militant organizations have been able to recruit much of the younger population as well as many of the returnees of the Afghan jihad.

[8] The News, December 16, 2007.

[9] The establishment of Federal Levies and Khassadrs in FATA and (tribal areas in Balochistan) was introduced by the British and has to date been maintained in order to exercise an effective control over the tribal people and for the maintenance of law and order in the tribal areas. The political agent holds the control of the federal levies and khassadars and runs the day to day affairs of policing the agency. Levies are the community police. They perform all functions that the regular police are supposed to do. Total strength of Federal Levies in FATA is 6785. Khassadar position is hereditary and incumbents carry their own weapons for the duty. Total strength of Khassadars working in NWFP & FATA is 17597.

[10] It is believed that the Taliban in Afghanistan are being paid heavily by the organized crime groups running the narcotic trafficking network to allow safe passage of drug consignments to pass into Pakistan and Iran for trafficking to other destinations. The al Qaeda is also believed to be using narco money as a financial supply-line. The narcotics production and trafficking is now directly linked to the financing of the Taliban insurgency and the terrorist funding for al Qaeda and other associated groups. The international community needs to address this on an urgent basis.

[11] The News, June 12, 2008

[12] Shuja Nawaz, "Rethinking the War in Pakistan's Borderlands," The Huffington Post, March 13, 2008.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shuja-nawaz/rethinking-the-war-in-pak\\_b\\_91407.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shuja-nawaz/rethinking-the-war-in-pak_b_91407.html)

[13] The Political Agent referred to here is the administrator appointed by the Governor of the NWF province and is in charge of running the administration of the agency. This setup has been implemented since the days of British Colonial rule has carried on successfully to date. Ironically with the increased military presence of the Pakistan Army, the role and authority of the Political Agent is now reduced to a nominal stature.

[14] Some quarters assert that the GCC states do not fully respect labor rights and question the increased export of Pakistan labor force to the Gulf. Recent press reports also brought to light several incidents where protests over unpaid wages and proper accommodation were staged by the work force especially in the construction sector. This served as an eye opener causing some of these host states to review the problems and address the violations. Many of these workers who were found guilty of inciting and indulging in violence were deported as well. It is not correct to assume that there are no transgressions in the labor sector by private or semi private or even government owned companies but there is marked improvement and more openness about such issues. In fact several of the GCC states are on a self improvement drive.

[15] In view of anti trafficking laws and labor reforms being implemented due to international concerns for expatriate labor communities in GCC states, and a desire to improve their image, many of the GCC states have seriously started to take measures to improve abuses within the labor sector. It is not expected to assume a model status but things have improved significantly over the years. It is also true as proved by a study conducted by Gallup Pakistan that Pakistan labor force prefer the Gulf as a work destination due to closeness to home, perceived higher monetary returns and ideological reasons.

[16] Directorate of Education FATA, NWFP, Pakistan Education Survey, 2004-05, Census Report of FATA, 1998.

[17] Statistics provided by the FATA Secretariat, Year 2006.