



TEHRIK-E-TALIBAN PAKISTAN
AN ATTEMPT TO DECONSTRUCT
THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION AND
THE REASONS FOR ITS GROWTH
IN PAKISTAN'S NORTH-WEST

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DIIS REPORT 2010:12

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Cover photo: Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud promising future attacks on major U.S. cities and claiming responsibility for the attempted car bombing on Times Square, New York (AP Photo/IntelCenter)

Cover: Anine Kristensen
Layout: Allan Lind Jørgensen
Printed in Denmark by Vesterkopi AS

ISBN 978-87-7605-419-9

Price: DKK 50.00 (VAT included)
DIIS publications can be downloaded
free of charge from www.diis.dk
Hardcopies can be ordered at www.diis.dk

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Executive Summary

The present report aims to describe the concept of the militant umbrella organization Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) by looking at the organisational structure, background and ideology of the group. Tactics and recruitment strategies are also discussed, along with the various financial sources that have helped sustain the TTP. Finally, the reasons for the spread and rise of the TTP are analysed.

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's presence and influence appear to be spreading across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPP). Pockets within the Punjab and Sind provinces have also been affected by the TTP. However, in light of recent political and military manoeuvres along Pakistan's North Western Pashtun belt, the dynamics of 'Talibanization' – i.e. jihadist activity and the enforcement of a parallel administrative system and social code – are expected to alter.

A number of the new breed of TTP leaders are in their thirties, with little or no formal education, and come from relatively poor socio-economic backgrounds. The exact number of TTP militants is uncertain but likely to be upwards of 10,000. Fault lines and nuances exist within the TTP umbrella organization, distinguishing one Taliban faction from the other.

Bombings, including suicide strikes, appear to be the group's preferred modus operandi, these being targeted especially at the Pakistani security forces and symbols of the state. Illegal FM radio channels and the circulation of DVD, CDs and pro-TTP newspapers and websites serve to promote the organization's propaganda campaign. Child recruitment appears common; certain Pakistani Taliban commanders bear a specific responsibility for training suicide bombers, and a significant amount of propaganda material is directed at young people. The role of Internally Displaced Persons as a possible recruitment pool for the TTP needs to be studied further. A myriad of financial sources swell TTP coffers, including criminal activity, 'protection money' and donations from sympathisers inside and outside of Pakistan.

TTP ideology reinforces the points laid out in the initial moves announced by the organization upon its formation in December 2007, namely:

1. Enforce *sharia*.
2. Unite against coalition forces in Afghanistan.
3. Perform defensive *jihad* against the Pakistani Army.

In addition, a marked sectarian tinge has coloured the TTP ideology, this most likely being due to the injection of leaders and cadres from sectarian backgrounds into the TTP. Although previously affiliated with religious political parties, TTP leaders now appear to have adopted a rigid anti-democracy stance. There has also been a growing reference to a 'global *jihad*' – either in relation to rescuing fellow Muslims from 'occupation,' spreading *sharia*, or avenging the growing US presence and drone attacks in Pakistan.

Difference may arise with regard to how any particular TTP faction prioritize the above points, depending on the individual background of a particular group leader, the political history of his territory, predominant social dynamics, and the extent and nature of its relations with other groups, such as the Afghan Taliban and al-Qa-ida. Such nuances distinguish, for example, the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban and the Haqqani group, who remain focused on Afghanistan, from the Baitullah Mehsud group and Fidayeen Islam, who claim the fight against the Pakistani security forces to be the 'real *jihad*.' It is also important to separate rhetoric from reality: alliances are often formed for the purpose of political posturing, rather than reflecting an actual alignment of agendas or ideologies.

The frequent formation of tribal militias to confront the Taliban points to a lack of local support for the TTP. Factors accounting for cases where the TTP is known to have received local backing include threats and coercion by the rebels, local power structures supplanted by TTP governance, an effective propaganda campaign and feeding off the socio-economic frustrations of the local population. The last point in particular deserves further attention, as evidence from FATA and KPP suggests that long-standing socio-economic grievances among the local population, coupled with ongoing feelings of victimization at the hands of the Pakistani state and army, may drive them to support extremist ideology and the parallel forms of governance and 'justice' it offers.

Acronyms

ANP	Awami National Party
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FC	Frontier Corps
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation
FI	Fidayeen Islam
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HuJI	Harakat-ul Jihad-al Islami
HuM	Harakat-ul Mujahideen
IB	Intelligence Bureau
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IED	Improvised Explosives Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISM	Ittehad-e-Shura-e-Mujahideen
JeM	Jaish-e-Mohammad
Ji	Jamaat-e-Islami
JUI	Jamaat-e-Ulema Islami
KPP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province
LeJ	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
MMA	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
MNA	Member of National Assembly
MTT	Muqami-Tehrik-e-Taliban
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWA	North Waziristan
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PA	Political Agent
PATA	Provincially Administered Tribal Areas
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PT	Punjabi Taliban
SFs	Security Forces
SWA	South Waziristan
TNSM	Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
TTS	Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat

I TTP Organization

Under various appellations and forms, the Pakistani Taliban has been active in the country since 2003. Actors operating under the seal of the ‘Taliban’ have expanded their reach nationwide by networking with other extremist groups based in different parts of Pakistan. This has resulted in a more local and nuanced focus for the ‘Taliban,’ marked as Pakistani in nature and definitely distinct from the Afghan movement. The trend saw its maturation in December 2007 when the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP was officially formed. TTP’s major *jihad* is to battle against the ‘infidel’ state of Pakistan; however, sections of the group also provide a rear base for the insurgency in neighbouring Afghanistan. The Pakistani Taliban has gradually strengthened its ties with various international terrorist networks, as well as other Pakistan-based groups that are formally focused on sectarianism or Kashmir/India. Thus, the Tehrik-e-Taliban has entered a domain which threatens not only Pakistan’s internal security, but the security of the whole region.

With an influx of diverse groups and individuals, the Tehrik-e-Taliban has surfaced as a conglomeration of fighters hailing from a range of different nationalities, ethnicities and tribes. While the majority of the cadres are known to be Pashtuns, a strong presence of Arab, Afghan, Chechen, Uzbek and Punjabi militants has also been observed. The Tehrik’s leadership is believed to include those who have trained and fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets, and the rank and file comprises elements previously linked with the Kashmir insurgency. Presently TTP militants are active mainly in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, but their impact has also been felt in other parts of the country, including large cities like Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan was officially established in December 2007 and its office bearers announced. Militant commander Baitullah Mehsud was appointed its emir or leader. Maulana Hafiz Gul Bahadur of North Waziristan was appointed his deputy, and third in command was Maulana Faqir Mohammad of Bajaur Agency (the smallest agency in FATA). Maulana Fazlullah was declared the secretary-general and head of the Swat chapter of the TTP, while Maulvi Omar was to be the organization’s official spokesperson. As many as 27 militant groups pledged their allegiance to Baitullah Mehsud and agreed to submit themselves to his centralized command.¹

¹ ‘Tribal Areas under Centralized Control,’ *Daily Times*, 16 December 2007.

Senior militants from a broad range of territories – namely the tribal regions of South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Orakzai Agency, Kurram Agency, Mohmand Agency, Bajaur and Darra Adamkhel, and the settled districts of Swat, Buner, Upper Dir, Lower Dir, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Mardan and Kohat, attended the meeting.² The TTP thus served as an umbrella organization covering all of FATA and large swathes of the KPP.³ The Taliban has also extended its presence to other provinces of Pakistan, namely Punjab and Balochistan, as well as the port city of Karachi.

A *shura* (consultative council) of forty senior Taliban leaders was formed to guide the TTP. The Pakistani Taliban in the Waziristans have divided the tribal areas into administrative zones; a military commander heads each zone and reports to the supreme commander of the local Taliban and *shura*. Within the administrative zone, separate units run specific functions: intelligence collection, identification and elimination of ‘spies,’ revenue collection, maintenance of law and order, and so on.⁴

The majority of the groups to join the TTP had long been involved in violent confrontations with the Pakistani army in the tribal areas. They are seen as having grown out of local settings and local circumstances, led by their own distinct, often tribal leaders with a unique leadership style, and strongly influenced by tribal cleavages. The TTP is thus seen as mainly comprising local groups, with local commanders as leaders, yet also inspired by other Pakistani groups with a more nation-wide following. Furthermore, while many may share similar anti-US and pro-al-Qaida world views, they are also known to express conflicting opinions on local, domestic and international issues.

Among the TTP’s constituent groups is the Movement for the Implementation of Muhammad’s Sharia (Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi - TNSM). The TNSM is a Pashtun-based group created by the cleric Maulana Sufi Mohammad, and presently run by his more vocal nephew Mullah Fazlullah, also dubbed ‘Mullah FM’ for his active use of local radio stations to spread his messages. As its name suggests,

² Rahimullah Yousafzai, ‘The Taliban Primer,’ (April 2009), HIMAL, http://www.himalmag.com/The-Taliban-primer_nw2881.html, accessed 3 April 2009. See page 19 for a map of FATA and NWFP.

³ Rahimullah Yusufzai, ‘A Who’s Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province: Part To - FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,’ *Terrorism Monitor*, 7 no. 4 (March 2009) and Laila Bokhari, ‘Who are the Pakistani Taliban? The Actors, their Ideology and Pragmatism,’ OMS Conference paper, Oslo, April 2008.

⁴ Arabinda Acharya et al., ‘Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,’ *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32 no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

since its inception the TNSM has rebelled to achieve the enforcement of *sharia*. The group formed an alliance with the TTP, most noticeably after the Lal Masjid operation in mid-2007. Indeed, upon the official formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban, Maulana Fazlullah was appointed the TTP commander of Swat District. There was also a marked increase in jihadist activity, especially in the form of violent Islamic extremism, during this time (see Appendix A).

A recent add-on dimension to the TTP is the 'Punjabi Taliban,' a burgeoning phenomenon linked to the surge in terrorist activity in Pakistan's heartland, namely Punjab and Islamabad. Reports indicate growing coordination between the TTP and extremist factions drawn from Punjab. The latter is believed to provide logistical and financial assistance, as well as manpower, to the TTP. The PT includes sections of sectarian outfits, like the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and previously Kashmir/India-focused groups like Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

Another dynamic in the spreading influence of the Tehrik-e-Taliban involves mutual relations of support with the Taliban movement in neighbouring Afghanistan. The TTP leadership in both FATA and KPP has publicly sworn allegiance to Mullah Omar, the undisputed leader of the Afghan Taliban. Indeed, the Pakistan and Afghan Taliban could be said to be Siamese twins – two heads of the same body. While the TTP has time and again professed loyalty to its Afghan counterpart, the latter has made efforts to distance itself – at least, vocally – from the battle inside Pakistan. Nevertheless, TTP and Punjabi militants are known to be active against coalition and Afghan targets in Afghanistan. Despite differences in opinion and agendas between the Afghan Taliban and (parts of) the TTP – for instance, over where the battlefield should be – it is difficult to deny that the Afghan Taliban has benefited significantly from cooperation with its Pakistani counterpart.

During the reign of the Taliban in Afghanistan, groups from Pakistan's tribal belt, as well as Punjab and Sind, served in the ranks of the Afghan Taliban. Following the collapse of the Taliban regime in Kabul in late 2001, scores of Taliban and foreign fighters sought a safe haven in the Pakistan/Afghanistan border areas. According to Misbah Abdul-Baqi, the main goal of these refugees was to reorganize and return to Afghanistan and fight US troops.⁵ Under pressure from the US, Pakistan began military operations to rid the Waziristans of foreign militants linked to al-Qaida and the Afghan Taliban. In response to the presence of government forces in the hitherto

⁵ Misbah Abdul-Baqi, 'Pakistani Taliban Disclosed,' *Islam Online*, 6 March 2008.

'autonomous' tribal areas, extremist groups proliferated, leading to violent confrontations between the militants and Pakistani troops. As a result, several groups initially formed to fight in Afghanistan became engaged in warfare against the Pakistani security forces, thus marking the shift away from the Afghan *jihad* to a 'defensive *jihad*' against the 'apostate' Pakistani army.⁶

According to Hassan Abbas:

The transition from being Taliban supporters and sympathizers to becoming a mainstream Taliban force in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) [was] initiated when many small militant groups operating independently in the area started networking with one another. This sequence of developments occurred while Pakistani forces were spending the majority of their resources finding 'foreigners' in the area linked to al-Qaida (roughly in the 2002-04 period).⁷

As more and more groups were made illegal in Pakistan, a number of individuals joined the Taliban in FATA:

During this period they developed their distinct identity. From their own perspective, they intelligently created space for themselves in Pakistan by engaging in military attacks while at other times cutting deals with the Pakistani government to establish their autonomy in the area. By default they were accepted as a legitimate voice in at least two FATA agencies – South Waziristan and North Waziristan.⁸

Taliban forces and their sympathizers became increasingly entrenched in the region, many having spent their time there since the first Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets. Additionally, many were married into local families and integrated into the tribal structures. However, since then, we have seen a continuous stream of new and young militants from abroad and other areas of Pakistan settling or at least spending time in the tribal areas.

The year 2007 witnessed a number of serious episodes in Pakistan (including the Lal Masjid incident and the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Hassan Abbas, 'A Profile of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan,' *CTC Sentinel*, 1 no. 2 (January 2008), 1-4.

⁸ Ibid.

which, combined with the Pakistan Army's perceived violation of peace agreements with extremists in the tribal areas, resulted in an increased lack of trust in the decisions and policies of President Musharraf's rule and a decline in public support.

The year also saw a significant rise in suicide attacks targeting the army and symbols of the Pakistani state.⁹ Adversely affected by or resentful of the Pakistani state's attacks on its 'own people,' many militants associated with local Pakistani extremist groups have moved to FATA to help their 'brothers-in-arms' and also to benefit from the sanctuary.

'Talibanization' or the spread of Taliban activities in the forms of both violent extremism and rebel governance have also been popularised in recent years. The former involves, for the most part, targeting people who are deemed un-Islamic or considered to be apostates and 'agents of the West,' such as security personnel and politicians, as well as their supporters. The latter refers to the use of violence and/or coercion to promote a way of life based on the militants' particular interpretation of the Quran and Islamic principles; this includes setting up a parallel law and justice system based on *sharia* law, discouraging women's education by bombing girls' schools, and so on.

'Talibanization' and what it connotes have been issues in Pakistan since before the official formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in December 2007; however, despite efforts by the Pakistani government to combat the threat of 'Talibanization,' the phenomenon has continued to grow and spread across the country, with implications for the internal security of the nation, as well as the security of neighboring Afghanistan.

