

Talibanization in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan

WANG Lian

(Institute of International Relations, Peking University)

***Abstract:** Owing to consistent Pakistani economic decline and social unrest, the corrupt governmental political structure and the deepening cooperation with western countries. Talibanization has spread more and more into the tribal area of Pakistan. It is mainly represented as an extremist, armed violence and mass participation, which will seriously affect the political stability in Pakistan and make the western military forces become stationed for a long time in Afghanistan. The "All-weather" relationship between China and Pakistan will also be challenged by those radical religious forces and separatists.*

***Key Words:** Religious Extremism; Talibanization; Madrassa; Pakistan*

As an important nation, Pakistan is not only a close neighbor of China, but also a nation for which the US, Afghanistan, as well as the Taliban and extremist religious groups are competing and hooking in. It is also a Muslim nation with nuclear weapons and it is a long rival and potential enemy of India. Since 1947, the chaotic situation of Pakistan and the tense relationships with Afghanistan, Iran and India

are all the nightmares of every government. However, as the frontline state of American anti-terror war and important Muslim country, Pakistan has many aspects deserving attention and studies.

Pushtuns at the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan were divided into two nations by the Durand Line which was drawn by the Great Britain in the late 19th century. Because of it, Pakistan has been deeply affected by the Taliban, and Talibanization has become more and more common. The support from Pakistan's military, government and religious groups is the reason why the Taliban which was built by only 800 religious students could become a strong force involved into the civil war of Afghanistan and draw the whole world's attention (Tarzi, & McCloud: 2004).

Currently, without any doubt, Afghanistan and Pakistan are two nations which have the most strategic impact on the current anti-terror war. The notion of Talibanization not only combines the two nations together in real politics, but also helps us understand the political and social development in the north-western border of Pakistan in theoretical research. The Pakistan-sided tribal areas, especially the Pashtun-populated Federally Administered Tribal ones, are natural home for the Taliban. They could not only grab political power in Afghanistan and increase their own impact, but also have a large number of support from devout and radical religious students and can be protected by tribal elders and the mosques while the governments of the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan could do nothing at all.

Therefore, taking Talibanization in tribal areas of Pakistan as the main study object, on the one hand, can figure deeply down to the complicated ethnic and religious conflicts and the relationships between central and local governments within borders; on the other hand, we can understand the internal reasons why the anti-terror wars have had little effect in Afghanistan. At the same time, we could observe the political developments in Pakistan, especially the face-off of the government and radical religious forces. It would also offer a reference for the China-Pakistan relationship.

Talibanization in tribal areas of Pakistan deteriorates the US and NATO anti-terrorism situation in Afghanistan and encourages Pakistani radical and religious forces, complicating the situation in these areas. The main consequences are as follows. First, it seriously affects the political stability in Pakistan. When Talibanization gradually becomes a fact, it may go to Balkanization in the near future. Second, it would give the chance for the Western military forces to be stationed for a long period in Afghanistan. And last, the “all-weather” relationship between China and Pakistan would also be severely challenged by radical religious forces and separatists.

I. Talibanization: Concept and Research

Talibanization refers to the political and social process following or imitating the political system, religious laws and life style of Taliban out of Pakistan. In the international media, it mainly describes the political and social development in Pakistan, especially in the north-western tribal areas. This process used to be called *Taliban Syndrome* (Ahrari, 2002: 658). Besides Pakistan, Talibanization is also used to define the political and religious issues in Karachi (Engel, 2008: September 30), Lahore (Alam), Bangladesh (Baldwin, 2002: May 18) and even Iraq (Fang, 2008), Malaysia (Klinghoffer, 2006: April 16), Somalia [Mogadishu (AFP), 2008: October 3] in order to illustrate that the emerging process in those areas is like the one in Afghanistan.

An editorial titled “The Threat of Talibanization” in *the Boston Globe* on November 6, 1999 warned of the threat posed by growing power of Taliban. This was probably the earliest record for the word’s usage in the Western mass media.

Distinctly, the Chinese research concerning with Talibanization in tribal areas of Pakistan is far behind those in the rest of the world. Since 2003, there is no article taking Talibanization as *Subject, Title* or *Key Word* in the China Journal Net Database. While, if it is searched in the *Full text*, 38 articles were found but most of them only mention

Talibannization when they discuss political development in Pakistan or the American anti-terror war in Afghanistan. None of them study it in detail. Only 2 articles are found when we use *tribal areas of Pakistan* as the title to search. Therefore, we need further and deeper research in Chinese discourse concerning the Talibanization in tribal areas of Pakistan.

In other countries, apart from a large number of the world (mainly Pakistan) Talibanization-oriented news reports, there are also research institutions which have carried out observations and research of this political and geographic phenomenon. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group has published several research reports. The US Council on Foreign Relations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Foundation and others have also published research papers which mainly discuss the situation of Afghanistan after 9/11 and the impact of the ruling and falling of the Taliban government toward Pakistan, especially toward its tribal areas. *The Economist* and *Terrorism Monitor* have also had articles giving sustained attentions to the Taliban and the internal development and evolution of its ideology.

