

**Civil-Military Cooperation
in Post Conflict
Development: A Case of
North Waziristan**

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Introduction

Every conflict in the world, be it internal or external, leaves crippling scars on the affected region and the people that inhabit it. At some point during the resultant chaos, there appears a window of opportunity, which if used wisely has the potential to bring forward effective change. The said window of opportunity is hope for change, but it is also a challenge. The challenging aspect is to most optimally utilize this opportunity - as an instrument to benefit the people and eventually rebuild the shattered society in a stable and long-lasting manner. The primary objective of this essay is to understand the very contours of post-conflict development and to understand the case of North Waziristan in the FATA using the previously mentioned theoretical reflections. The essay is an attempt to understand the challenges confronted by the country and its people from a foreign perspective. The ultimate aim of the essay is to answer whether there is or if there should be a possibility of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in post-conflict development in North Waziristan, in addition to understanding the existence of any on-going CIMIC ventures in the area and their role in rebuilding the conflict-struck area. The assertions, conclusions, and arguments in this essay are based on academic journals, articles, and available secondary data alongside the personal interactions with the locals in Pakistan.

Peacebuilding and Development

Within the plethora of literature available on the subject, it can be maintained that there are two different schools of thought that facilitate a critical insight into the relationship between peacebuilding and post-conflict development. The former among these schools, the exclusivists, propose a separation of the two actions, however allowing for a slight room for simultaneousness and one action encouraging or precisely so leading to another (Smoljan, 2003). However, if the basis of understanding regarding post-conflict development is constructed on the second school of thought i.e., the inclusivists, it can be claimed that peacebuilding cannot succeed without development, just like development would not be complete or in the first place, easy to materialize without peacebuilding. The two processes are interdependent, they simultaneously work together towards a common goal. The aforementioned inclusivist approach has garnered substantial followers in recent years. It is the synthesis of both that can truly bring the best effects in positive, long-term development of a self-sustainable

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settlement. Post-conflict development, as the name suggests, is a process, a mechanism that consists of the operations carried out following a conflict. It must be noted here that in order to designate a conflict-struck area as a post-conflict zone, there are several other markers that point to the certainty of the fact that the conflict in the region has culminated and that it is viable to plan development ventures in the area. Once the conflict-struck area is deemed as post-conflict, policies pertaining to its (re) development are formulated with special attention to the scope of their effective implementation. According to Jelena Smoljan, the contours of post-conflict development revolve around constitutional and institutional reforms, social reconstruction and reconciliation as well as the rebuilding of shattered state organs, communities and economies. Since post-war period can neither be described as neither peace nor war - it is a period marked by frustration, episodic violence, chaos, suspicion, and mistrust – the road to recovery hence, needs to be planned while keeping in view an in-depth analysis of the underlying issues; the causes which led to the conflict in the first place.

Without defining the causes, one would not be able to avoid them in further development therefore it could lead to a relapse into conflict. Sadia M. Malik in her analysis points out horizontal inequalities as the key drivers of radicalization and conflict. Horizontal inequalities (real or perceived) are measured among groups defined by various dimensions, such as gender, religion, ethnicity, and class. They become a source of conflict when for example, one of the groups is marginalized or because of unmet expectations and/or unheard grievances. Citizens act by the social contract, they accept the authority of the state, as long as it provides them necessities such as security, public services, quality education and reasonable economic condition in return. However, a failure in providing the aforesaid services can result in the emergence of other non-state actors which try to fill in the arisen gap. Such incongruity between expectations and gratification occurs if expectations are constant but the level of conditions keeps on diminishing if expectations are going down and conditions are unchangeable or in the worst scenario, when expectations are rising, and at the same time conditions are declining. It is the state's responsibility to provide necessary stability and governance; however, some states are unwilling, unable or negligent to do so. Therefore, the intervention has become a part of the foreign policy of some well-developed, stable states. It is usually through the United Nations that states choose to invest their resources into areas in need of support. This has led to the politicization of post-conflict recovery and assistance.