There is no clear estimate of the number of TTP fighters in Pakistan: figures range from 5,000 to 30,000. The exact number of foreign fighters amid the TTP also remains uncertain: official figures have ranged from 500 to 8,000.¹⁰

In September 2009, official figures from the military in Pakistan put the number of TTP fighters, including foreign militants, in FATA alone at over 10,000.¹¹ In Swat, the number is thought to be over 5,000.¹² However, according to a Swat-based TTP

⁹ See Appendix A.

¹⁰ Hamid Mir, '8,000 Fighters in FATA Ring Alarm Bells in Islamabad,' *The News*, 21 July 2008.

¹¹ 'Over 10,000 Taliban in FATA: DG ISPR,' *Daily Times*, 30 September 2009.

¹² Amir Mir, 'The Swelling Force of Extremism,' *The News*, March 2009.

fighter interviewed in August 2009 by the Indonesian website Arrahmah.com, the total number of ‘mujahideen’ operating in Swat was 1,500.¹³ Rahimullah Yusufzai has suggested that a realistic figure for the overall number of TTP militants would be 10,000 if ‘reserves’ were included.^{14,15}

There is no clear-cut profile to which TTP members might adhere. However, Talat Hussain and his research team analyzed the backgrounds of various TTP leaders from FATA and KPP to unearth some general features common to them.¹⁶

Average age: 35

Family background: Poor

Education: Little or no formal education; religious education was not received from a reputable madrassa or institute

Affiliations: Majority of the leadership is affiliated in one form or another with religious tanzems or parties/organizations. However, they appear to lack a concrete political agenda or standpoint with respect to politics, economics, etc.

Source: “Live with Talat,” Aaj TV, 21 April 2009

It is interesting to note that the average age of TTP leaders is quite young – 35. A general trend amongst the burgeoning Taliban movement is for older commanders to be replaced by younger, more robust leaders who are technologically savvy.¹⁷

Whilst in his mid-30s, Baitullah Mehsud became the emir of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (in December 2007). Baitullah’s successor, Hakimullah Mehsud, is in his early 30s. Maulvi Nazir, a Taliban commander of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe in South Waziristan who has allegedly been involved in offering operational assistance to the

¹³ ‘The Exclusive Interview Arrahmah.com with Pakistani Taliban Mujahideen,’ (14 August 2009) Arrahmah.com, <http://www.arahmah.com/index.php/english/read/5354/the-exclusive-interview-arahmah.com-with-pakistani-taliban-mujahideen>, accessed 29 August 2009.

¹⁴ Rahimullah Yusufzai is a journalist and Peshawar bureau chief for *The News*.

¹⁵ Rahimullah Yusufzai, phone interview on 16 May 2009.

¹⁶ Talat Hussain is a Pakistani journalist, news anchor, and host of the popular show, *Live with Talat*, on Aaj TV.

¹⁷ Amir Mir, ‘The Swelling Force of Extremism,’ *The News International*, 22 March 2009 and ‘US Plans New Drone Attacks in Pak,’ *The Nation Pakistan*, 26 March 2009.

Afghan Taliban, is about 35 years of age. Maulana Fazlullah, TTP commander of the Swat valley, is allegedly also in his mid-30s.

A number of the TTP leadership were or are linked to religious political parties in Pakistan, namely, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) or Jamaat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI). However, apart from advocating converting Pakistan's existing constitution to *sharia* law, the militant organization appears to lack a political agenda: TTP leaders are not known to talk of, or write, political programs. It is unclear whose interpretation of the *sharia* will be endorsed as the final product: religious nuances prevail between different militant groups based on their specific brand of Islam – e.g. Deobandi, Wahhabi, Ahl-e-Hadith, and so on.

2 TTP Background

Anti-Western and anti-American rhetoric and the liberation of Palestine, Chechnya and Kashmir were 'hot topics' during Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001. After 2001, removing the infidels from Afghanistan became priority number one for violent Islamist groups operating from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Yet, due to the ambivalent policies of the Pakistan military in dealing with the militants and the tribes in FATA, who were accused of harsh and seemingly indiscriminate military attacks (often resulting in a high number of civilian casualties), public questioning of the counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts of the government increased.

While the older generation of Afghan Taliban was a by-product of the Soviet invasion, the new Taliban is a result of American intervention – and as such, a different rhetoric is used by the extremists. In addition, the Pakistani state's seemingly abrupt withdrawal of support from the Taliban regime in 2001, as well as violent jihadist groups in Pakistan/Kashmir, compounded by the military operations in the 'autonomous' tribal regions, has led to a situation in which the violent *jihad* of many militant groups is aimed not just at 'infidels occupying Afghanistan', but also the local 'infidels' who are ruling and running Pakistan and maintaining 'the secular values of Pakistani society and an apostate state.'

The Durand Line separating Afghanistan and Pakistan is not accepted as an official border by the Pashtun populations living on either side of it.¹⁸ Up until 2003-4, when the Pakistani army launched military action against the Pakistani Taliban in South Waziristan for the first time, the focus of the Pakistani chapter of the Taliban was exclusively to support the Afghan Taliban in their struggles by sheltering them and supplying them with fighters. However, the Pakistani military's operations in the Waziristans, and later Bajaur, as well as the army attack on the Red Mosque in Islamabad in July 2007 served as a turning point for the TTP, turning their attention from Afghanistan to targeting the Pakistani security forces.

The Taliban has reiterated time and again that if the Pakistani army or the US should attack them, they will take revenge, and that it would be in 'self-defence.' Therefore the TTP has termed their struggle a 'defensive' *jihad*. The Pakistani forces are viewed as toeing the line of the Americans, working alongside the

¹⁸ The Durand Line refers to the 2,640-kilometer border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

US in targeting Taliban hideouts in the tribal region and attacking them with drone planes.

Key themes arising from the rhetoric of various jihadi components in Pakistan are: 1) their enmity towards the Pakistani government and military, 2) hostility towards US/NATO forces in neighbouring Afghanistan, and 3) a demand for the enforcement of *sharia* law in Pakistan. The exact priority with regard to these three points appears to depend on the TTP faction under question, but even within a certain faction, priorities have been shuffled over time and new ones added, depending on changes in national and regional politics and in the dynamics within the TTP leadership and membership.

In 2004, for example, Nek Mohammad, the then Taliban commander of South Waziristan, stated:

The tribes helped Afghanistan against the British occupation, then against the Soviet aggression, and now they are helping them against the American assault. As *jihad* is a religious duty, we must constantly exert it.¹⁹

By 2007, and with the official formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, we notice that the onus also fell on battling the Pakistani government, exemplified in the moves (see above) laid out by the TTP. Many of these points later became the focus of negotiations with the Pakistani government. However, they have also laid out fault lines and divides within the TTP. Their demands are issues that have the potential to raise debates intrinsic to Pakistani society in all its complexity and immaturity.²⁰

In 2008 the TTP promised to take its ‘defensive *jihad*’ out of the Pashtun belt and into the rest of Pakistan:

The US and its allies want the bloodshed to continue on our soil. But we have made it clear that, if a war is imposed on us, we will take this war out of tribal areas and NWFP to the rest of the country and will attack security forces and important government functionaries in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and other big cities.²¹

¹⁹ Misbah Abdul-Baqi, ‘Pakistani Taliban disclosed,’ *Islam Online*, 6 March 2008.

²⁰ Laila Bokhari, ‘Who are the Pakistani Taliban? The Actors, Their Ideology and Pragmatism,’ OMS Conference paper, Oslo, April 2008.

²¹ Mushtaq Yusufzai, ‘Taliban Warns of Attack on Capital,’ *The News*, 10 June 2008.

This proved not to be an empty threat: since 2007, Pakistan has suffered a sharp rise in suicide attacks in KPP as well as the major cities of Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. By 2009, Baitullah Mehsud was openly threatening to 'launch an attack in Washington that will amaze everyone in the world.'²²

That is, a gradual shift from 1) fighting foreign troops in Afghanistan → 2) 'defensive *jihad*' against the Pakistani security forces in FATA and KPP → 3) launching attacks against symbols of state outside the tribal belt (Punjab, Karachi) → 4) threats or possible plots to carry out attacks in the West. This suggests that the *jihad* paradigm for the Pakistani-Taliban had undergone several important shifts (i.e. 1-3) over the past few years and that more shifts (e.g. 4) appear likely.

This shift may also be reflective of the general attitude of the Pakistani people towards the US. A 2009 Gallup Survey revealed that 59% Pakistanis believed the US to pose the greatest threat to their nation, while only 11% thought the Taliban to be a risk.²³ Escalating numbers of reported US drone attacks in the tribal areas, coupled with a widespread belief that Pakistan is fighting 'America's war,' suspicion of a 'US invasion of Pakistan' as seen by the expanding US embassy in Islamabad, and the alleged presence of private security contractors in the country, have all fed strong anti-US sentiments amongst Pakistanis.

Different branches of the TTP appear to have different agendas. While Baitullah's group has been virulently opposed to the GoP and the army and has launched a series of attacks against the Pakistani security forces and symbols of the Pakistani state, Taliban commanders such as Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur have traditionally been pro-government and maintained cordial ties with the GoP, limiting their jihadi activities to Afghanistan, and on occasion helping the Pakistan army oust foreigners from Waziristan.

Muddling the issue is the February 2009 creation of Council of the United Mujahideen that apparently aligned the diverging agendas of various TTP factions, uniting rival leaders Baitullah Mehsud, Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur. It is believed that the Council was formed under the directive of Mullah Omar, a demonstration of the

²² Zahid Hussain & Jeremy Page, 'Taleban: We Will Launch Attack on America that will Amaze the World,' *Times Online*, 1 April 2009.

²³ 'US Public Enemy No 1 Gallup Survey Pakistan 2009,' Press TV, downloaded from YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dV7rs7LZ3wk>, accessed 1 October 2009.

extent of influence exerted by the Afghan Taliban on their Pakistani counterpart.²⁴ The organization boasted common goals, emphasising that US troops in Afghanistan were ‘absolutely’ their target – thus seemingly placing Afghanistan back at the top of their agenda.²⁵ The arch-infidel remains the US and those who ‘pain the innocent people of Afghanistan.’²⁶ Although their messages resonate with references to a ‘global *jihad*’, its immediate expression is found in battling a regional enemy: American and coalition forces in Afghanistan and the Pakistani security forces.

Pamphlets distributed by the Council in mosques across North and South Waziristan hailed Mullah Omar and Osama bin Laden, affirming their allegiance to the leader of the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaida respectively:

Mullah Muhammad Omar and Sheikh Osama bin Laden gave to all Muslims, especially to the mujahedeen, the chance to fight collectively against the enemy of Muslims and to defeat their cronies such as [US President] Obama, [Pakistani President] Zardari, and [Afghan President] Karzai... The enemy has united against the Muslims, especially against the mujahedeen, in the leadership of America headed by President Obama. Therefore we mujahedeen too should shun our differences and work for...the defeat of the infidels.²⁷

No follow-up meetings of ISM have been reported since their inauguration in early 2009, and the strength of their alliance remains under question. In fact, clashes between Maulvi Nazir and Baitullah’s men made the airwaves months after this union was forged.

It is possible that the formation of the Council was mere political posturing, a response to the US government’s announcements at the time that it was increasing the number of troops in Afghanistan. The alliance aimed to appease Mullah Omar as well as intimidate foreign troops in Afghanistan and the Pakistani security forces by ostensibly directing TTP’s aggregate weight on to a common jihadi agenda.

²⁴ Rahimullah Yusufzai, Peshawar-based journalist for *The News*, phone interview on 16 May 2009.

²⁵ Ibid. This alliance was apparently the result of direct instructions from Mullah Omar, who is said to have dispatched a delegation to TTP fighters with the message ‘Unite and fight not your own people, but the occupiers of Afghanistan’; Imran Khan, ‘Talking to the Taliban,’ *Al-Jazeera English*, 10 March 2009.

²⁶ Rahimullah Yusufzai, Peshawar-based journalist for *The News*, phone interview on 16 May 2009.

²⁷ Nick Schiffrin, ‘Taliban Commander Says US Troops are being Targeted,’ *ABC News*, 18 March 2009.

Maps of Pakistan and its North Western border with Afghanistan





3 TTP Ideology

Pakistan's jihadi vernacular echoes an Islamic fundamentalism based on narrow and militant interpretations of Wahabism, Salafism, Ahl-e-Hadith or Deobandi doctrines. The 'common enemy' includes the US, Israel, India, as well as the Barelvi, Sufi and Shiite sects of Islam. The enforcement of Islamic law (*sharia*) in Pakistan has been a central point and demand in TTP propaganda.

In recent times, and especially since the Pakistani Army's Operation Silence against Islamabad's Red Mosque in July 2007, the Pakistani security forces have rapidly been placed under the rubric of the 'enemy'.²⁸ Yet there remain pockets of the TTP that have taken a neutral stance, or are even pro-government.

While Afghanistan and the international forces operating there remain a key 'front line', the focus of the most vocal and active actors in the Pakistani theatre have shifted to the Pakistani establishment, the so-called 'apostate state' and its institutions, in particular the army.

The centralized control of the TTP expressed the following goals for the new umbrella movement upon its formation in December 2007:

- Enforce *sharia*.
- Unite against coalition forces in Afghanistan.
- Perform defensive *jihad* against the Pakistani Army.
- Demand the release of Lal Masjid Imam Abdul Aziz.
- Demand the abolition of all military checkpoints in the FATA area.
- Refuse future peace deals with the Government of Pakistan.²⁹

The first four points could be said to form the ideological base of the Tehrik, namely the implementation and enforcement of *sharia* law in Pakistan, assisting the Afghan Taliban in fighting the 'foreign invasion' of Afghanistan, launching a 'defensive *jihad*' against the Pakistani army who are perceived to be 'un-Islamic' and are held responsible for becoming puppets of the West, and causing mass suffering for the north-western tribes,

²⁸ Qandeel Siddique, 'The Red Mosque Operation and its Impact on the Growth of the Pakistani Taliban,' *FFI Research Report*, No. 2008/01915, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), October 2008, http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00115/Qadeel_Siddique-Lal_115013a.pdf.