At the closing ceremony of the Kabul Peace Jirga of Pakistan-Afghanistan on August 12nd, 2007, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf admitted that a number of militant groups frequently created incidents of violence in Afghanistan and got support from some tribes of Pakistan. This was the first time that the leader of Pakistan had openly recognized the existence of Taliban and their sympathizers, as well as the Pakistanis' participation of Taliban organizations and activities. All of this information shows that the Talibanization in the tribal areas is becoming a matter of fact. Musharraf said, "Like Afghanistan, Pakistan is also facing the same situation in which anti-social armed actions and violent incidents are increasing." He pointed out that Pakistan is faced with three issues. The first and the core one is that the armed groups continued to create "violence and conflict"; second, a number of armed groups emerged

“Talibanization and other extremist tendencies” in ideology; third, that “some people give their sympathy to Taliban and accept the extremist ideology”.

During his speech, President Musharraf highlighted the main content and features of Talibanization in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which are extremism, armed violence and mass participation. These are also the foundation and starting point of this research.

II. Political and Social Development in Federally Administered Tribal Areas

Since the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded in 1947, the whole nation has four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). In addition, Pakistan includes three special areas, namely, the northern part of Kashmir and Azad Kashmir, both actually controlled by Pakistan. And the third one is the Federally Administered Tribal Areas which is at the border of North-West Frontier Province, but under the administration of the central government. Such complicated administrative divisions reflect the intricacy of ethnic structures and the political development history in Pakistan.

In political development history, the ownership of disputed territory of Kashmir has always been the main hindrance of the normal bilateral relations between India and Pakistan while the political and social development in the tribal areas also reflects the long-term boundary disputes between Pakistan and Afghanistan. All the successive Afghan governments have not recognized the Durand Line drawn by the British-Indian colonial authorities in 1893, while Pakistan insisted that this was an internationally recognized borderline. Today, this controversy makes the tribal and regional situation more complicated. It is not only a continuation of historical issues, but also has become one focus of the international fights against terrorism.

A. The Tribal Areas in History

The western and north-western region of Pakistan was historically tribal-concentrated areas with relatively poor political, economic and social developments. In the mid-18th century, Afghanistan became the main battlefield of the British and Russians for their colonial rule and development in Central Asia. The British worried that the volatile situation of the Pashtun tribal areas in the North-West frontier would become an excuse for Czarist Russia to go south. Therefore, the British-Indian authorities decided to divide this tribal area into two and made Afghanistan a buffer zone between Russia and Britain. In 1893, the British-Indian Foreign Secretary Henry Duran factitiously split the Pashtun tribal areas into two, which formed a 1,200 miles long international border line and the political structure of the Pashtun cross-border door problem (Goodhand, 2005: 195).

Pashtun tribal areas which are across both sides of the Durand Line have historically been claimed by Afghanistan as territory. It includes Pakistan's NWFP, FATA, Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and the Pashtun areas of Balochistan province. In 1901, the NWFP's settled and non-settled tribal areas which were originally under the jurisdiction of the British Punjab Commissioner and later directly controlled by Delhi have become the buffer zone between NWFP and Afghanistan. Since then, the *Frontier Crimes Regulations* have been in use until now. It allowed the tribal areas to become the constitutional independent place and a combination zone of direct governance of British-India government, and the political agents and tribal elders (known as Malik).

After Pakistan gained independence in 1947, the local tribes have sworn allegiance to the new nation. In these tribal areas, the Pakistan government has four main forms of domination: the first one is FATA. As the direct jurisdiction areas of the federation, it is nominally managed by the President himself, but in fact maintains practically complete independence; the second one is PATA, including 7 out of 24

districts in Northwest Frontier Province and 5 regions in Baluchistan Province. The other two forms are putting them directly into Baluchistan and Punjab provinces (Markey, 2008: August). The Pakistan's tribal areas mainly refer to the FATA-based tribal areas.

B. The FATA's Role in Pakistan Political System

With the development and transform of Pakistan's constitutional system, until July 1, 1970, Dir, Swat, Chitral, Malakand and Hazara Districts which originally belonged to tribal areas have been transferred to NWFP; Meanwhile, the tribal areas of Baluchistan, Zhob District, Sibi District, Loralai District, and Chagai District have become a part of Baluchistan Province; the rest of the tribal areas have been declared as Federally Administered Tribal Areas, including Mohmand known as *Tribal Agency*, Kurram, Khyber, Bajaur, Orakzai, North and South Waziristan, as well as Peshawar known as the *Frontier Region (FRs)*, Kohat, FR Tank, Bannu, FR Lakki, and Dera Ismail Khan. Besides Orakzai, the other six tribal agencies border on Afghanistan and the 600-km long border line is at the middle of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, which has a significant strategic position.

In accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan, unless the President issues a decree, the law passed by the National Assembly does not apply to the FATA. The NWFP Governor has represented the President in FATA. But in fact, neither the British-Indian government in Delhi nor today's Central Government in Islamabad, has achieved real political domination and military presence in FATA. Some critics even believe that the so-called "federal jurisdiction" is simply a misnomer. In reality, Islamabad governing to FATA has never been beyond the range of 100 meters on each side of few roads in the tribal areas (Johnson, & Mason, 2008: 53).

In 1973, the Pakistan Constitution gave the President the executive power in the FATA, but the NWFP Governor in Peshawar, not the representatives of FATA in National Assembly and Senate, exercised this power and had no legislative supervision. The NWFP

provincial government provides medical, educational services for the entire FATA and supports the tribal areas for agriculture and communication development, but FATA has no representation in the NWFP Provincial Assembly, so there is no political affiliation between the two.

Unlike other parts of Pakistan, there is no political party, national law or administrative judiciary in FATA. Having all legislative, executive and financial management functions, the Political Agent (PA) performs the power of Tribal Agency. In addition to the local senior civil servants, PA is also the judge, juror, police chief, prison official, local administrative official and prosecutor.

Although, in theory, the PA has great power, when it comes to tribe's internal affairs, he needs the support and cooperation of tribal elders. The tribal elders are known as *Maliks* who have the hereditary system in the past and now need the government's appointment. It is reported that because there is no the executive and judiciary in the tribal areas, the settlement of tribal internal affairs mainly needs the *Maliks*'s negotiation. Therefore, the Pakistan government needs the tribal elders' help.

FATA is a Leviathan political monster combining all together. Since the foundation of Pakistan, there has been peace between the central government and the FATA, and they even have used each other. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the FATA became the main channel of a large-scale American assistance to Afghan Mujahedeens, and also a reliable base for Pashtun nationalism and the radical religious forces on both sides of the border. Due to the remoteness and inconvenient traffic, the world has a limited understanding of this area. With the rapid rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan and thorough the anti-terror war since 2001, the FATA has begun to receive increasing attention from the whole world. As the head of Islamabad Policy Institute, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema (2008: August 19) said, "After the shock of 9/11, the FATA all of a sudden became one of global concerns". The way of dealing with the radical

forces in tribal areas, as well as the Taliban and al Qaeda members hidden in FATA has become a headache of the Pakistan government. The severe cracking down on the Taliban and al Qaeda would receive their retaliation and dissatisfaction of tribal people. However letting them be will make the tribal areas go opposite to the central government and get the strong pressure from the United States and Western world.

C. Refugee and Economic Development in FATA

As has been mentioned before, FATA is mainly inhabited by Pashtuns. This brave and warlike nation has rarely been conquered by other nations in history. On the contrary, the surrounding neighborhood has been always controlled by them. In 1809, when British official Mountstuart Elphinstone visited Afghanistan, a senior person in a tribal area told him that: "We are accustomed to chaos, alerts everywhere, bloodshed and warfare...but we have never been used to having a master" (Tanner, 2002: 124). People in Waziristan of FATA are very proud that they have never paid taxes to the authorities and their territories have never been conquered (Johnson, & Mason, 2008: 50). Because of the harsh natural environment and the chaotic political reality, this national character has been kept until now.

Since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in the late 1970s, as Pakistan was the frontline against the invasion, the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan once again became the main attacking line for Mujahideens against the Soviets. This area is the Mujahideen's base, from where weapons, supplies and other war supplies were continuously sent to Afghanistan. Accordingly, a large number of Afghan refugees flowed to areas of FATA. In 1981, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan reached their peak and it was estimated that there was about 4,700 people per day crossed the Afghan border into Pakistan (Wood, 1989: 350). By 1986, the number of refugee villages which were established by the Pakistan government in three provinces along the borderline had come to 350. The registered ones in NWFP

are approximately 72% of the total, Baluchestan Province, 24% and Punjab province, 4% (Dupree, 1988: 846).

Compulsive emigration brought cross-cultural shock to them, but just because of the complex sense of loyalty to Pakistan cognation, this shock had some relief. Although the war had brought about all kinds of hostility and severe social and economic problems to Pushtus on two sides, because they share the same tribal customs, they still retain the tribal laws including personal honors, tribal responsibility, and goodwill. The growing interdependence even strengthens their wish to pursue an independent "Pashtunistan" (Wood, 1989: 350).