Post-conflict development is an arena confronted with numerous challenges, most notably, the almost impossible task to break the nexus between poverty, underdevelopment, and violent conflict. Another challenge is the issue of good governance. Whilst it is an undeniable fact that the post-conflict environment needs effective and goal-oriented management, the bigger questions remain as to *who* will be responsible and *what* exactly can be deemed as 'good' governance. Here it is important to understand that the 'good' is a relative concept and may have varying conceptions in distinct contexts. Various actors (such as the army, civilian administration, foreign aid agencies, etc.), can either take the lead or collaborate with each other in order to bring back the normalcy of life after violent conflict. Within this context, CIMIC is a concept that offers a framework within which civil and military institutions collaborate at the national level, in the aftermath of natural or human-made disasters. Nevertheless, there is little consensus among scholars regarding the construct CIMIC, particularly in terms of its operationalization (e.g., Ankersen, 2008).

The introduction of CIMIC in post-conflict scenarios is relatively new, thus faces operational-related challenges during post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement, and development phases. In the conflict-ridden areas, the necessary cooperation between the civil and military institutions has frequently led to contentions and controversies (ibid). The major critique has been expressed through terms such as militarization or securitization of development, particularly during the transition phase. In response, various scholars have defended the dominant role of security as it provides the precondition for any effective developmental or peacebuilding-related initiatives. Nevertheless, (ideally) CIMIC provides a framework within which the institutions can be integrated with shared goals and objectives

The Case of North Waziristan

A region that is currently facing the challenges of redefining peace and stability and that requires particular attention is North Waziristan. There are very few places in the world, if any, that have such complex, historically and socially conditioned, underlying issues, making it naturally vulnerable and prone to conflict. Geographically it is a region of rugged mountains, hills and deep, narrow passes, with a harsh climate. It lays within the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), northwest Pakistan, sharing the border with Afghanistan. It is home to the Wazir and Dawar tribes known for their exceptional bravery and toughness, born warriors who have never been defeated. They were referred to as the 'Hell's door knocker' by the British Army (Khayyam, 2016), as they caused them a lot of trouble under the colonial rule; especially in terms of administering and disarming them. The attempts of civilizing them also remained unsuccessful and therefore an agreement was drawn up and North Waziristan was granted a high degree of autonomy with the promise of no external intervention or guidance in exchange for peace and loyalty. After the partition of India, Pakistan continued the British policy, leaving North Waziristan as a self-governing agency, with an independent status and tribal governance system - no form of central government or any other form of formal state authority was put in practice. The peace within was maintained through the respect of tribal elders, tribal jury *jirga* and submission to culture - Pashtunwali - a non-written, tribal code, a set of behaviors practiced among Pashtuns. It defined what it really meant to be a Pashtun. Some of the fundamentals of the Pashtun identity as dictated under the code of Pakhtunwali were, *Badal* - meaning revenge, *Melmastia* - hospitality and respect towards visitors, *Nanawatai* - asylum, giving protection to those in need of it, *Tureh* - bravery, *Sabat* - loyalty, a belief in kinship, a sense of belonging to clan, section, subsection and family (Benson and Siddiqui, 2013). According to Benson and Siddiqui, this does not imply the lawlessness of the people but rather being effectively stateless and able of maintaining order without the involvement of government courts, judges, police, army or other state institutions. However, the customary-law-based system of governance, as well as the deeply rooted tribal identity created a culture of independence that the people of North Waziristan already got used to over the long years of little or no external intervention. That creates a challenge for the present attempts of governing the territory, after its merger with Khyber Pakhtunkwa, Pashtunwali needs to be considered, understood and respected in order for constructive and sustainable development to take place. 2018 FATA Reforms Bill incorporated North Waziristan into constitutional mainstream and put an end to an out-dated system of governance Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) and the colonial era mind-set of the outside treatment. Positive outcomes following the initiative can already be seen and proof of the actual extension of basic civil and judicial rights in the recent elections that took place on July 20th, 2019. However, this is just one step, and

the historically developed political and economic isolation persists in the region. As long as the poor socio-economic conditions do not change and a substantial number of the locals continue to survive below the poverty line, the vicious circle of poverty and war will continue to pose a threat of relapsing into the state of active violent conflict (Smoljan, 2003).