²⁹ 'Tribal Areas under Centralized Control,' *Daily Times*, 16 December 2007.

and the latent support for the Lal Masjid clergy and students, many of whom (including the head cleric) were killed during a military raid on the mosque in July 2007. At least one branch of the TTP was created with the sole ambition of avenging the military operation on the Lal Masjid, whereas several other groups have vowed vengeance for those martyred in the raid and are using the incident to rally further support.³⁰

A markedly sectarian outlook has coloured the emerging TTP ideology, which is most likely due to the injection of leaders and cadres with sectarian backgrounds into the organisation. There has also been a growing reference to a 'global *jihad*', whether in relation to rescuing fellow Muslims from 'occupation,' spreading *sharia*, or avenging the US/western presence and attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Surveying recent messages delivered by Hakimullah Mehsud and Wali-ur Rehman, as well as the TTP spokesperson, Azam Tariq, it appears that the Tehrik has become more explicit in its anti-US rhetoric, with increasing references to the US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, US drone strikes inside Pakistan, and its control over the 'corrupt' Pakistani army and government, who, in exchange for monetary reward, are performing America's nefarious biddings on its soil. TTP leaders explain in their statements that US drone attacks would not be possible without the complicity of the GoP. The expansion of the US embassy in Islamabad, the infamous Kerry-Lugar aid bill, and rumours of the growing presence of Blackwater and its operatives in Pakistan have made the militants point fingers directly at the US for waging war on Pakistan. Owing to an under-developed capacity to launch attacks in western cities, the TTP has found its immediate outlet in bombing western targets within Pakistan, such as the October 2009 assault on the UN's World Food Programme office in Islamabad; according to a TTP spokesperson, this was because the UN 'was serving US interests.'

The evolution of the TTP since the group's formal inception in 2007 has resulted in a variegated entity. The ideology which emerges can be said to espouse the following:

- '*Sharia ya shahadat*:' rejecting democracy and enforcing *sharia* law in Pakistan, and replacing the existing constitution with *sharia*, thus realizing Pakistan's true identity as an 'Islamic' state.

³⁰ Qandeel Siddique, 'The Red Mosque Operation and its Impact on the Growth of the Pakistani Taliban,' *FFI Research Report*, No. 2008/01915, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), October 2008, http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00115/Qadeel_Siddique-Lal_115013a.pdf.

- Waging a ‘defensive *jihad*’ against the Pakistani army and state, who are considered apostates and puppets of the West – i.e., they ascribe to a secular, un-Islamic lifestyle and ‘sacrifice’ the Pakistani people in return for ‘US dollars.’
- Denouncing the Kashmir struggle, as it does not aim to achieve sharia law and is supported by the ISI.
- Allegiance and assistance to Mullah Omar and the Afghan Taliban.
- Links to the Punjabi Taliban and sectarianism: numerous segments of groups previously focused on Kashmir/India have moved bases to Pakistan’s western border and started networking with the core TTP to carry out attacks in major cities across Pakistan. Sectarian violence, especially in connection with suicide bombing, has risen in recent years, and this may reflect the new TTP leadership, who have LeJ backgrounds. Shias in particular, have been targeted with al-Qaida-inspired vigour, leading to sectarian mass casualties.
- Talibanization; this includes acts of violent extremism and rebel governance (or the installing of a parallel system of governance based on the local TTP leader’s interpretation of *sharia* law) in usurped territories.

Sharia. The enforcement of *sharia* law – not only in a particular territory or district but across Pakistan – is voiced as a common goal by most TTP leaders. The cardinal goal of the Tehrik-e-Taliban alliance upon its formation was indeed the implementation of sharia throughout Pakistan. The February 2009 union of warring Waziristani militant leaders also included in its agenda the implementation of *sharia*.

The TTP’s dedication to *sharia* law manifested itself in their video entitled *Bloodshed and Revenge*, promoting the ‘*sharia ya shahadat*’ (*sharia* or Martyrdom) slogan.³¹ For most of the video, the merits of Islam – or rather TTP’s specific brand of Islam – are hailed. Islam is presented as a religion with global appeal, one which can act as a panacea for all the world’s ailments: ‘Should the world, which is torn by corruption and unpropitiousness, embrace Islam, it will become a receptacle of peace and stability.’³²

Integral to the struggle to replace Pakistan’s constitution with *sharia* is the misplaced belief that Pakistan’s creation and identity is attributed to Islam and is therefore ‘bound to be regulated by Islamic law.’³³

³¹ ‘Bloodshed and Revenge,’ (August 2009), <http://www.2shared.com/file/7370960/8370331e/TTPENGDVD.html>, last retrieved on 25 August 2009.

³² Ibid.

³³ ‘Bloodshed and Revenge,’ (August 2009), <http://www.2shared.com/file/7370960/8370331e/TTPENGDVD.html>, accessed on 25 August 2009.

Defensive jihad. By joining the war on terror, conducting military operations in the tribal areas, forcing foreigners to evacuate the region, claiming high collateral damage, and hindering the militant's effort to help their brothers in Afghanistan, the Pakistani Army has increasingly become the arch-enemy of the TTP. The reportedly harsh military offensives of 2009 – carried out in parts of Malakand division and FATA – have further provoked the terrorists' hostility.

The growing number of US drone strikes in Pakistan's border areas, and expanding US presence and influence inside Pakistan has further aggravated the jihadists – not only in the northwest of the country, but also in Punjab. The jihadists accuse the GoP of facilitating this US 'takeover' of Pakistan. As a result, militants increasingly see themselves as the 'saviours' of Pakistan – both from the 'infidel' ways of the slavish Pakistani state and its elite, as well as from an American usurpation.

From early statements by the TTP to present-day interviews – for example, the recent Hakimullah Mehsud press conference – the Tehrik has reiterated its *jihad* against the Pakistani regime to be 'defensive', for the GoP 'left them no choice.'

A major ideological drive of the TTP appears to be based on the defamation of the Pakistani establishment and to strip the Pakistani government and army of their role as institutions created to safeguard the interests of an Islamic country. Propaganda material is geared towards exposing the 'crimes' of the Pakistani army, which render it 'apostate.' In order to legitimize its *jihad* against the 'Islamic' Republic of Pakistan, the TTP is first and foremost preoccupied with establishing the bases on which the Pakistani state can be deemed an infidel entity. To this end, a picture is created whereby Pakistani politicians and soldiers are depicted as indulging in un-Islamic acts, for example, drinking alcohol, watching pornographic material or being unable to recite specific verses from the Quran. The TTP video entitled *Bloodshed and Revenge* tries to capture precisely this image of the Pakistani regime.³⁴

Kashmiri jihad. It is known that many segments of 'Kashmiri' groups shifted their focus from Pakistan's north-eastern to its north-western border. These elements set up their bases in the tribal areas and fought alongside the TTP in the region. Other

³⁴ *Bloodshed and Revenge*, (August 2009), <http://www.2shared.com/file/7370960/8370331e/TTPENGDVD.html>, last retrieved on 25 August 2009.

groups of 'renegade extremists' who were previously affiliated to or worked with the Pakistani Army and were involved in the struggle to emancipate Kashmir from Indian occupation, diverted their focus after the perceived betrayal of the Pakistani regime and its policy change after 9/11. On account of their religious and political beliefs, and in some cases personal vendettas against army officials, many extremists severed their links with the Army and joined the militants in their struggle against the security forces.

The Swati Tehrik and SWA leaders like Maulvi Nazir have dismissed the Kashmiri *jihad* because it does not aim to promulgate *sharia* and is closely linked to the ISI (which is now perceived to be working at the behest of America). Hakimullah Mehsud has also (nostalgically) spoken of the working relationship that existed between TTP fighters and the Pakistani Army, and suggested how the two can return to the status quo when and if the Army discontinues its support of the US.

The year 2009 also witnessed the first act of suicide terrorism in Pakistan-administered Kashmir when Pakistani soldiers were targeted; Hakimullah Mehsud allegedly claimed responsibility for the attack. The TTP has in the past struck against important cities and cantonments, such as Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Sargodha and other places, and a majority of these attacks were directed at the ISI, military installations, the Special Services Group (SSG), the Police and the Federal Investigation Agency; so far no attack had been attempted in Azad Kashmir. The strike could be a symbolic statement, suggesting that the TTP and its fighters (including those previously involved in Kashmir) no longer support the Kashmir struggle or the ISI.

Afghan Taliban. Many TTP leaders are veterans of the fighting in Afghanistan during the Soviet-invasion and have historically supported the *jihad* against foreign forces in Afghanistan by supplying fighters and logistical aid. Members of the Afghan Taliban have also been observed leading militant groups in the FATA agencies. For instance, Maulvi Sangeen is an Afghan commander of the TTP linked to Baitullah Mehsud's group, as well as an alleged associate of Sirajuddin Haqqani and key commander of the Haqqani network in eastern Afghanistan.³⁵

The Mauqami Tehrik-e-Taliban, consisting primarily of the Waziri tribal bloc, have, for the most part, limited their jihadi activities to Afghanistan, where they presum-

³⁵ Cyril Almeida, 'Groping in the Dark,' *Dawn*, 26 June 2009.

ably continue to operate.³⁶ It is believed that fighters belonging to various factions of Pakistan-based Deobandi extremist groups have also gone to Afghanistan to fight under the Afghan Taliban. Sources claim there to be 5,000 to 9,000 young people from southern Punjab fighting in Afghanistan and Waziristan.³⁷ Indeed, from the 1980s to the present day, factions of the Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Jaish-e-Mohammad, and Lashkar-e-Taiba have allegedly been engaged in Afghanistan.³⁸ Various articles and speeches found on the Jaish-e-Mohammad's Internet website reveal its staunchly pro-Taliban stance and current involvement in Afghanistan.³⁹

Punjabi Taliban. Terrorist activity, including fidayeen and commando-style raids, has increased in mainland Pakistan, especially Punjab province and the federal capital, Islamabad. Two of the biggest recent attacks in the country have taken place in Rawalpindi.⁴⁰ This trend is not only symptomatic of the TTP's spreading influence, but also of the rising of the so-called 'Punjabi Taliban', i.e. Punjabi extremists from sectarian and/or Kashmir-*jihad* backgrounds, and its strong bonds with the tribal Taliban. The Punjabi Taliban includes a vast array of actors, including members previously tied to the Pakistani army and the Inter-Services Intelligence.

Unlike Baitullah and his league of jihadists, the new breed of TTP leaders is known to have stronger ties to the Punjabi Taliban. Key figures like Hakimullah Mehsud, Wali-ur Rehman and Qari Hussain are all reportedly deeply connected to Punjabi extremists, where the latter have helped the Tehrik-e-Taliban carry out high-profile attacks in major cities. Qari Hussain, for example, was formerly a highly active member of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and during the peak of sectarian violence in Karachi, he developed a network with the group. As the head of the TTP's suicide squad, it is expected that Qari Hussain coordinates major attacks in Punjab with the PT. Given the differing dynamics of the new breed of TTP leaders, greater coordination with the Tehrik's Punjabi counterparts is likely to result in a higher level of attacks inside greater Pakistan.

³⁶ The MTT's fundamentally pro-government stance, and the recent peace accord between the Waziris of North and South Waziristan and the GoP, suggest that MTT fighters will continue operating in Afghanistan while keeping their side of the deal, i.e. desisting from attacks on the security forces and denying assistance to the Mehsud TTP.

³⁷ Ayesha Siddiq, 'Terror's Training Ground,' *Newsline*, September 2009.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ www.alqalamonline.com

⁴⁰ This includes the 2 November 2009 suicide blast that killed 35 people, a day-long raid at the army headquarters on 10 October 2009, and at least 40 people, including high-ranking officials, being killed in the 4 December 2009 gun-cum-suicide attack on a mosque next to the army headquarters in Rawalpindi.

As mentioned earlier, PT has been observed operating inside Afghanistan. Not only Pashtuns, but Punjabis from different backgrounds also find themselves influenced by the Taliban rhetoric to fight ‘infidels’ in the region. As-Sahab has released at least two videos of the ‘wills’ of ‘martyred’ Punjabi jihadists. One such martyr was an engineer named Ashraf Abid who hailed from Pakistani’s Punjab province. After 9/11, he fought in Afghanistan and died during the martyrdom operation at Jalalabad airport against the coalition forces.

The second video is that of Hasham from Islamabad, who, upon completing his FSc, joined the ‘caravans of *jihad*.’ From the title of the video it seems that Hasham was martyred in Dir in October 2008. It was during a training session that Hasham was targeted by a US-Pakistani missile strike. In the video, Hasham bemoans the ‘sordid’ state of the *umma*, in particular the suffering of ‘our brothers, sisters, and elderly in Afghanistan.’ He took part in missions to fight foreign forces in Afghanistan and was later placed in charge of training courses.

The examples of Ashraf Abid and Hasham highlight the involvement of extremists from Punjab in Afghanistan. Ashraf Abid’s Punjabi roots and engineering background suggest that he might be linked to the Lashkar-e-Taiba.⁴¹ Although more research is needed on the PT phenomenon and its relationship to the TTP and Afghan Taliban, it is known that thousands of Punjabi extremists have moved to the FATA and Afghanistan in recent years to take part in jihadist activity.⁴²

Sectarianism. An emerging trend within the new Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan leadership signals a shift to sectarian violence. Appendix A reveals the marked increase in sectarian suicide strikes, especially in 2007. Shias in particular have been targeted with al-Qaida-inspired vigour, resulting in sectarian mass casualties. In the late 1990s, after a wave of SSP and LeJ cadre were arrested, the groups shifted their bases to Afghanistan, where they were allegedly provided sanctuaries by Mullah Omar’s regime.⁴³ After the Taliban ouster in 2001, many of these ‘sectarian’ militants returned to Pakistan, settling in the borderlands, in particular Lower Kurram and

⁴¹ For more on Lashkar-e-Taiba, see Qandeel Siddique, ‘What is Lashkar-e-Taiba?’ http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00118/Qandeels_foredrag_1_118041a.pdf

⁴² Ayesha Siddiqi, ‘Terror’s Training Ground,’ *Newsline*, September 2009.

⁴³ ‘Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge,’ (13 March 2009), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/164_pakistan___the_militant_jihadi_challenge.pdf, accessed 15 March 2009.

Orakzai Agency.^{44,45} When the Taliban sunk its claws in the tribal belt, 'the simmering animus of the sectarian terrorists found vent in suicide-bombing attacks on the Shia community.'⁴⁶

Sectarianism has risen sharply in the middle agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which is not surprising given the large Shia population of the middle agencies. As part of their strategy to garner greater local support, the Taliban aimed to expand the religious divide within the middle agencies.⁴⁷ After TTP's takeover of Darra Adam Khel in early 2008, the TTP in the region aligned itself with sectarian positions, expressed in anti-Shia raids in the surrounding FATA agencies.⁴⁸ Hakimullah Mehsud was appointed TTP commander of the region in 2008, when the militants began to successfully exploit dormant anti-Shia sentiments prevalent in the area. The Shia population of the middle agencies was accused of receiving support from the 'apostate' Afghan regime, as well as from US and NATO forces, and for furthering the 'Iranian' agenda of spreading Shi'ism.