After the Soviet withdrawal, a protracted civil war had been carried out between Najibullah and Mujahideen. As a result of no guaranteed domestic security and peace, the Afghan refugees were all reluctant to return home, and then FATA continued to be the home for millions of Afghan refugees. During more than a two decades' stay of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the national difference between Pakistanis and Afghans has diminished, particularly in the areas where there is an Afghan concentration. One entire Afghan generation has been born in and grown up on Pakistani soil. They feel more at home in Pakistan than being in Afghanistan. They have also gotten married into Pakistani families. Many carry Pakistani national identity cards, and form an important electorate vote bank which was evident in the 1997 general elections when they voted in large numbers for the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) (Shah, 2001: Summer).

The Taliban came into power in Afghanistan in 1996. They not only drove the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance away to the north-eastern area of Afghanistan, but also increased its influence over neighboring countries, especially over the Pashtun tribes of FATA. Some tribal natives also joined the Taliban military operations against the Northern Alliance. The number of refugees in some places is even beyond the local population, which puts enormous social and economic pressures onto the local government and people. The ICRC Head of Delegation in Pakistan, Pascal Cuttat (2008: September), says

that conditions in Pakistan and Afghanistan are closely linked. If fighting intensifies on one side of the border, it will affect the other side and provoke a humanitarian crisis.

Moreover, the war also brought the flood of guns and drugs smuggling and had serious impact on economic development and social stability. There is no banking system, so smuggling of opium and contraband is routine.

D. Madrassa and Its Extremism

Jinnah adheres to the “two nations” theory to achieve the partition of India and Pakistan and then name the new country “Pakistan” (Urdu means “pure land”). Until now, the full name of Pakistan still has “Islam”, which seems to suggest the important status and influence of Islam in the Pakistani political process.

Since the 9/11 event in 2001, the mosque-attached madrassas (religious schools) have become the concern of the international anti-terror war. Because nearly all principal leaders of the Taliban have received religious education in madrassa of Pakistan’s tribal areas, the US government began to be particularly critical towards the entire madrassa system (Bano, 2007: 44). The American political context also views madrassa negatively and often defines it as an anti-US or radical Islamic schools. However, literally, the madrassa is only “school” and has no relationship with politics or religion. For its part, the madrassa open a variety of courses which are not all religious ones.

It is reported that when a western journalist asked about the madrassas’ links to al Qaeda, every imam or hafiz boldly told him, “there is no link, and if there is, where is the proof?” A teacher at Karachi’s Dar ul-Uloom Amjaddia madrassa, a boy’s school with nearly 1,000 students, insists that “international propaganda wrongly accuses Pakistan’s madrassas of supporting terrorist networks, and we have no resources to defend ourselves” (Ali, 2006: 4).

However, in reality, especially since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, madrassa in Pakistan has played a role with

politics and religion combined. In the era of Zia Haq, the number of Pakistani madrassa rocketed for the first time. The Pakistani government made use of the madrassa to train radical religious students in a large-scale, and then sent them to the battlefields of Afghanistan to carry out Jihad against the Soviet Union. These religious students were not only from Pakistan, but also from Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, India, Bangladesh and other Muslim countries (Shah, 2001: Summer). After the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan emerged as a power vacuum and Pakistan seized this opportunity, attempting to establish a radical Islamic regime. First, they supported the Islamic Party in Hekmatyar, and then changed to foster Taliban religious students who were educated and trained by madrassa. They had two purposes: first, they worried that Pashtun nationalism would undermine Pakistan's unity, and second, they wanted to win "strategic depth" in the conflict with India and control the trade routes to Central Asia (Nella, 2008: 1).

It is estimated that the number of registered students in madrassa is 800,000 to 1,000,000. This completely free Islamic education system has a sharp contrast with the public one which declines continuously. The cost of Pakistani government-run schools only accounts for 1.8% of the total GDP. And many schools exist only on paper. This educational gap means the parents have no choice but to send children to accept the conservative and outdated madrassa education, because only religious schools are free of charge. Thus, madrassa have a large number of new students and the extremist ideas have laid the foundation for the community.

Pakistan has captured or killed some 600 al Qaeda members since 2001. True enough, but with an extensive madrassa system left untouched, the key question posed by the US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's leaked memo from October 2003 comes naturally to mind: "Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?" *The Washington Post*

made it clear that until Pakistan's madrasas are truly reformed, the answer to Rumsfeld's question will be "no" (Ahmed, & Stroehlein, 2005: B07).

The transition to the FATA situation has become more apparent. According to Pakistani law, all political parties, aid agencies and civic groups are prohibited to carry out activities in the FATA, but the radical extremist clerics can have preaching and publicity in the tribal areas. Since these areas have been given the right to vote in 1996, these clerics often won in the majority of the elections which have no political parties (Rubin, & Siddique, 2006: 13). As a result, the influence of the mullahs expands further and the madrasa and its extremist ideology increasingly spread in the tribal areas. This is the religious and ideological foundations of Talibanization in FATA.

