

Pashtunwali as a Geo-strategic Asset for Pakistan

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Abstract:

This article basically analyses how Pashtunwali, which is a prominent culture in Pak-Afghan border region, could be turned into a geo-strategic asset in Pakistan. Pashtunwali is a tribal code of conduct in Pashtun majority areas that regulate their way of life. It is a primitive value system that promotes egalitarianism, uniformity and resolution of dispute through Jirga system. Pashtunwali, as an alternate form of governance system, promotes speedy justice, egalitarian values and community service, if implemented in its true spirit, could create an ideal society in Pak-Afghan border region. There are three dynamics of Pashtunwali, which could turn it into a geo-strategic asset for Pakistan. Firstly, it is one of the most established social structures to fight extremism and terrorism. Therefore the early targets of terrorists were not security personnel, but tribal chiefs. For example Afzal Lala of Swat, who is a tribal chief, is brand name against the Taliban in Swat. Secondly, it could also improve state and society relationship by ameliorating services system, especially delivery of speedy and cheap justice as during the time of Wali-e- Swat. It would not only help to increase people confidence in federation, but would also deliver speedy and cheap justice to resolve issues without going through lethargic court justice system, which has totally failed to address peoples' grievances. Last but not least important aspect of Pashtunwali is its effect on bilateral relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The embracing of Pashtunwali would create a good-will in Pashtun majority areas, which would positively affect its relationship with Afghanistan and automatically kill movements for greater autonomy.

Key words: Pashtunwali, Jirga, Terrorism, Siali, Constructivism, War on Terror, Extremism.