The pre-existing conditions were already skilfully used by foreign Afghan Taliban, local Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other extremist groups, turning North Waziristan into their sanctuary. Their presence in the area further worsened the already precarious economic conditions — marked by a shift of power from tribal elders to guerrilla leaders and Islamic courts, schools shut down, taxes levied and the spread of extremist ideology. The Pakistani Army carried out operation Zarb-e-Azb operation improved the overall security situation but also damaged the area and displaced the locals, creating another simmering issue in the region. According to the data presented by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) till 5th September 2014, the number of registered displaced population from North Waziristan was 961,000 (Hameed, 2015), and it now needs aid and resettlement. Bringing back normalcy in the region is going to be a long-lasting process that needs collaborative efforts, close assessment, and eradication of the underlying issues.

As for now, CIMIC has been most visible in the operations connected with the resettlement of the returnees. Civilian administration with the support of foreign aid agencies has been present in the facilitation of the temporarily displaced people in neighboring regions and relief camps. Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) were established and is being facilitated by foreign agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, with the collaboration of the Pakistan Army. However, after looking at different development initiatives carried out in North Waziristan it seems like post-conflict development has been carried out mostly through and by the military itself. Its official aim has been to:

[...] ensure fast track restoration of essential services, re-construction/renovation of civic amenities and regeneration of livelihood (...) with the realization that it is easy to destroy but difficult to construct' (Golden Arrow Division, 2019).

Army projects focus on building infrastructure, education, mosques, an army camp in Miranshah, developing access to health care facilities as well as improving the supply of water. The revival of livelihood is carried out through the army's support of agriculture – providing equipment, land, fertilizers, pesticides, and training. A Women Vocational Training Center and Youth Employment Scheme were also established to ensure an equal level of education and economic opportunities. The army also focuses on 'Winning Hearts and Minds' (WHAM) of the people through organizing public celebrations – for instance, 14th August, Solidarity Day, Pakistan Day Celebrations. A de-radicalization center was also set up as a means of transforming former terrorists and reintegrating them into society.

Army's involvement in post-conflict development has been unconventional as it goes beyond providing security and steps into the field of improving livelihood, which normally would be considered as the function of the civilian government. The usually visible line segregating military and civilian involvement appears blurred and ambiguous in the case of North Waziristan. Between the Pakistani Army spreading their area of influence and the historically conditioned and deeply rooted respect for

tradition, foreign investment and NGOs are seen as a threat to the society and its culture of independence (Yousaf, Khan and Hussain, 2018).

This raises serious questions of what is, the reason for such involvement, and what is the Army's interest behind not following the traditional role of providing security. The role of the military has undoubtedly been prominent, considering its spectacular role in development; in particular, the 400 projects being carried out by the armed forces on the soils with its tragic conflict history uproariously speak of the efforts that are being put in the region for the pursuit of peace and stability. However, it is not the full picture of the Army's actions in NWA. What comes with their involvement is control over every aspect of public life. Their presence has brought a lot of limitations, starting with curfews, fences, checkpoints, limitations on residents' movement in and out of FATA followed by military restrictions and several instances of abuse of power. Extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and collective punishment have also been pointed as a basis for questioning the effectiveness and good interest of the military-based development operations.

The current operations do not seem to have brought the desired and satisfactory effect as people, mostly the new generation, have started to mobilize and voice their discontent. In 2018, a politically oriented volunteer body, mainly constituting the Pashtun youth, called the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) emerged because of discrimination against the tribal people, violence by the Taliban and continuous stationing of armed forces in the area. The movement, just like any form of resistance, has been perceived as anti-state with the suspicion of being linked to foreign influence, governments and intelligence agencies – mostly Indian and Afghan. Rallies and protests have been ending with police raids and arrests. NWA is still full of unrest. There is a deep need for involvement of local communities throughout all the stages of post-conflict development in North Waziristan. It is a society with deeply rooted tribal values, determined by a long history of poverty and conflict. Given the inherently complicated dynamics of the North Waziristan Agency, it can be said that the fundamental issue in designing various frameworks for the area to avoid conflict has lacked on one basic component and that is the inclusion and representation of locals. The reality that tribal culture and affiliations supersede any sort of intervention now needs to be recognized as a significant driving the politics and development in the area. The locals should hence, be given preference, and their opinions should be included when it comes down to planning, designing, implementing and monitoring development in the region.

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