

Title and Abstract for the conference “Ethno-federalism in Punjab and Beyond” at Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan, April 13-14, 2015

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TITLE:

Examining Autonomy Options in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Baluchistan:
Federalism, Full Independence, or Partial Independence?

ABSTRACT:

Since 1947 a range of nationalist conflicts have produced great suffering and difficulties for Pakistan. Nationalist conflicts in Kashmir have been at the root of wars with India. In the northwest, portions of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have been rendered ungovernable with thousands losing their lives and hundreds of thousands being internally displaced as the Pakistani military fights Pashtun militants. In the province of Baluchistan, conflict between government forces and Baluchi nationalists have produced still more death and destruction. These conflicts are not only harmful to Pakistan, they have damaging international implications, as wars spill over borders.

A variety of scholars have suggested that insurgencies in FATA and Baluchistan can be remedied through further integration into Pakistan’s federation. Popular proposals suggest further modifications to Baluchistan’s status as a province of Pakistan’s existing federation. Still others suggest that FATA be incorporated into the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Furthermore, some local insurgents have also pushed for full independence in these areas. As distinct from these views, this paper will argue that partially independent unions between these regions and the state of Pakistan have greater advantages for each side. Federations, such as Pakistan’s federal union, have difficulties with symmetry, structural equality, and scope of powers that are absent from partially independent arrangements. Additionally, in accordance with the experience of other partially independent territories in the world, such as Northern Ireland, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Puerto Rico, partial independence arguably provides greater potential for wealth, security, and self-determination than full independence or federation member-unit status.