III. The Talibanization in FATA

Researchers who are concerned about the recent political developments in Pakistan generally agree that since 2004, the so-called Pakistani Taliban and "Pakistan-based" al-Qaeda has emerged in Pakistan. Initially, the Talibanization gathered in the North and South Waziristan areas, and later spread to Bajaur areas in the northern part of FATA. Pakistani Taliban forces are also constantly growing and expanding in agencies such as Mohmand, Aurakzai and Kurram, etc., which were relatively stable areas before (Fair, 2008: 15).

A. Taliban-style Governing

Though the Pakistani government has long expressed its worries concerning the members of Taliban and al-Qaeda who disguised themselves as refugees to cross into Pakistan on several occasions. However, as the war is moving forward, this fact eventually has happened.

Owing to the above political, ethnic, social, economic, religious and ideological factors, if they crossed mountains on both sides of the

Durand Line where “there’s no border security, there’s no border guards, there’s no border control” (Zissis, 2007: October 26), the Taliban and al Qaeda members are able to infiltrate into Pakistani tribal areas including the FATA. Cheema believes that there are three main types of militants operating in the FATA: al Qaeda elements, who desire “regime change” in Pakistan, constitute the first type of militants. Those elements are primarily reacting to US-Western policies perceived as anti-Muslim; Afghan nationals in Pakistan, particularly those who are sympathetic to the former Taliban government and oppose Afghanistan’s occupation by foreign troops, constitute the second type of militants; Pakistan nationals, especially some Pashtuns in the NWFP and the FATA who are sympathetic to and supportive of the above two elements, constitute the third type of militants (Cheema, 2008: August 25). It is also reported that a number of tribal people from North and South Waziristan in FATA live and work in Saudi Arabia. They formed a special connection with the Arab Mujahedeens: the relatives of them in Saudi Arabia have a stable job and are in the care of relatives who seek sanctuary in the FATA (Ansari, 2005: May).

Since 2001, the Taliban has targeted the tribal areas in Waziristan. According to reports, there are more than 200 tribal elders who resisted Taliban to control local affairs having assassinated in the years 2005 and 2006 in the FATA (Gall, & Khan, 2006: December 11).

In 2002, the authorities focused on fighting with Afghan Taliban. By taking this opportunity, a small group of Pakistan’s tribal militants grouped together to resist the federal government control. Since 2004, these groups began to negotiate with the Pakistan government and established their authority in the FATA. They are the formal Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Currently, TTP members are from all the seven tribal agencies in the FATA and some areas of NWFP. It is estimated that combatants are between 30,000 and 35,000 (Jayshree, 2008: February 6).

The New Statesman delivered an article in April, 2007 pointing

out that a new generation of militants was emerging in Pakistan. Although they are generally referred to as “Taliban”, they are all Pakistani. They are led by young mullahs who, unlike the original Taliban, are technology- and media-savvy, and are also influenced by various indigenous tribal nationalisms, honoring the tribal codes that govern social life in Pakistan’s rural areas. They are Taliban in the sense that they share the same ideology as the Taliban in Afghanistan (Sardar, 2007: April 30). Their targets are not only “the infidel occupied Afghanistan” but also to the one ruled by Pakistan. They want to maintain the secular values of Pakistani society. “They aim at nothing less than cleansing Pakistan and turn it into a pure Islamic state,” says Rashed Rahman, executive editor of the Lahore-based *Post* newspaper (Sardar).

Such events are commonly reported in FATA, which shows that the situation in Pakistan’s tribal areas is far beyond the control of the Pakistani government and the Taliban and al Qaeda group infiltration and Talibanization. In March 2008, Michael Hayden, the former CIA Director in the United States told reporters that if there were terrorist attacks on US troops, then they must be from the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas (Yen, 2008: March 13). A former CIA official also estimated that al Qaeda was training as many as 2,000 fighters in Pakistan (Mazzetti, & Rohde, 2008: June 30).

In June 2007, Pakistan’s National Security Council decided to take action to control the Talibanization in Waziristan. In order to strike the tribal areas and combat militants in NWFP, the Pakistani government has also decided to strengthen law enforcement and military operations. They took actions especially towards the Madrassa, and at the same time destroyed its illegal FM radio station (Khan, 2007: June).

B. Reasons for Changes in FATA

After all, the reason for this advancement of Taliban-style rule in FATA is mainly based on political power struggles. Regardless of the

Taliban in Afghanistan or Pakistan, what they want to achieve is mainly the secular political power.

The reports of the US Institute of Peace pointed out that many scholars and journalists have identified the fundamentally altered traditional power structures in FATA as a serious source of regional instability. They posit several explanations for the numerous sociopolitical changes in FATA.

First, the influx of Arab Mujahideen in the 1980s and of Taliban and al Qaeda fighters since 2001 brought political Islam, fund, and illicit economic activity to the region and buttressed emergent Islamist leadership.