In April 2009, a suicide bomber attacked an *imambargah* (Shia place of worship) in Chakwal (Punjab), killing at least 24 people and injuring 140. About 800 people were present at the religious gathering which was the target. Such mass sectarian killings in Punjab are a relatively new phenomenon, indicative of the overlap between the Taliban and sectarian groups, and their struggle to secure new zones of influence.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi's role in the spreading of sectarian violence across Pakistan is pivotal. The strong relationship between al-Qaida and LeJ has been well documented. In addition to attacking the Shia community, saint worshippers, bureaucrats and policemen, the group is believed to have been behind most of the attacks against Western targets in Pakistan since 9/11.⁴⁹ While some LeJ activities are related to TTP's expansion and al-Qaida's focus on western targets, others remain unrelated to this and pursue a solely sectarian agenda.

⁴⁴ Mariam Abou Zahab 'Sectarianism in Pakistan's Kurram Tribal Agency,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 6 (March 2009).

⁴⁵ Many of these militant groups were terrorist organizations that were proscribed by Pakistan during this period, possibly leading them to seek sanctuary in the country's north-west.

⁴⁶ 'The Sectarian-Ethnic Scourge,' *Daily Times Pakistan*, 5 February 2009.

⁴⁷ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two – FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' 3 March 2009, *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4.

⁴⁸ Claudio Franco, 'Competing Voices Within the Taliban Leadership in Pakistan,' *NEFA Foundation*, September 2009.

⁴⁹ Amir Mir, 'The Swelling Force of Extremism,' *The News*, 22 March 2009.

Talibanization. The bifurcated notion of Talibanization – based on observed violent, jihadist activity on the one hand and rebel governance and social conditioning on the other – has been apparent in the majority of FATA as well as parts of KPP. In the case of Punjab and Sind, there have been signs of a growing trend of Taliban-style militancy, but Talibanization in the sense of imposing ‘Islamic’ change on the social and political fabric has not been as prominent.

In various measures, Baitullah Mehsud (SWA), Hafiz Gul Bahadur (NWA) and Maulana Fazlullah (Swat) have managed the Talibanization of their areas. As part of what it sees as enforcement of *sharia* law, the Swat group has reversed the area’s traditionally ‘cosmopolitan’ outlook, imposing its own anti-modernity ideology on it.⁵⁰ A more detailed account of the Talibanization of various FATA and KPP agencies is provided in the next chapter.

⁵⁰ ‘People take on Taliban,’ *Dawn*, 25 May 2009; Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, ‘Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,’ PBS, 14 April 2009.

4 Militant Map

Charting a clear-cut map of actors and groups operating as ‘Taliban’ in Pakistan is not easy: when reporting on terrorism in Pakistan, the media has spoken of the ‘Taliban’ in rather generic terms, obscuring the idiosyncrasies that might distinguish different TTP factions. The overlap between different militant groups, the internal rifts and the constant coming-and-going of old and new actors further adds to the confusion.

A generalized categorization of the Taliban movement in Pakistan can be drawn up as follows:

- Mehsud Group: the core conglomerate of the Tehrik-e-Taliban, including Baitullah Mehsud’s group and his affiliates across FATA, as well as Maulana Fazlullah’s Swat chapter, who have waged a *jihad* against the Pakistani state.
- Muqami Taliban: typically pro-government factions, including Maulvi Nazir (South Waziristan) and Gul Bahadur (North Waziristan), focused primarily on supporting the Afghan *jihad*.
- Punjabi Taliban: factions of groups previously focused on sectarianism inside Pakistan or the Kashmir/India *jihad* now networking with TTP.
- Niche groups with specific ambitions, e.g. Ghazi Force, now interlinked with TTP.

A distinction is made between groups focused primarily on fighting foreign and Afghan government forces in Afghanistan, some of who maintain cordial ties with the Pakistani government (GoP), and those extremist factions that are fundamentally motivated by opposition to the Pakistani state and security forces and that view the fight against Pakistan as the *haqeeqi* or real *jihad*.

Groups like Ghazi Force, named after the head cleric of Lal Masjid who was killed during the military siege on the mosque in July 2007, have unique aims borne of specific circumstances. Its founder, Fidaullah, studied at a Lal Masjid seminary, and since 2007 had been indoctrinating his students with jihadi ideology and sending them to Waziristan for military training.⁵¹ The sole agenda of Ghazi Force appears to be to avenge the Pakistani military’s raid on Lal Masjid.⁵² To this end, the group has

⁵¹ Munawar Azeem, ‘Mastermind of Islamabad Suicide Attacks Arrested,’ *Dawn*, 1 June 2009.

⁵² Saifullah Khalid, ‘پاکستان نواز گروپ شدت پسندوں کیخلاف معاون بن سکنے ہیں,’ *Ummat Karachi*, 30 May 2009.

collaborated with the core TTP and been incriminated in the recent wave of attacks on the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.⁵³ The group allegedly established its network in the Hangu area of KPP, as well as FATA's Orakzai agency, and recruited youngsters from Islamabad (presumably students of Lal Masjid and its seminaries).

The overlap of Ghazi Force with the Taliban in FATA and Swat Valley exemplifies an interesting aspect of the TTP, namely, the injection of small groups into the broader jihadist movement. The Ghazi Force represents a network of Lal Masjid affiliates, who, consumed with anger and resentment at the Pakistani army's 'unjust' and 'extreme' actions towards the Mosque, have joined the larger TTP organization to carry out attacks against symbols of the Pakistani state. This reveals the danger posed by sects of the population who have been adversely affected by the actions of the Pakistani military, including tribesmen or locals of an area where the army has conducted operations, at times resulting in high casualty rates and leaving vast swathes of the population displaced.⁵⁴

4.1 The Waziristans

The Waziristans are divided into two tribal agencies: North Waziristan (NWA), with a population of 362,000, and South Waziristan (SWA), population 430,000. NWA borders the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost to its west and the KPP districts of Hangu, Karak and Bannu to its east. SWA borders the Paktika province of Afghanistan and the Frontier districts of Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan. Page 19 provides a map of the Pakistan's North-Western tribal belt that borders on Afghanistan. A dialect of the Pashto language, Waziri, is spoken in the Waziristans.

Miran Shah is the capital of North Waziristan. Wazir and Daur tribes populate NWA. The capital of South Waziristan is Wana, and the majority of inhabitants in SWA belong to the Waziri and Mehsud tribes.

Within Pakistan, North and South Waziristan are considered to be the epicentre of militancy. Baitullah Mehsud and Maulvi Nazir have held sway in South

⁵³ Azaz Syed, 'Lal Masjid is Still Training Militants,' *Dawn*, 25 October 2009; Bill Roggio, 'Islamabad Police Capture Ghazi Force Commander,' 20 November 2009, *Long War Journal*, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/11/islamabad_police_cap.php, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁵⁴ Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), for example, as a group prone to radicalization, deserve further attention.

Waziristan; Baitullah led the Mehsud tribe of SWA, while Nazir ruled the Wazir tribe. After Baitullah's death, his close aid, Wali-ur Rehman, resumed the Taliban command of Mehsud. Hafiz Gul Bahadur remains the TTP leader of North Waziristan.

By 2009, Baitullah Mehsud had allegedly gained control over most of South Waziristan and commanded thousands of fighters, many of whom are foreigners, namely Uzbeks.⁵⁵ He imposed *sharia* law in the areas he governed by setting up alternative structures of 'preventing vice and promoting virtue' in South Waziristan. Music and video stores were torched and couples who committed 'adultery' stoned to death.⁵⁶ Barbershop owners were threatened that they should not shave beards.⁵⁷ Baitullah Mehsud was also known to have launched a special task force in June 2007 to deal with criminals in South Waziristan.⁵⁸

Similarly, in North Waziristan, Gul Bahadur established a parallel Taliban government. In October 2006, the NWA *shura* headed by Bahadur issued a pamphlet in which they announced new taxes to be levied and prescribed harsh penalties for various offenses, including dereliction of religious duty.⁵⁹ The local Taliban also imposed a penalty of Rs. 500,000 for robbery and theft and set up a law enforcement unit to maintain order.⁶⁰

As early as September 2007, Rahimullah Yusufzai reported closer cooperation between North and South Waziristan in fending off the Pakistani military.⁶¹ By August 2009 Taliban forces in the Waziristans appear to have flushed out almost all the security forces from the area, and those remaining were confined to their forts. Only a superfluous 'writ' of the Pakistani state was observed in North and South Waziristan; security officials could not move freely out of their barracks for fear of posing a threat to the militants, who would invariably carry out 'reprisal' attacks. There prevailed a tacit 'understanding' between the militants and security forces in North and South

⁵⁵ Amir Mir, 'The Swelling Force of Extermism,' *The News International*, 22 March 2009.

⁵⁶ Mohammad Shehzad, 'Why is the Pakistan Army Scared of this Man?' Rediff News, 10 March 2006.

⁵⁷ In 2006, a local barber recounted: 'Earlier I would shave my customers, but now I don't. Because if I do, my shop will be burned down and I will be punished to death by Baitullah Mehsud.' See Mohammad Shehzad, 'Why is the Pakistan Army Scared of this Man?' Rediff News, 10 March 2006.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ 'Taliban Slaps Taxes in Miranshah,' *Dawn*, 23 October 2006.

⁶⁰ Mohammad Shahzad, 'Why is the Pakistani Army Scared of this Man,' Rediff, 10 March 2006.

⁶¹ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'Accord and Discord,' Newline, 3 September 2007.

Waziristan: as long as the government did not challenge the local TTP, there would be no attacks from the Taliban terrorists.⁶² However, this trend is expected to be reversed in light of the GoP's recent call to step up operations in FATA and Swat.

The various militant factions in North and South Waziristan are also divided along the lines of tribal identities, and there exist deep tribal cleavages and local differences over how to relate to foreign fighters. Nearly every tribe has its own Taliban faction operating (relatively) independent of the other; militants of one tribe do not generally operate in the territory of another tribe, and even to cross another tribe's territories to reach areas of combat, permission is required.⁶³

Tribal and caste affiliations resonate jarringly along the Pashtun belt of Pakistan, accentuated more in the Waziristani context than in other agencies. For example, in the Bajaur, Orakzai and Mohamand agencies of FATA, clan identity is not as strong, and it is partly on account of this that Mehsud extremists managed to secure influence in these agencies.⁶⁴ On the Waziristani arena, one sees clear tribal differences between the Mehsud and Wazir tribes: Gul Bahadur and Maulvi Nazir, belonging to the Waziri tribe, find their support base amongst the Waziri tribesmen, whereas most Mehsuds are loyal to Baitullah Mehsud's group.

The main tribes in South Waziristan include the Ahmedzai Wazir and the Mehsud tribes. Nek Mohammad belonged to the Yargul Khel of the Ahmedzai tribe. His successor was Maulvi Nazir, who hailed from a weaker clan, the Kaka Khel. The Yargul Khel members never fully accepted Maulvi Nazir as their leader, and this eventually led to violent conflicts between them. Unlike Nek Mohammad, Maulvi Nazir, with the support of the Pakistani security forces, battled to evict foreign fighters – namely Uzbek militants – from the region, and this move firmly established a fault line, distancing the Yargul Khel clan, as well as Baitullah Mehsud, from Maulvi Nazir's group.

The Mehsud tribe in South Waziristan, led by Baitullah, welcomed foreign militants and became increasingly belligerent towards the Pakistani armed forces.

⁶² Syed Irfan Arshad, Peshwar-based correspondent for *Dawn* newspaper, telephone interviews on 7 and 15 May 2009.

⁶³ Arabinda Acharya et al., 'Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

⁶⁴ Syed Irfan Arshad, Peshwar-based correspondent for *Dawn* newspaper, telephone interviews on 7 and 15 May 2009.

Baitullah's group started hit-and-run operations against military personnel and installations in South Waziristan in 2004. The period from 2005-2007 witnessed a relative lull in terrorist activities, after a peace accord was forged between the militants and the military. This came to an end in July 2007, when the Pakistani army attacked the Red Mosque in Islamabad and ordered increased deployment of troops in the tribal areas, which the extremists perceived to be a violation of the peace deal.

The Uthmanzai Wazir and Daur tribes rule North Waziristan. Hafiz Gul Bahadur (Uthmanzir Wazir tribe) and Sadiq Noor and Abdul Khaliq Haqqani (Daur tribes) lead the Taliban in NWA. Like Maulvi Nazir, this group signed an agreement with the government and helped evict foreign militants in 2006.

While the Yargul Khel clan of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe sought refuge with Baitullah Mehsud, Maulvi Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur formed a military bloc – Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban or the Local Movement of Taliban – representing the 'interests' of the dominant Waziri tribes in the Waziristans and united against Baitullah. Gul Bahadur reportedly denied Baitullah the use of North Waziristani territory to carry out attacks against the Pakistani security forces. A major bone of contention between Baitullah's group and the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban remained over the thorny issue of where the battlefield lay: for the core TTP, the *jihad* against the Pakistani security forces was key, while the MTT prioritized the struggle against coalition forces (ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom) in Afghanistan.

In addition to Gul Bahadur's TTP faction, North Waziristan is also home to the Haqqani headquarters, located in the Dande Darpa Khel village (near Miramshah) bordering Afghanistan.⁶⁵ The group is a powerful Taliban offshoot and allegedly conducts cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. Sirajuddin also opposed Maulvi Nazir's campaign against foreign fighters in the region and attempted to reconcile differences between the Nazir and the foreigners.⁶⁶

The Waziristans appear to be riddled with foreign fighters.⁶⁷ Traditionally, local extremist leaders in this region have supported foreign militants. For example, South

⁶⁵ Imtiaz Ali, 'The Haqqani Network and Cross-Border Terrorism in Afghanistan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 6, no. 6 (24 March 2008).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ 'حکومتی کنٹرول ایک تہائی تک محدود,' BBC Urdu, 12 May 2009.