Second, the traditional hierarchy has been challenged and religious leaders have emerged as political entrepreneurs using political Islam as their instrument of mobilization. These Islamist leaders also gained considerable credibility and resources and had robust ties with the Jamiat-e Ulama-e Islam Taliban and al Qaeda.

Third, migration has affected power structures in FATA. To escape poverty and underdevelopment of the tribal areas, many tribals left for the settled areas of Pakistan or to the booming oil economies in the Gulf. These workers have provided substantial remittances to their families, and these families now also seek power and influence consonant with their new wealth. Migrants have also become aware of inequities in the tribal areas and have garnered greater appreciation for the rights that Pakistani citizens enjoy everywhere except in FATA.

The fourth consideration is the expansion of the role of mullahs and political Islam into FATA and adjoining areas. In 1996, the government introduced adult franchise into FATA. However, mainstream parties were not allowed to mobilize in FATA as the elections were supposedly held on a non-party basis. However, because the Islamist parties controlled mosques and madrassas, Islamist candidates effectively had the opportunity to lobby for votes.

Consequently, the tribal residents elected mullahs to represent

FATA in the national assembly in 1997. The election of religious leaders to represent FATA in the national assembly was and remains an important departure from the past when maliks chose their tribal representatives to the parliament on secular and tribal bases. Now, mullahs are important power brokers.

Finally, military operations by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, and by Pakistan in the tribal areas have contributed to the ever-shifting social and power structures and the deepening turn toward Islamism and even Islamist militancy in the region. The Pakistan military's defeats in South and North Waziristan – and concomitant peace deals – have empowered, enriched, emboldened, and legitimized the socio-political role of the mullah, the militants, and their Taliban allies.

These operations have led to widespread dissatisfaction and a sense of betrayal among the tribes, as the operations are viewed as excessive and indiscriminate use of force. It is difficult for many tribal residents to understand how the mullahs and militants, who were once considered heroes and given support during the effort to repel the Soviets from Afghanistan, are now branded as enemies (Fairetal, 2006: December).

These and other factors have contributed to the decline of traditional tribal governing structures and have vitiated the authenticity and legitimacy of the maliks' leadership in particular. Simultaneously with the decline of the malik and the ascendance of the mullah, the role of the Political Agency has continued to erode both due to the diminished quality and rank of the civil servants assigned to the position and due to the ever-expanding corruption within the agency since 1947. In recent years, the army has further supplanted the PA's authority in key agencies such as North and South Waziristan.

Therefore, the reason and development of the Talibanization in Pakistan's tribal areas should be analyzed in the whole historical process. In the development of Pakistan's domestic politics, the main

manifestation of Talibanization, such as religious extremism, mass movements and armed violence all highlighted the political struggle behind the disputes of doctrine, especially the struggle for power. In the face of further alliance and cooperation on anti-terror between Pakistan and the West, the rake-off political structure between the government and Malik, and persistent economic deterioration and social unrest, it is not surprising for the anti-government political forces to use the unique political attributes and other socio-economic foundation of the tribal agency trying to rival with the central government and even want to establish a new nation.

C. The Spread of Talibanization in Pakistan

However, the Talibanization is not limited to the tribal areas of the FATA. Since 2006, the Taliban had obviously overflowed into FATA and had gone into the deeper north of Pakistan. The Lal Masjid incident which took place in Islamabad in July 2007 furtherly demonstrates that the Taliban is trying to enter the heart of the city (Osman, & Shah, 2007: July 18).

After 2007, the government has successively sent more than ten thousand soldiers to the Swat region, and killed 300-400 members of the Taliban. Pakistani military has killed more than 130, while the local residents suffered no small loss. Although Pakistan has refused to recognize that the Taliban has established "a state within a state", it acknowledged that Pakistani military actions are seriously hampered by repeatedly-destroyed supply lines.

When the Talibanization had extended to the NWFP capital Peshawar in 2006, some similar abductions and intimidations had begun to appear in the capital Islamabad, the most typical one of which was the Lal Masjid event in early 2007. The Lal Masjid incident symbolized the end of alliances between the military and the mullahs since the 1980s, From then on, the Lal Masjid has played two roles in promoting national policies; one is to organize the Mujahideen to resist the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and launch attacks against India in

Kashmir; the other is to support the Saudi-funded Sunni Islamists against the Iranian-backed Shiite groups in the sectarian conflict (Usher, 2007: July 19). Unless the Pakistani government changes its attitude toward the extremists, similar conflicts and confrontation will not disappear soon.

In 2008, the impact of Islamic militants was spreading in most parts of Pakistan. There were even reports saying that Peshawar was at the risk of being captured by the pro-Taliban militants. There were also comments that the boost of Talibanization in the western Pakistan might be a threat to the territorial integrity of Pakistan (Nella, 2008: July 6). Undoubtedly, the Talibanization is not only the unique political and social phenomenon in the FATA, but also a major issue for the whole Pakistan.

IV. The Political Impact of Talibanization in FATA

According to the developing situation, it has been the fact for the Talibanization in the tribal areas of Pakistan. As Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, a professor at the Pakistan Study Center at the University of Peshawar said: "Nobody can stop the Talibanization of the tribal areas." However, it is too early to say that the development of this area will go as he predicted: "Due to the ongoing instability on both sides of the border, the Taliban will become the ultimate rulers in South Waziristan" (Marwat, 2007: A-9). While for its political impact, it can be reflected into three aspects: to the domestic politics in Pakistan, to the anti-terror situation, and to the Sino-Pakistan relationship as well as the safety of western China.

A. The Impact to the Domestic Politics in Pakistan

Generally speaking, it is not a surprise that the Talibanization emerged in some regions or that the Taliban and other radical forces came into power in Pakistan. The conservative MMA that won the election of the National Assembly and the Senate in 1997 and 2002 is a

prominent example.

Now what remains to be seen is that after the process of “Talibanization”, whether the future situation in Pakistan would emerge as a lasting and real independent local government of extremists or a national Taliban or other extremist forces having the real governing power. Thus, Islamization, the Balkanization and the Talibanization will be the three main concepts in Pakistani political development.

First, Islamization will be strengthened. South Asian Subcontinent originally has had the traditions of political religion and religious politics. From Zia Haq’s Junta, the Pakistani military both fought with the Soviets in Afghanistan and the Indian Army in Kashmir in order to deal effectively with the complicated situation in the border areas. At the same time, they gradually formed political coalition with mullahs and religious fanatics to compete with the major political parties for the national power, which further foments the Islamic forces having the dominant position in Pakistan’s political and social development process. Musharraf had taken the former military regime’s practice which was supporting religious parties (such as MMA, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, etc.) to contend against Beinaqier Bhutto’s People’s Party and Sharif’s Muslim League. In addition, both the military regime and the democratically elected government get help from religious forces to foster agency forces in Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas and at the meanwhile, give overt or covert support to the specific political and religious organizations in Afghanistan to seek a strategic initiative. Therefore, due to the spread of Talibanization in the tribal areas, the blossoming of madrassa in the country, religious parties having access to the federal and provincial assemblies and even governing alone, Islamization will be the mainstream of Pakistani political development in the future. On one hand, it is the social basis of Talibanization; on the other hand, it can be seen as the direct consequence of the Taliban’s influence.

Second, Balkanization still has room for further development.

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country. The complicated ethnic and religious structure has always been the main obstacle to nation-building since 1947. "Balkanization" always becomes the frequently-used terms for those who do not tend to be optimistic over the political future of Pakistan. Already in 2005, a report by the US National Intelligence Council and the CIA forecast a "Yugoslav-like fate" for Pakistan "in a decade with the country riven by civil war, bloodshed and inter-provincial rivalries, as seen recently in Balochistan" (Jafri, 2003: 469). According to the report "due to the civil war, the Taliban completely, and the struggle for control of the impact of the struggle against nuclear weapons", Pakistan will be a "failed state" in 2015. The Talibanization in the tribal areas has objectively created the situation that some areas of Pakistan established a de facto self-government and then split Pakistan. There are many examples to illustrate this point, such as the establishment of the "Emirate of Waziristan", as well as the Lal Masjid in Islamabad in 2007. Therefore, some people worry that Pakistan will, like the former Yugoslavia eventually split. At least so far, such a situation is still developing and the Balkanization of Pakistan may be getting closer.

The third is the minimum number of the Taliban across the country. There are special reasons for the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan. Except for Pakistan and other foreign support, the neglect of the international community and the serious socio-economic development crisis caused by long-term civil war are also the causes. Today, Pakistan is in the front line of the US-led war on terror. Its situation is related to the success of the war, so the United States and the international community could not let Pakistan fall under the control of the Taliban or al Qaeda group. Besides the public support of the Taliban and al Qaeda remnants, there is no international force upholding Taliban rule across Pakistan. Although the Pakistani domestic political situation is not optimistic, at least they can get support from Western-backed military and still hold nuclear weapons firmly in their hands. It is no doubt that the secular development will

be the mainstream of politics in Pakistan. As mentioned before, the Talibanization in the tribal areas also threatens the traditional power structure. The political privileges of Malik, economic benefits as well as the federal upper classes are at stake. They have realized that the social radicalization under the control of the Taliban would end their leadership and privileges. In addition, the influence of Islamic religious parties is more concentrated on the tribal or rural areas, which have reduced the possibility of implementing radical extremist policies across the whole country. Therefore, the possibility of Talibanization in Pakistan is the lowest.

B. The Impact of Regional Anti-terrorism Situation

Just as the report of the US Center for Strategic and International Studies points out, "No matter who is in power of Washington or Islamabad, Pakistan will always have an important position between the war-torn Afghanistan and the rest of Asia."