Waziristan's prominent Taliban commander, Nek Mohammad, allegedly sheltered militants from Chechnya, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and some Arab states.⁶⁸

Al-Qaida reportedly runs two operations centres in North and South Waziristan.⁶⁹ Al-Qaida leader Essa al-Misri had until recently been living in North Waziristan before his arrest in May 2009.⁷⁰ The Ahmedzai Wazir tribe in Waziristan, which is spread across both sides of the Durand Line, is believed to have the closest ties to the al-Qaida leadership.⁷¹

The presence of Uzbek militants is most notable in the Waziristans, leading to internecine battles within the TTP. Extremists belonging to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) have reportedly been active in South Waziristan, from where the Pakistan army struggled to evict them, and a set of TTP factions – most notably, Maulvi Nazir and Gul Bahadur's groups – assisted the Pakistani army in this regard.⁷² There is now close collaboration between IMU and TTP; in return for shelter, the Uzbeks allegedly repay the Baitullah Mehsud group by joining the TTP's struggle against the Pakistani security forces.⁷³

In a recent confession, Hakimullah Mehsud claimed to have played a 'key role' in giving asylum to al-Qaida and Uzbek Mujahideen.⁷⁴ An October 2009 video release by TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) reveals that the Uzbek al-Qaida leader, Qari Tahir Yuldashev, has joined hands with Hakimullah Mehsud.⁷⁵ This marks a convergence of interests between al-Qaida-affiliated Uzbek fighters and the TTP.

⁶⁸ Nek Mohammad was a powerful pro-Taliban commander of the Ahmedzai Wazir tribe in South Waziristan until he was killed in an airstrike in June 2004. See Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'Profile: Nek Mohammad,' BBC, 18 June 2004; Laila Bokhari, *Waziristan: impact on the Taliban Insurgency and the Stability of Pakistan*, FFI/RAPPORT-2006/02894, http://www.mil.no/felles/ffi/start/FFI-prosjekter/Alfover/_TERRA/Publikasjoner/Reports/

⁶⁹ Kristina Zetterlund, *Pakistan: Consequences of Deteriorating Security in Afghanistan*, Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), January 2009.

⁷⁰ 'Al-Qaida Leader Esa al-Misri with \$50 Million Head Money Arrested in Faisalabad,' Khabrain, 1 April 2009. Essa al-Misri is an Egyptian scholar and top al-Qaida ideologue.

⁷¹ Syed Shoaib Hasan, 'Centre-Stage in the 'War on Terror,' BBC, 31 March 2009.

⁷² Haroon Rashid, 'وانا: چودہ میں سے بارہ یرغمالی رہا,' BBC Urdu, 28 March 2004.

⁷³ Imran Lalani & Qurat ul ain Siddiqui, 'Baitullah Mehsud: Who is He?' *Dawn*, 31 March 2009.

⁷⁴ 'Translation of Hakimullah Mehsud's Autobiographical Handwritten Notes,' (3 October 2009), NEFA Foundation, <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Hakimullahnotetranslation.pdf>, accessed 12 October 2009.

⁷⁵ 'Uzbek AQ Leader Joins Hands with the New TTP Leader, Hakimullah Mehsud,' (October 2009), NEFA Foundation, <http://www1.nefafoundation.org/multimedia-prop.html>, accessed 12 October 2009.

4.2 Bajaur

Bajaur is the smallest of the FATA agencies, located to the east of Afghanistan's Kunar Province. Its capital is the town of Khar, lying on the border with Afghanistan. To Bajaur's east lie the NWFP districts of Dir and Malakand. Bajaur's 600,000 inhabitants come chiefly from the Uthman Khel, Tarkalanri or Momand tribes.

Faqir Mohammad leads the TTP in Bajaur. He is known to command several thousand fighters.⁷⁶ The local Taliban in Bajaur managed to enforce Friday as the weekly holiday instead of Sunday, the official weekly holiday. The head of the government's vaccination campaign in Bajaur was killed in a bomb attack in February 2007 amid Taliban propaganda that Pakistan's polio vaccination drive was a US plot to sterilize Muslim children. As a result, up to 24,000 children were denied polio vaccine in the region.⁷⁷ Such acts symbolize the extent of Talibanization in Bajaur.

A key figure in Bajaur is Qari Zia-ur Rahman, an Afghan commander in his late thirties who is allied to Baitullah's group, Rehman leads a militia of trained fighters hailing from Uzbekistan, Chechnya, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan.⁷⁸ Like Maulvi Sangeen (below), Qari Zia-ur Rehman is known to have considerable sway on both sides of the Durand Line, in Bajaur as well as the Nuristan and Kunar provinces of Afghanistan (where he is allegedly in charge of military and financial operations).⁷⁹

Other militant groups operating in Bajaur – including the Jaish-e-Islami headed by Wali-ur Rehman, Karwan-e-Niamatullah, and Dr Ismail's group – are reportedly allied with Baitullah's TTP.⁸⁰ In the aftermath of Baitullah Mehsud's death in August 2009, Wali-ur Rehman took over as head of the Mehsud tribe of SWA. The presence of international terrorist groups, such as the Islamic Jihad Union, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and al-Qaida, have also been traced to Bajaur.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two - FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4 (March 2009).

⁷⁷ 'Health Workers Boycott Polio Vaccination in Bajaur Agency,' *Daily Times*, 20 February 2007.

⁷⁸ 'Taliban Infiltrating from Afghanistan,' *Daily Times*, 24 October 2008.

⁷⁹ Syed Saleem Shahzad, 'A Fighter and a Financier,' *Asia Times Online*, 23 May 2008.

⁸⁰ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two - FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4 (March 2009). Rifts, however, have reportedly surfaced between the Baitullah and Abdullah groups.

⁸¹ Mukhtar A. Khan, 'A Profile of Militant Groups in Bajaur Tribal Agency,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7 no. 6 (19 March 2009).

4.3 Mohmand Agency

The Mohmand tribal agency is bound by the Bajaur Agency to the north, the Khyber Agency to the south, Malakand and Charsadda districts of the KPP to the east and Peshawar to the southeast. Mohmand shares its western border with Afghanistan's Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. The Mohmand, Musa Khel, Mero Khel, Tarak Zai, Safi, Utman Khel and Halim Zais tribes inhabit this agency.

The Omar Khalid group, allied with Baitullah's TTP, also operates in this agency.⁸² Qari Shakeel is deputy commander to Omar Khalid, also known as Abdul Wali, in the Mohmand tribal agency. Both Omar Khalid and Qari Shakeel are opposed to the Pakistani government and may have links to terrorist groups in Afghanistan. In 2009, it was suspected that Omar Khalid and Qari Shakeel escaped to Afghanistan during military operations in Mohmand. To show their allegiance to Taliban leaders in Mohmand, Afghan militants allegedly returned fire on Pakistani security forces.⁸³

Taliban elements wield considerable control over the Mohmand, Kurram, and Khyber agencies. However, since the government has managed, via local *lashkars*, to maintain control over at least the headquarters of these agencies, they cannot be said to be under the Taliban's total rule.⁸⁴ Despite this, the inhabitants of the settled areas in these agencies cannot move freely, and independent media reporting is next to impossible.

4.4 Middle Agencies: Kurram, Khyber and Orakzai

The middle agencies – Kurram, Khyber and Orakzai – are packed together in the centre of the FATA strip, with the Waziristans to the south and Mohmand and Bajaur tribal agencies to the north. Hakimullah Mehsud was appointed commander of this region in 2008.

Kurram has a population of about 450,000 inhabitants, mainly Turis who, unlike the majority of Pashtuns, belong to the Shia sect of Islam. Kurram shares its western

⁸² Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two - FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4 (March 2009).

⁸³ Saifullah Khalid, 'پاکستان نواز گروپ شدت پسندوں کیخلاف معاون بن سکتے ہیں,' *Ummat Karachi*, 30 May 2009.

⁸⁴ 'حکومتی کنٹرول ایک تہائی تک محدود,' BBC Urdu, 12 May 2009. The word *lashkar* implies a militia of local tribesmen, in this case armed by the government to confront the militants.

border with Afghanistan's Nangarhar, Khost and Paktika provinces, and its eastern border with Hangu district in KPP. The agency's headquarters are in Parachinar, a city located ninety kilometres from Kabul.

Khyber agency has a population of 550,000 and is divided into Bara, Jamrud and Landi Kotal administrative units. Khyber borders Nangarhar to the west, and to its east lays Peshawar, the provincial capital of KPP. It is home to the famous Khyber Pass, an important trade route between Central and South Asia.

Over a tenth of Orakzai's population of 450,000 is Shia. Orakzai is the second smallest tribal agency, after Bajaur, and the only one not on the border with Afghanistan. From the west it is locked in by Kurram and Khyber agencies, and to the east it shares a border with the Frontier districts of Peshawar, Nowshera, Kohat and Hangu. The sectarian strife in neighbouring Kurram agency is known to have spilled over into Orakzai.

Hakimullah's deputy in Khyber Agency is an Afghan named Rahmanullah.⁸⁵ Formally, the group's leadership was under the command of Afghan governor, Mustafa Kamal Hijrat. With Afghan leaders and cadres of mostly non-local origin, it is surprising that this faction of the TTP is not directly active in Afghanistan. Instead militants of the middle agencies are known to operate on the roads linking Peshawar to Kabul so as to disrupt trucks carrying cargo to US and ISAF soldiers in Afghanistan and to conduct activities in the surrounding settled districts of the NWFP.

The gradual Talibanization of the middle agencies occurred when Hakimullah Mehsud assumed command of the region. Sectarian violence grew significantly, after the militants successfully exploited dormant anti-Shia sentiments prevalent in the area.

Other expressions were also found: the TTP in Orakzai announced the enforcement of *sharia* in lower Orakzai in October 2008.⁸⁶ In December 2008 the Orakzai Taliban announced the observance of what they called a completed code of *sharia* by 'banning women from visiting bazaars' while imposing a complete ban on 'TV and CDs and video centres in the agency.'⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two - FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4 (March 2009).

⁸⁶ 'Orakzai Blast Toll Rises to 82,' *The News*, 12 October 2008.

⁸⁷ 'Taliban Enforce Sharia in Lower Orakzai Agency,' *Daily Times*, 28 December 2008.

Extremist groups in the middle agencies do not exactly fit the TTP 'jihadist' template; rather, their militancy appears more localized in its agenda. Kurram Agency, with a large Shia population, is torn mainly by Shia-Sunni sectarian violence, which has been fuelled by the growing Taliban influence in the region. The Shia population of Kurram is accused by TTP factions of being pro-Northern Alliance and active against the Taliban, and as such suffers the wrath of the TTP.

Lashkar-e-Islami militants have been preoccupied in fighting another warring group in the area called Ansar-ul-Islam, which is also viewed first and foremost as a sectarian clash (Deobandi versus Bareilvi). There is also the *Amr Bil-Marooif wa Nahi 'An al-Munkar* ('Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice') group, run by the lieutenants of the late Haji Namdar Khan. These groups, despite having entered into a tactical alliance with Baitullah Mehsud's TTP, are not known to attack the Pakistani security forces or to send fighters to Afghanistan, nor do they have known links to al-Qaida.⁸⁸ Instead they remain preoccupied with fighting one another and enforcing their strict Islamic code on the local population.

All these groups have included the Khyber agency in their efforts at Talibanization; sectarian violence is rampant, as is the drive to establish a rigid Islamic code in the area. Mangal Bagh is known to wield significant power in the Bara subdivision of the Khyber agency. He has issued edicts warning men to wear Islamic caps to avoid being subjected to monetary fines and having their hair shaved off. The extent of Mangal Bagh's influence could be gauged by the fact that he managed to impose a personalised 'code of conduct' on candidates contesting elections in the region.⁸⁹

The Amr Bil Marooif wa Nahi an al-Munkar organization banned music, threatened music and CD shops, and created private jails to punish 'rebels'.⁹⁰ By joining hands with the Taliban and lending TTP elements support and sanctuary, these groups expect to receive in exchange the protection of the TTP, enabling them to carry on their activities without hindrance from the government. The extent and nature of the relationship between the TTP and Mangal Bagh and other home-grown extremists in the middle agencies deserves further investigation.

⁸⁸ Rahimullah Yousafzai 'The Taliban Primer,' (April 2009), HIMAL, http://www.himalmag.com/The-Taliban-primer_nw2881.html, accessed 3 April 2009.

⁸⁹ Imtiaz Ali, 'Khyber Tribal Agency: a New Hub of Islamist Militancy in Pakistan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 6 no. 11 (29 May 2008).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

4.5 Swat valley and Darra Adamkhel

Upon the formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in December 2007, Maulana Fazlullah, head of the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Sharia-Mohammadi movement in Swat, was appointed the leader of the Tehrik-e-Taliban's Swat chapter, or the TTS.⁹¹ The Taliban in Swat had reportedly divided the North West Frontier Province into 37 sections, assigning a commander to each. Work units were set up to carry out judicial and financial services, and even contract marriages or *shoabai arosat*.⁹²

Under the banner of *sharia ya shahadat*, the TNSM was originally founded in the early 1990s by Sufi Muhammad, Maulana Fazlullah's father-in-law. After Sufi Mohammad's imprisonment in late 2001, Maulana Fazlullah, a former chairlift operator, took over the leadership of the TNSM.

Uprisings by the TNSM are not a new phenomenon in the Swat valley; the mid and late 1990s also witnessed concerted efforts by the group to enforce *sharia*. Sufi Muhammad maintains that *jihad* is only permissible once *sharia* has been established. He has pushed for a local agenda, interested first and foremost in establishing *sharia* law in the area. On the other hand, Maulana Fazlullah, backed by the TTP, came to adopt a more jihadist ideology.

This development started in 2007, in the aftermath of the military operation on Lal Masjid and a strengthening of ties between the TNSM and TTP.⁹³ During the military siege of Red Mosque, Maulana Fazlullah publicly pledged his support for Lal Masjid and managed to rally a large group of armed people at his Imam Dheri *madrassa*, and threatened *jihad* if the military operation on Lal Masjid was not aborted. Many students of the Mosque and its *madrassas* came from Swat.⁹⁴ Following the Red Mosque raid, Fazlullah's fighters conducted attacks against the government and security services.

In an interview, Fazlullah explained that the attacks carried out against the government and military personnel were in reaction to the Army's operation at Lal Masjid:

⁹¹ The Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi also has a branch in Bajaur, affiliated with Faqir Mohammad.

⁹² Syed Irfan Ashraf 'Nothing Sells Like Terror,' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Nothingsellsiketerror.html>, accessed 21 May 2009.

⁹³ Syed Irfan Arshad, Peshwar-based correspondent for *Dawn* newspaper, telephone interviews on 7 and 15 May 2009.