Because of the cover of international borders, the Afghan Taliban, al Qaeda, and Pakistani anti-government militants are commonly found in Pakistan's tribal areas. US and NATO cross-border strikes against terrorists have met with the dissatisfaction of Pakistani government, the military and the people. However, only by means of Pakistani government and military, the counter-terrorism task can hardly work in the near future. Although Pakistan has not currently fallen into the hands of terrorists, it has been highly influenced by religious radicals. The political chaos and social unrest are also a fact.

Afghan high officials have regularly accused Pakistan of tolerating militant recruitment, training camps, and arms depots on its territory. They often keep their differences at the official level couched in diplomatic tones, thus Islamabad's efforts to check extremism and prevent the infiltration of anti-regime insurgents are accurately described as inconsistent, incomplete, and at times insincere.

The long prepared Kabul Peace Jirga convened in August 2007. Under the pressure of the US, President Pervez Musharraf attended

the closing ceremony and for the first time acknowledged in his speech to the Kabul peace jirga that there was Taliban in the tribal areas of his country and its situation (Yusufzai, 2007:March 13). Although the meeting was seen as a positive step for eliminating tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, because of the absence of the Taliban and representatives of the tribal areas, the practical effect of this meeting remains (Jalali, 2007: 17).

However, what the Western politicians and the media worry most about is that the Pakistani government not only hesitated and repeated in anti-terrorism issues and has an ambiguous and yielding attitude towards the armed and extremist forces in Pakistan, but also that the common people in Pakistan, especially the tribal people, the Mullahs and Taleb in madrassa, also hold the sympathy, understanding, and even supportive attitude and position towards the Taliban and al Qaeda members. It is probably the most serious challenge to the Western-led war on terror and the development of the situation in this region.

It was reported that the Pakistan President of the National Madrassa Association has stated: "reactionaries (the West) are called terrorists, but (anti-Soviet invasion) freedom fighters are not terrorists". It is obvious that they do not agree with the Western-oriented definition of terrorism. Similarly, on the issue of Bin Laden, some Pakistan leaders either see him as a hero, or consider him as the lesser of two devils (Ali, 2006: 5).

Thus, the Western-led military strikes alone cannot eliminate the far-reaching implications of Talibanization in Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas as well as the whole Pakistan. Musharraf once said that Talibanization and extremism represent a way of thinking which requires complex and long-term strategy consisting of military actions, political measures and socio-economic developments. The secularism, moderation and stability of the political and social development should be maintained in Pakistan, which should become the consensus of the international community.

In short, the Talibanization in the Pakistani tribal areas further complicated the situation in Pakistan and makes the regional anti-terrorism situation, especially the fight against terrorism launched by the United States and NATO forces in Afghanistan, come into a stalemate.

C. Implication on the China-Pakistan Relations and the Security of Western China

Traditionally, Pakistan has maintained an “all-weather” friendship and cooperation with China for a long time and the domestic transformation of both sides could not affect the normal development and strengthening of their relations. However, since the forces of religious extremism have gained ground in Pakistan, especially when the residual Taliban and al Qaeda forces have come into Pakistan, they gradually cooperated with the internal radical forces which are not only anti-American and anti-India, but also anti-China.

As China and Pakistan have enjoyed good political contacts and trade exchanges with each other, the anti-government extremist forces would take China and the Chinese people in Pakistan as their objects of violent attacks. The Lal Masjid incident that occurred in July 2007, to some extent, involved the Chinese government directly into the Pakistani internal competition among the religious and political forces. According to reports, the Lal Masjid clerics were loyal to Baitullah Mehsud, while his brother planned several kidnappings and attacks against Chinese workers in Baluchistan and Islamabad. The Musharraf administration regarded the Lal Masjid as the mastermind, so they ordered the attack on Lal Masjid, but the extremism forces viewed this as the result of China’s pressure.

Second, the Talibanization of the tribal areas makes the security of western China being further challenged by ethnic separatism, religious extremism and international terrorism. There are Xinjiang people as trainees in Taliban training camp and there are also

terrorists with Chinese nationality captured by the US in the Afghanistan war who are imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. These all show that a small number of separatists in Xinjiang are getting support from the radical religious forces abroad.

International Review also pointed out that the proliferation of the Taliban as a force to support actively is involved in Central Asia and Xinjiang, the Islamic organization's operations (Ahrari, 2000: 663). Therefore, the Talibanization in Pakistan's tribal areas is a major event in Pakistan's political and social development and is also linked to the normal development of bilateral ties, the Chinese personnel and property safety in Pakistan, and the security and stability in western China. In this respect, the Chinese government should further strengthen its friendly relations and cooperation with Pakistan and take measures to ensure that the Pakistani border region does not suffer from the impact and attacks of extremist organizations. With the support of international community, China should actively engage in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Pakistan's economic and social development and then effectively contain the spread of Talibanization in Pakistan until the eventual elimination of the negative political and social process.

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