⁹⁴ Qandeel Siddique 'The Red Mosque Operation and its Impact on the Growth of the Pakistani Taliban,' FFI Research Report, No. 2008/01915, Kjeller: Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), October 2008, http://www.mil.no/multimedia/archive/00115/Qadeel_Siddique-Lal_115013a.pdf.

I just told my followers to be prepared for *jihad*. Whatever has started in Swat is not related to my announcement, but it is related to the government operation in Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa. [...] It is the responsibility of every Pakistani to rise up in arms against those who are bombing their own people.⁹⁵

This is echoed by another Swat commander named Hifazullah; when asked in an interview with *As-Sahab*, ‘When did the Swat Taliban emerge?’, Hifazullah responded: ‘One of the initial reactions to Lal Masjid raid took place in Swat, so it was two years ago that we started militancy here; since then we have been involved in *jihad*.’⁹⁶

This suggests that, although TNSM leader Maulana Fazlullah was declared the Taliban commander in Swat during the official formation of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in late 2007, the TNSM had started cooperating with the Taliban prior to that time. This also explains the new force with which Talibanization came to overtake Swat. As part of what it sees as the enforcement of *sharia* law, the Swat group has reversed the area’s traditionally ‘cosmopolitan’ outlook, imposing its own anti-modernity ideology on it.⁹⁷

Through his heavy use of an illegal FM radio station – from where he transmitted his messages and edicts, and reached out to a new and younger audience – Fazlullah managed the Talibanization of the area. For an hour a day he would broadcast his interpretation of the holy Quran, which would sometimes be followed by the distribution of newsletters or pamphlets. These broadcasts were used, for instance, to prohibit barbers from shaving the beards of their client, to urge schoolgirls to wear *burqas* and to force the closure of development organizations, accusing them of spreading immorality by employing female staff.

According to a journalist who visited KPP’s Malakand division in May 2009, several abandoned factories and schools had been converted into ‘prisons’, where, along with lawyers, policemen and FC personnel, female government employees were imprisoned on charges that ‘they were working with men who were not related to them by blood or marriage.’⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Interview conducted by *Dawn* newspaper’s Syed Irfan Ashraf. Transcript sent to author via email.

⁹⁶ Hafizullah, ‘فائدہ عسلی تحریک طالبان سوات استاد فاتح حفظہ اللہ کی السحاب سے گفتگو’, interview with *As-Sahab* (June/July 2009), Ansar Mujahideen, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>, accessed 20 July 2009.

⁹⁷ ‘People take on Taliban,’ *Dawn*, 25 May 2009; Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, ‘Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,’ PBS, 14 April 2009.

⁹⁸ Mohsin Naqvi, ‘Column Kar’, 2 May 2009, Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/02/column-kaar-2-may-2009>, accessed 2 May 2009.

To assert their power further in many areas, Taliban elements in KPP on occasion took control of hospitals and police stations (e.g. in KPP's Matta, Maidan and Kalam regions), hoisted white party flags, and also set up check-posts (in Shakardara, Charbagh) and parallel Islamic courts in occupied areas. The militants, armed with sophisticated weapons, would urge the populace to lodge their problems at the Imam Dheri *madrassa*, where they would be dealt in accordance with *sharia* law. Harsh medieval-style punishments, such as flogging alleged criminals, were also practiced by Fazlullah's Shura. The radicals have routinely bombed girls' schools and blown up video and CD stores.

Maulana Fazlullah announced the formation of a militia called 'Shaheen Force,' functioning both as a criminal and a moral police, to patrol towns like Matta so as to 'control law and order and traffic problems.'⁹⁹ Fazlullah's group has also opposed polio vaccine campaigns, denying immunization to thousands of children in the area. Fazlullah convinced his followers that the US-manufactured polio drops are part of a conspiracy to sterilize Pakistanis and reduce the Muslim population.¹⁰⁰ Fazlullah further declared that those dying of polio are 'martyrs,' for they have refused to take a vaccination that consists of *haram* or 'forbidden' materials.¹⁰¹

The intermittent months of 'peace negotiations' between the Government of Pakistan and the TTP in Swat helped to bolster the latter's infrastructure, facilitating the expansion of the TTP's influence to other districts of the KPP, such as Upper Dir, Swabi, Mardan, Peshawar, Malakand, Hangu, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan.¹⁰² This was partly managed by the carving of communication networks – like building new dirt paths through villages – and laying land mines in old roads so as to impede the movement of ground troops.¹⁰³

All this is a mark of the new ground gained by the Taliban in the NWFP. Baitullah's faction of the TTP in particular has taken credit for the spread of the Taliban across Pakistan, especially in the Swat valley. Intelligence officials have reportedly

⁹⁹ Safdar Sial and Aqeel Yusufzai, 'Swat: A Symptom of a Deeper, Older Malady' Pak Institute for Peace Studies, 16 November 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Ayesha Akram-Nasir, 'Polio-free Pakistan: Only a Dream?' *The Daily Times*, 14 September 2008.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² 'حکومتی کنٹرول ایک تہائی تک محدود', BBC Urdu, 12 May 2009.

¹⁰³ Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Nothing Sells Like Terror,' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Nothingsellsiketerror.html>, accessed 21 May 2009.

confirmed that the TTP's support (including training) helped to embolden the Swat Taliban.¹⁰⁴ Initially, the Swat group was able to coerce the Pakistani government into allowing the establishment of *sharia* law in that district. However, as of summer 2009 this agreement has backfired, resulting in heavy military operations against the militants in Swat and other parts of the Malakand division.

Having forged intimate links with the TTP, the new TNSM was managed by 'Shura Swat', a council that included Swat Taliban leaders like Ibn-e-Ameen, Ibn-e-Aqeel, Muslim Khan and others who coordinated militant operations in the area.¹⁰⁵ The council managed different departments, each dealing with a specific task – e.g. to blow up NATO supply trucks, attack Pakistani troops, and so on.¹⁰⁶

Despite the media focus on Maulana Fazlullah as the chief militant controlling the Swat chapter of the TTP, guerrilla commanders and brothers Ibn-e-Ameen and Ibn-e-Aqeel are also considered important figures in the Swat arena, who act as key functionaries in the militant infrastructure, including media propaganda and bombings.¹⁰⁷ Ibn-e-Ameen was allegedly running a training camp from where militants embarked on suicide missions not only in Swat, but also other areas of the KPP, as well as parts of Punjab.¹⁰⁸ This is supported by a recent interview with another Swat commander, Hafizullah, who boasts of having conducted at least 25 operations inside Swat and 'several outside of Swat', including 'Islamabad, Peshawar, and Mardan....'¹⁰⁹ Indeed, connections between Swati militant commanders and leaders of splinter factions of Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have been reported, pointing to collaboration between Swati and Punjabi militant groups.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Syed Shoaib Hasan, 'Centre-Stage in the 'War on Terror,' BBC, 31 March 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Sohail Qalandar, 'Khul Kay' (15 May 2009) Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009. Muslim Khan was the spokesman for the Tehrik-e-Taliban, in particular the Swat chapter. It is unclear whether Ibn-e-Ameen and Ibn-e-Aqeel are pseudonyms.

¹⁰⁶ Sohail Qalandar, 'Khul Kay' (15 May 2009) Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. The third brother, Mohammad Rasool, is another Taliban commander operating in Swat, although perhaps not of his brothers' seniority. Ibn-e-Aqeel and Mohammad Rasool were reportedly killed during clashes between the Pakistani military and Taliban fighters in Swat. However, these reports remain unconfirmed. 'Three Taliban Commanders Killed Swat: ISPR,' *The News International*, 8 July 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Sohail Qalandar, 'Khul Kay' (15 May 2009) Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Hafizullah, 'قائد عسکری تحریک طالبان سوات استاد فاتح حفظہ اللہ کی السحاب سے گفتگو,' interview with As-Sahab (June/July 2009), Ansar Mujahideen, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>, accessed 20 July 2009.

¹¹⁰ Zaffar Abbas, 'Offensive in Swat – Boon or Bane for Taliban,' *Dawn*, 13 May 2009.

In an *As-Sahab* interview, Hafizullah reiterates that the first and foremost objective of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat's *jihad* is to install *sharia* law: 'Since 1992 we have been fighting for this [*sharia*] ... anything or anybody coming in the way of *sharia* [is our enemy and target].'¹¹¹ This underscores the over-arching importance of *sharia* to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat (TTS), showing how theirs is a struggle that has been active for decades.

An exuberant criminal component has also been added to the stream of militants in Swat according to Pakistani journalists: 'Those who specialize in kidnapping for ransom... have started growing beards, wearing turbans, and started calling themselves the Taliban,' giving the Tehrik a new flavour.¹¹² This dimension of TTP includes a stream of young recruits who 1) are attracted by Kalashnikovs and the lucrative pay of 15-20 thousand rupees that the Taliban dole out, and/or 2) have been adversely affected by the Lal Masjid raid or other 'unjust' military operations.¹¹³

The TTP also have a strong presence in the semi-tribal city of Darra Adamkhel in Kohat in KPP: local militant groups – Tehrik-e-Islami and Islami Taliban – have merged with the Pakistani Taliban. Mufti Ilyas, Khalid Khan and Maulana Tariq are said to be the local custodians of the TTP and to maintain close ties to the sectarian outfits, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-e-Sahaba. The leadership has allegedly moved out of Darra Adamkhel but continues to attacks Pakistani security forces inside the city.¹¹⁴

4.6 Punjab and Sind

Certain areas in Punjab have also come under the threat of the TTP, namely Chakwal, Mianwali, Bhakar, Jhang, Muzaffargharr, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan, where 22% of Punjab's population lives.¹¹⁵ In recent years, a variety of Taliban-style activities have been observed in these districts of Punjab, where militants elements can be seen interacting with their tribal counterparts. Attacks in Punjab, namely in the big capitals of Islamabad and Lahore, which are

¹¹¹ Hafizullah, 'قائد عسلی تحریک طالبان سوات استاد فاتح حفظہ اللہ کی السحاب سے گفتگو' (June/July 2009), Ansar Mujahideen, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>, accessed 20 July 2009.

¹¹² Sohail Qalandar, 'Khul Kay' (15 May 2009) Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two – FATA Excluding North and South Waziristan,' 3 March 2009, *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 4.

¹¹⁵ 'حکومتی کنٹرول ایک تہائی تک محدود', BBC Urdu, 12 May 2009.

believed to have been undertaken by the Punjabi Taliban, have risen in recent years (Appendix A).

TTP-inspired militancy in Punjab and Sind has been growing in recent years. However, the other facet of Talibanization, involving parallel governance by a rebel group or attempts at social conditioning based on strict Islamic codes, has not been as apparent or assertive in these areas.

Nevertheless, there have been a few steps in this direction, namely in Punjab: in August 2008, for instance, owners of CD and cable network stores in Muzaffargarh received threats to shut down their businesses; and in Kot Addu, a group calling itself Tehrik-e-Islami Taliban warned women to wear *burqas* or be subjected to acid attacks.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Kaustav Dhar Chakrabarti, 'Taliban Spreads into Pakistan's Heart,' Rediff.com, 13 February 2009.

5 Child Recruitment, Media Propaganda

According to Maulvi Nazir, the Taliban has a low supply of weaponry; however, he does not mourn this setback, as theirs is a *jihad* based on human sacrifice:

Look at the Battle of Badr! Look at Uhud! How few were the material means! Nothing has been achieved because of means; rather, it was achieved by sacrifice. We are fighting this battle with the power of faith.¹¹⁷

This echoes the *madrassa* teacher interviewed by Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy in Karachi, who claimed there was no shortage of 'sacrificial lambs' that the Taliban could presumably conjure up to fight their *jihad*.¹¹⁸ Martyrdom is romanticized and idolized in the TTP's messages, training and videos. Videos glorifying child martyrs are readily available in Karachi, with young children singing songs in the background, chanting lyrics like: 'If you try to find me after I have died, you will never find my whole body, you will find me in little pieces.'¹¹⁹

Indeed a number of jihadi videos available on the Internet resound to similar songs sung by children.¹²⁰ And online literature belonging to militant groups with ties to the Taliban includes magazines dedicated to children, which include articles eulogizing martyrdom. A case in point is Jaish-e-Mohammad's online edition of *Musalman Bachay* or 'Muslim Children.'¹²¹ In some cases children themselves are selling jihadi CDs, the contents of which includes interviews with young suicide bombers.¹²²

The Taliban commonly prey on young people in *madrassas*, mosques or religious gatherings. A 'Talib' in Swat who had joined the extremists when he was thirteen years

¹¹⁷ Maulvi Nazir interview, *As-Sahab*, March 2009.

¹¹⁸ 'Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,' (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ <http://ghazwah-urdu.sitesled.com/Tranay/tranay.html>.

¹²¹ See the magazine's website: <http://www.musalmanbachay.com>. For an analysis of the content of the magazine, see Qandeel Siddique, 'Child Martyrs', *Jihadica.com*, 11 March 2009, <http://www.jihadica.com/child-martyrs/>.

¹²² Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Will They Grow up to be Militants?' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Willtheygrowuptobemilitants.html>, accessed 21 May 2009.

¹²³ 'Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,' (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

old describes how the Taliban groom young boys: 'they first call us to the mosque and preach to us. Then they take us to a *madrassa* and reach us things from the Quran.' This is followed by months of military training:

They teach us how to use Kalashnikov and machine guns, rocket launchers, grenades, bombs... they tell us to use them only against the infidels. Then they teach us how to do a suicide attack.... there are thousands of us; the Taliban is now strong enough to defeat the army.¹²³

In another report, a young militant arrested in a Taliban training camp in Swat's Matta area revealed how sometimes the militants use force to train a youngster; he was allegedly picked up, against his will, by the Taliban at his seminary and trained to fight against the military.¹²⁴

A branch of Baitullah's Taliban, led by Asmatullah Muawiya, allegedly plays a key role in the exploitation of *madrassa* boys in Swat so as to 'train them for suicide missions [and] supply other anti-Pak militant factions with them.'¹²⁵

Taliban commander Qari Abdullah, who is also known to be responsible for the recruitment of child soldiers, defends training children for suicide missions: 'When you are fighting, then God provides you with the means. Children are tools to achieve God's will. And whatever comes your way, you sacrifice it, so it's fine.'¹²⁶

On 27 July 2009, several 'teenage bombers' were rescued from a Taliban suicide training camp in Swat.¹²⁷ One boy, age thirteen, was allegedly abducted from his school and taken to the Taliban mountain base in Swat. His training included sixteen hours daily of 'physical exercise and psychological indoctrination', with his instructors drumming into his head that 'martyrdom is the biggest reward of Allah.'¹²⁸ Another boy, aged fifteen, studying at a *madrassa*, was apparently also lured to the Taliban's training camp; he claimed: 'I was told that it was a religious

¹²⁴ 'Taliban Forcibly Recruit People Against Military,' *Daily Times Pakistan*, 20 May 2009.

¹²⁵ Saifullah Khalid, 'لاہور رہمکے 2 سے ذاید گروہوں کی کاروای تھی,' *Ummat Karachi*, 29 May 2009.

¹²⁶ 'Pakistan: Children of the Taliban' (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

¹²⁷ 'Teenage Bombers are Rescued from Taliban Suicide Training Camps: Report,' *The Nation Pakistan*, 27 July 2009.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

duty of every Muslim to get training to fight the enemies of Islam.¹²⁹ Another teenager revealed that the Taliban endorsed the killing of one's own family if they should be on the 'wrong side.'¹³⁰ Furthermore, they are taught that the Pakistani army is an enemy of Islam, as it is fighting at the behest of Christians and Jews. Officials believe that up to 1,500 boys were recruited by Swati militants for suicide missions during an interval of peace negotiations that took place between the terrorists and the GoP in early 2009.¹³¹

In January 2009, Qari Hussain, the designated chief of the TTP suicide squad, held a press conference in Peshawar where he distributed a Taliban propaganda tape showing 'men and youths, some apparently in their teens, addressing the camera about their intention to carry out suicide attacks to background music of Urdu-language militant anthems.'¹³² In it a teenage suicide bomber named Masood claims that:

Suicide bombers are the atomic weapons of Muslims because Muslims do not have the latest weapons to fight enemies who are committing atrocities in Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq.¹³³

Propaganda videos celebrating the suicide missions of young TTP members are rife; one such video focuses on fifteen-year-old Arshad Ali from Swat who attacked a polling station in 2008. In the video he sat with an AK-47 cradled in his lap while he prayed with rosary beads. He says: 'Some hypocrites say that we are doing this for money, or because of brainwashing, but we are told by Allah to target these pagans. [...] I invite my fellows to sacrifice themselves.'¹³⁴

In another video, Maulana Fazlullah is heard saying 'A lot of people have given us everything for *jihad* – their homes, their money, their children, too.'¹³⁵ And speaking with journalists in 2008, the Maulana purportedly conveyed how proud he was that 'our boys use their flesh and bones as a weapon for Islam.'¹³⁶

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² 'Taliban Video Claims Pakistan Attacks,' AFP, 18 January 2009.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Nick Meo, 'Taliban Recruits Teenage Suicide Bombers for Revenge Attacks,' *Telegraph*, 30 May 2009.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Children, then, serve as an important pipeline of recruits for the TTP's jihad. This could simply be because children have impressionable minds that are easier to mould, and are also mentally and physically more open to the sense of thrill and adventure that a *jihad* against 'bad guys' offers. Strategically also, child suicide bombers may find it easier to escape detection and reach their targets.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in refugee camps across Pakistan, who have been adversely affected by the ongoing war between the militants and the military, might also provide another pipeline of recruits for the TTP. It is mostly heavy military action that leads to collateral damage and/or forces locals to move, and it can be speculated that this segment of the population, which includes angry and resentful individuals who have long harboured a grudge against the Pakistani state and army, is more vulnerable to indoctrination by militant groups. Over 60% of the total IDPs are children, and, in the few interviews held with them, one boy – who watched his cousin's dead body being eaten by dogs in the aftermath of a missile strike on his *madrassa* – declared that he wanted to be a 'Taliban.'¹³⁷ Not much is known of extremist trends amongst IDP populations, but it is clear that greater attention needs to be paid to this group.

Pirate FM radio stations have proved to be both a cheap and effective way for the Taliban to promulgate their media propaganda. A transmitter, amplifier and car or bike battery are the bare necessities needed for launching an FM channel, equipment that is readily available at a low price in the local markets of FATA and KPP.¹³⁸ Tuning into the radio has also become easier: with the advent of cell phones with built-in radios, locals no longer need to purchase FM radios. According to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, the number of Islamist pirate FM channels in Pakistan is estimated at 300.¹³⁹ The airwaves are generally used to promote a specific political and ideological agenda, incite listeners to *jihad*, and to terrorize and intimidate the local population.

¹³⁷ Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Will they grow up to be Militants?' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Willtheygrowuptobemilitants.html>, accessed 21 May 2009; 'Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,' (April 2009), PBS. http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

¹³⁸ Mukhtar A. Khan, 'The FM Mullah's and the Taliban's Propaganda War in Pakistan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 14 (26 May 2009).

¹³⁹ Mukhtar A. Khan, 'FM Mullahs Spread the Taliban's Word,' *Asia Times Online*, 4 June 2009.

The first extremist FM radio station propagating sectarian views can be traced to Khyber Agency in December 2003.¹⁴⁰ This was followed by a proliferation of private FM radio stations: notably Mangal Bagh (head of Lashkar-e-Islami) managed, through his radio sermons and broadcasts, to recruit fighters, issue religious decrees, and attack and challenge his opponents and the government.

In the North West Frontier Province, running an FM station appears to have become an emblem of one's terrorist fiefdom. Maulana Fazlullah is infamous for promoting his organisation using numerous illegal radio stations, which has helped him spread his propaganda and even rally much support for his radical missions, as well as earn him the title of Maulana FM or Reedo Mullah.¹⁴¹ Maulana Fazlullah has been most effective at politicizing his radio broadcasts; in late 2005 he launched his FM service and within a short span of time became a household name in the region.

Several locals tried to resist this by offsetting Fazlullah's influence with their own FM stations, but were quickly made to fall silent, presumably by Fazlullah's men.¹⁴² After a brief hiatus, Fazlullah reportedly returned to the airwaves in mid-July 2009, though it was uncertain whether his message was live or pre-recorded.¹⁴³

The Taliban commander in Darra Adam Khel, Tariq Afridi, joined the wave of FM stations by launching a private channel and airing speeches daily from 9-11 pm, and threatening the tribesmen against giving any assistance to the GoP or becoming involved in the formation of local militia.¹⁴⁴ In the Upper Dir region of the NWFP too, extremists have established a firm radio presence.¹⁴⁵

TTP spokesman, Maulvi Omar, designated a 'media-friendly spokesman' by the BBC Urdu has been in constant contact with the media. According to journalist Riffatullah Orakzai, 'He [Maulvi Omar] would often call to claim responsibility for a suicide

¹⁴⁰ Mukhtar A. Khan, 'The FM Mullah's and the Taliban's Propaganda War in Pakistan,' *Terrorism Monitor*, 7, no. 14 (26 May 2009).

¹⁴¹ 'سوات کی نظریات پر ایم ایف : سوات' BBC News Urdu, 31 October 2007.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ 'Fazlullah Back on Swat Airwaves,' *Daily Times Pakistan*, 19 July 2009. Following a broken peace accord between the Swati militants and the Pakistan Army, the latter launched a military campaign in the region starting in April 2009. During this time Maulana Fazlullah made few appearances on his radio channel, leading to rumors that he might be dead.

¹⁴⁴ 'Kohat: Mobile FM Channels to be Jammed,' *Dawn*, 25 April 2009.

¹⁴⁵ Ghulam Ghaus, 'Expansion of Talibanization in the North West Pakistan is a Threat' Ground Report, 18 February 2009.

bombing or attack on security forces; and sometimes he would ring to inquire after our health and safety.’¹⁴⁶

The TTP uses brutal punishments, kidnappings, and psychological warfare to further spread terror and reclaim its hold on power. By decapitating or kidnapping Pakistani army soldiers, TTP has managed to demoralize them and make the Army appear weak. Performing terrorist activities in big cities, like Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad, gives them the opportunity to embarrass the government.

Beheadings is a popular terror mechanism by which the TTP aims to exert its influence and pressurize the government into acquiescence. In September 2008, a Polish geologist, Poitr Stancza was kidnapped by Taliban militants. On 8 February 2009, a video was released showing the beheading of Poitr Stancza, while militants threatened that other foreigners in the custody of the TTP would suffer similar fate if the Government of Pakistan did not accept their demands. Before his beheading, Stancza was made to appeal to the Polish government to not send troops to Afghanistan.

Beheadings are a relatively new phenomenon in the Swat valley; in some cases, the decapitated bodies are accompanied by a letter warning locals to ‘not touch’ the body, and in some incidences dead bodies remained hanging from trees for days, effectively fulfilling the terrorist’s aim to instil maximum terror amongst the local population.¹⁴⁷ A young girl reported seeing a dead body of a policeman tied to a pole in her village in Swat; his head had been severed and ‘was hanging between his legs,’ and there was a letter reading ‘if anyone removed the dead body they would share its fate.’¹⁴⁸

Symbolic of the TTP’s reign of terror in the region is a public place in Swat formally called ‘Green Chowk.’ It has now assumed the title of ‘Lal (Red) Chowk,’ as a tribute to the horrific acts of decapitation and hanging that were carried on the spot. In a televised interview TTP spokesperson Muslim Khan justified the practice of beheadings in the Malakand division: ‘whoever we behead deserve to be beheaded (as per *sharia*).’¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Riffatullah Orakzai, ‘میڈیا فرینڈلی ترجمان,’ BBC Urdu, 18 August 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Sohail Qalandar, ‘Khul Kay,’ (May 2009), Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,’ (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Muslim Khan interview 24 April 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP0eUmXF7bU>

Womenfolk have been especially targeted in Swat. Frequent bombing of girls' schools, public floggings and forcing women accused of prostitution to dance before killing them have become the norm. Girls have also been threatened with acid attacks if they did not cover themselves with a *burqa* (veil).¹⁵⁰

In some cases, male journalists have been welcomed into the heartland of the tribal regions for militants to show off their strength. Hakimullah Mehsud, for instance, invited journalists to a press conference in Orakzai Agency (arriving in an American Humvee that his militants had just retrieved as booty after attacking a NATO convoy) to declare:

If America continues to bomb and martyr innocent people, then we are compelled to attack them.... If the Pakistani leaders and army maintain their stance, then we will take over other cities like Peshawar and Hangu...and every nook and cranny, or try to, InshAllah.¹⁵¹

In other cases, journalists and the Taliban cooperate in bolstering the latter's image, or are coerced into toeing the Taliban line.¹⁵² In a war zone, reporting is dangerous occupation; several journalists have been killed in Pakistan's tribal belt. It would therefore not be surprising if arrangements between some journalists and the militants have been manufactured that work in favour of the Taliban.

Taliban propaganda DVDs and CDs have become quite common in both FATA and NWFP; these videos are now also exchanged over cellular phones and Internet sites.¹⁵³ Such videos generally show footage of the attack and possibly the final message(s) of the suicide bombers. Sermons from firebrand leaders, jihadi songs about revenge or the chanting of Koranic verses are played as a soundtrack over the footage. They might also beheadings of 'infidels', be it policemen or alleged spies. More commonly, arch-enemies (for example, US and Pakistani leaders) are depicted, and often scenes are borrowed from ongoing Muslim insurgencies elsewhere in the world.

¹⁵⁰ Mark Magnier 'Confusion over Taliban Muddies the Issues in Pakistan,' *Los Angeles Times*, 10 May 2009; 'Pakistan: Origins of the Violence in Swat Valley,' IRIN, 26 February 2009.

¹⁵¹ Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'Hakimullah Unveils Himself to Media,' *The News International*, 30 November 2008.

¹⁵² Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Taliban Ties with the Media,' *Dawn*, 15 February 2009.

¹⁵³ Nick Meo, 'Taliban Recruits Teenage Suicide Bombers for Revenge Attacks,' *Telegraph*, 30 May 2009.

6 Financial Sources

The nature of the TTP's financial sources remains a contentious issue, as fingers are routinely pointed at foreign intelligence services. Pakistani officials, such as the Interior Ministry Advisor Rehman Malik, have alleged that 'enemies of Pakistan' provide financial aid to the Pakistani Taliban.¹⁵⁴

It seems clear, however, that the Pakistani Taliban collects revenue from the local population in terms of taxes, penalties and extortion. Other sources include Islamic institutes who collect '*chanda*' (donations) from Taliban sympathizers both within and outside Pakistan. Expatriates living in the Arab world, especially the UAE, use the *hundi/hawala* system to send money contributing to the cause of the TTP, and apparently thousands of *dhirams* are collected annually in this way.¹⁵⁵ Criminal activities such as kidnappings for ransom and bank robberies swell TTP coffers, as does the looting of army vehicles and ammunition. The group allegedly has ties with drug and smuggling cartels in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁶ The exploitation of natural resources in FATA and KPP has also provided the Taliban with a wellspring of cash.

Money allegedly also comes from foreign terrorist groups, such as al-Qaida.¹⁵⁷ Al-Qaida allegedly used front organizations to channel funds to affiliate groups in Pakistan: recently in September 2009, Pakistan's Criminal Investigation Department found that \$15 million were provided to the Tehrik-e-Taliban by a Saudi-based charity, al-Haramain Foundation, which has been linked to al-Qaida by the US authorities.¹⁵⁸

Yet another source of the Taliban's income is the large Pashtun community in Karachi, where they have a monopoly of the transport business and pay the Pakistani Taliban to provide security for their business operations.¹⁵⁹ An 'intelligence network' has purportedly also been set up in the port in Karachi, from where trucks carrying

¹⁵⁴ 'Return to Your Areas, Malik Asks People of Secured Areas,' *Dawn*, 18 May 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Arabinda Acharya et al., 'Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

¹⁵⁶ 'Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge' (March 2009), International Crisis Group, http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/164_pakistan___the_militant_jihadi_challenge.pdf, accessed 15 March 2009.

¹⁵⁷ Arabinda Acharya et al., 'Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

¹⁵⁸ 'Saudi Charity Funds al-Qaeda linked Pak Terror Groups,' *The News*, 14 September 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Arabinda Acharya et al., 'Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

NATO supplies to Afghanistan set off, and the information obtained is given to TTP militants who ambush or attack these vehicles and what they contain.¹⁶⁰ The mayor of Karachi recently dubbed Karachi ‘Taliban’s revenue engine.’¹⁶¹

In July 2009, the Arab news network, Al-Jazeera, obtained documents from the Pakistani police which exposed criminal activity – including kidnap for ransom, bank robberies, street crimes and the sheltering of Taliban members – carried out in Karachi, along with a money trail leading from Karachi to Waziristan.¹⁶² The Jundullah group in Karachi is especially notorious for being contracted by the Taliban to rob, kidnap, and so on. It should be remembered, however, that Karachi has a large Pashtun populace, not all of whom are using the Karachi banking system to fund the Taliban across Pakistan: honest Pashtuns could also be sending money as remittances to their families.

Another revenue source for the TTP is the heroine trade, with the drug being exported to foreign countries via Karachi. On 24 August 2009, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and TTP terrorists arrested in Karachi confessed to exporting heroine to countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, China, the United Arab Emirates, Europe and the US.¹⁶³ They further disclosed that money from the sale of heroine was being channelled to Taliban commanders in Balochistan and to the family members of arrested militants.¹⁶⁴ Among those detained were the heads of Jundullah.

Within the Waziristans, the main body collecting the revenue is the TTP. The leadership of Baitullah decides where and how the money will be distributed. The Pakistani Taliban in the Waziristans has reportedly divided each tribal area into administrative zones; revenue collected across the tribal agencies is submitted to a central authority that then distributes money to the various administrated zones on a monthly basis, with Baitullah’s group receiving the lion share.¹⁶⁵

In North Waziristan, the Taliban have levied ‘taxes’ on transport and trucking – for example, ten-wheel trucks entering Waziristan are required to pay 1,500 rupees for

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ ‘Karachi Taliban’s Revenue Engine: Mustafa Kamal,’ *Daily Times*, 3 December 2009.

¹⁶² Imran Khan, ‘Taliban ‘using Karachi funds,’ Al-Jazeera English, 1 July 2009.

¹⁶³ Salis bin Perwaiz, ‘Six Suicide Bombers Held in Karachi,’ *The News*, 24 August 2009.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Arabinda Acharya et al., ‘Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan,’ *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32, no. 2 (February 2009), 95-108.

'safe' road access for six months.¹⁶⁶ The TTP also charges smugglers for the 'safe passage' of contraband shipments from Afghanistan to FATA/NWFP and to Balochistan. Protection money is also extorted from non-Muslim minorities as *jiziya*. For example, in April 2009, the Sikh community in FATA agreed to pay Rs. 20 million to the militants as *jiziya* after being coerced by the Taliban, who confiscated their houses and kept a Sikh leader hostage.¹⁶⁷ Economic penalties have also been prescribed for offences, especially those in violation of *sharia* law. Fund-raising campaigns also bring in extra rupees for the TTP; this includes donations from Waziristani families living in other provinces outside FATA.

'Commando squads' hired to kidnap for ransom are also thought to be used to bring in cash to the militants. Kidnappings of NGO workers, locals belonging to NWFP's business community, security personnel and government officials have witnessed a steep rise. In June 2007, an NGO worker, a government employee and a bank manager were kidnapped in the Bannu district of the NWFP for a ransom of Rs. 1.2 million, which was paid.¹⁶⁸ Businessmen and the wealthy have been a popular target. For example, a captured Swat militant reportedly confessed: 'We kidnapped Najeebullah Afghani, the owner of a company transporting cement from Hayatabad to Afghanistan, for ransom and received Rs 10 million for his release.'¹⁶⁹

Soldiers and government employees have also been routinely targeted for kidnappings for ransom. In August 2007, for the release of 280 kidnapped soldiers, the terrorists were paid Rs. 60 million. On 11 February 2008, Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin, was kidnapped and subsequently released for a ransom of \$2.5 million paid to Baitullah Mehsud.¹⁷⁰ Likewise, recently militants demanded 25 million rupees exchange for releasing the Afghan ambassador-designate to Pakistan, Abdul Khaliq.¹⁷¹

Revenue is also collected from external actors: groups like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Harakat-ul-Mujahideen give money in the forms of gifts or *sadaqa* to the TTP in

¹⁶⁶ 'Taliban Slaps Taxes in Miranshah,' *Dawn*, 23 October 2006.

¹⁶⁷ 'Sikh Community Concedes to Taliban Demand in FATA, Pay Rs. 20 Million as Jiziya,' *The Indian News*, 16 April 2009.

¹⁶⁸ Inayatullah Khan, 'FR Bannu Kidnapees Released After Paying Heavy Ransom,' *Statesman*, 18 July 2007.

¹⁶⁹ Shakeel Anjum, 'WFP, Rescue 15 Attacks' Mastermind Arrested,' *The News*, 21 November 2009.

¹⁷⁰ Ismail Khan, 'Azizuddin is Home After 97 Days,' *Dawn*, 28 March 2008.

¹⁷¹ 'Taliban Demand Rs 25m to Release Afghan Diplomat,' *The Nation*, 19 May 2009.

exchange for sanctuary and training. The Afghan Taliban also reportedly financed the Pak-Taliban; e.g. some \$70,000 was allegedly given by Mullah Omar to Baitullah in March 2006 to attack diplomats of countries involved in the publication of the Mohammad cartoons.¹⁷² The exact role of the Afghan Taliban in providing financial aid to its Pakistani counterpart remains ambiguous. Advisor to the Interior Ministry of Pakistan, Rehman Malik, has made contradictory claims with regard to the financial support given to the TTP by the Afghan Taliban. In September 2008, Malik stated that: 'suicide bomber, their handlers and financiers are Pakistan-based.'¹⁷³ In other statements, he has claimed militants in FATA to be 'foreign-funded.'¹⁷⁴

In April 2008, TTP militants took over a marble quarry in Mohmand (FATA), expanding the organization's economic lifeline.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, on 25 March 2009 it was reported that the Swat chapter of the TTP had taken over the emerald mines in the area and begun excavation.¹⁷⁶ Previously, Shamozaï and Gujjar Killi mines had been occupied and excavation and trading processes initiated. Spokesman for the Taliban in Swat, Muslim Khan, justified the mining: 'All these minerals have been created by Allah for the benefit of his creatures.'¹⁷⁷ Given the high value of these gems and the profits they yield, this is likely to have given a financial boost to the group. The TTP allegedly also took a large slice of commissions of the coal mines of Orakzai agency from the interested parties.¹⁷⁸

In addition to taking control of mines, Taliban militants are reported to have been involved in the looting of archaeological sites in Swat. They have also joined Swat's timber mafia to fill their pockets further.

However, some sources have downplayed the economic importance of the mines to the Taliban: in this view the mines were never excavated on a large scale and did not serve as a significant financial resource for the TTP. Instead, kidnapping

¹⁷² Mohammad Shahzad, 'Why is Pakistan Army Scared of this Man,' Rediff News, 10 March 2006.

¹⁷³ Tariq Butt, 'Suicide Bombers, Handlers & Financers are all Pakistanis: Malik,' *The News*, 9 September 2008.

¹⁷⁴ 'منواں حملہ۔ گرفتار دہشت گرد بیت اللہ محسود کا ساتھی ہے,' *Geo Urdu*, 30 March 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Animesh Roul, 'Resourceful Taliban Milk the Land,' *Asia Times Online*, 6 May 2009.

¹⁷⁶ Riffat ullah Aurakzai, 'سوات: زمرہ کی کانوں پر طالبان کا قبضہ,' BBC Urdu, 25 March 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Ashfaq Yusufzai, 'Taliban Jihad against West Funded by Emeralds from Pakistan,' *The Telegraph*, 4 April 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Khadim Hussain, 'Orakzai Agency: the Stronghold of Hakeemullah Mehsud,' Aryana Institute of Regional Research and Advocacy, 5 September 2009.

for ransom – such as that of key politicians or rich individuals from the Malakand division – remains the key source of income.¹⁷⁹ According to a man kidnapped by the Tehrik, the TTP militants refer to ransom as a ‘kind of *jihad*.’¹⁸⁰

When asked: ‘Where does the Tehrik-e-Taliban Swat receive its ammunition from in order to hold such a protracted battle with the Pakistani military,’ Hafizullah, military commander of the Taliban in Swat, responded:

The locals are supporting us. Everyone knows that when Maulana Fazlullah asks for *chanda* through his FM channels, then within minutes Rs. 1-2 crore (10-20 million) are raised. The locals are cooperating. And we are also looting from these infidels [army] their vehicles and other equipment, including night-vision goggles, launchers, RPG-7, M-15, and so on [...] Whatever the Americans give them, we steal from them. In Swat it is a daily practice to attack the army and retrieve such ‘boons’.¹⁸¹

It is questionable whether these are the only sources of the Taliban’s stockpile, as Hafizullah suggests. Militants take what they can get as rebel acquisitions after attacking military personnel and their installations; however, whether that is enough to confront one of the largest armies in the world remains a moot point, as is the issue of whether the Swat extremists receive support from the local population. If the Taliban indeed manage to procure such a large amount from the locals, it is likely that they agreed out of fear rather than empathy for the extremists.

¹⁷⁹ Sohail Qalandar, ‘Khul Kay’ (May 2009), Pakistan Politics, <http://pkpolitics.com/2009/05/15/khul-kay-15-may-2009/>, accessed 18 May 2009.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Taliban Launch Fund-Raising Campaign,’ *Dawn*, 19 October 2009.

¹⁸¹ Hafizullah, ‘قائد عسکری تحریک طالبان سوات استاد فاتح حفظہ اللہ کی السحاب سے گفتگو’ (June/July 2009), Ansar Mujahideen, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>, accessed 20 July 2009.

7 Reasons for TTP Support in FATA and Swat

Recently, there has been a growing awareness in the upper echelons of the Pakistani establishment of the need to bridge the vast gap in Pakistan between rich and poor through land reforms. A bill has been moved to redistribute Pakistan's farmland; however, there is already widespread scepticism surrounding its implementation since structures of political power in Pakistan are dependent on feudal support. Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition that, 'by delaying (land reform), you are providing terrorists with fuel to inflame terrorism on the basis of class division.'¹⁸²

According to journalists based in Peshawar, the majority of the local population of FATA and KPP – specifically, in areas that have been penetrated by the Taliban – do not subscribe to the Taliban's ideology: instead their 'relative broad-mindedness has been hijacked' by the radicals.¹⁸³ Taliban militants invade and govern these territories with their reign of terror and by the power of their guns, creating a despotic environment in which only the Taliban can flourish. Using such thuggish 'powers of persuasion' and fear, the Taliban manage to recruit from the local tribesmen and thus strengthen their rank and file. A small number might also join in the militancy for lack of better economic opportunities or a trigger-happy sense of adventure. Others might be compelled by a need to avenge the deaths of their relatives or tribespeople at the hands of the Pakistani military.

Not consumed by vengeful thoughts, nor prone to militancy for any other reason, locals might still silently sympathize with the Taliban because they resent the actions of the Pakistan army that have resulted in the deaths of many Pakistani civilians. An increased number of foreign troops in Afghanistan, compounded by US drone attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan, have fuelled anti-American sentiments – and, in a nation where a large portion of the population believes that its government and army are fighting 'America's war' on Pakistani soil, these sentiments are ultimately directed against the Pakistani state and security forces.

A brief look at the tribal structure and social-economic conditions of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas from which the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan sprang can

¹⁸² 'Pakistan Feudalism Boosts Taliban Cause,' *Daily Times*, 26 October 2010.

¹⁸³ Syed Irfan Arshad, Peshwar-based correspondent for *Dawn* newspaper, telephone interviews by the author on 7 and 15 May 2009.

help unearth some of the causes that led to the birth and growth of the Taliban insurgency in Pakistan.

Since its inception, FATA has existed in relative autonomy. Pakistan's Political Parties Act does not apply to FATA; it could be argued that the vacuum left by the lack of a political voice has been open to an over-reliance on tradition and religion. The diminishing power of the political rulers of tribal society – namely, the Political Agents (PAs), *maliks* and tribal elders – in the face of rising opposition from violent extremists has further accentuated that vacuum. At least 600 *maliks* have hitherto been killed by militants, leaving the locals susceptible to the radical ideology of the usurpers of the tribal hierarchy.

Although every tribe is distinct in its own right, the general tribal psyche is resistant to outside influence and interference in favour of the overarching importance given to tribal codes and customs. The army presence in the Pashtun areas is thus perceived as an affront to private space and honor. Pashtunwali also hails the concepts of hospitality and asylum, which can include the harboring of foreign militants as guests:

In our customs and traditions, we can die but never even think of handing over our guests to their enemy. Tribal people fought against their own security forces for almost three years in North Waziristan but did not compromise their traditions.¹⁸⁴

However, the inculcation of aspects of *sharia* or Islamic law into the tribal society of Pakistan's North West borderlands is a relatively recent development that saw its peak during the 1980s, when the dual threats of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and Ayatollah Khomeini's popularity in Iran were rampant amongst Sunni Muslims. To counter these threats, money was pumped into Pakistan's religious sector, ultimately giving more power to the clergy, who had hitherto played a backseat role in Pakistani society.

In tribal society, where respecting traditional structures and the elders are pivotal, it is a great dishonour to go against the grain. However, the existing political administration was viewed as corrupt, promoting its own interests rather than those of the tribe. The negligence of the GoP in providing for the social and economic

¹⁸⁴ Mushtaq Yusufzai, 'Tribal Elders Call for Raising FATA Force,' *The News*, 14 September 2006.

development of the tribal areas, coupled with the perceived elitism of the tribal rulers, is likely to have caused deep-seated resentment and frustration in the tribesmen towards the government. Unemployment is also rife: fifteen percent of FATA's population consists of young, unemployed boys, a large proportion of whom are preyed on by radical ideologues and recruiters, who offer a monthly salary of up to Rs 15,000.

The post-9/11 era saw the alliance of the then President Pervez Musharraf with US President George Bush and the War on Terror, leading to army operations in the tribal belt, as well as the banning of numerous Pakistan-based extremist groups, including those previously focused on Kashmir and India. Amongst the extremist segments, these moves were widely seen as an act of betrayal, especially in light of the long-standing patronage given to these militant groups, as well as the Taliban regime in neighbouring Afghanistan, by the GoP and Pakistani army.

The presence of, and military operations by, the Pakistani army in FATA, then, were seen as rubbing salt in existing wounds. That is, the government had not only ignored the needs of the tribal people, it was now engaged in disrupting their society and infrastructure and, on occasion, causing considerable levels of collateral damage. This inevitably angered the local population and helped shift their sympathy towards the local Taliban, the only movement to put up a strong front against the hegemony of the tribal leaders – who were seen as puppets of the Pakistani government – which, in turn, was seen as the puppet of the US.

So, two key factors, working in tandem, might explain the rise and spread of the Pakistani Taliban: a) frustration caused by the existing tribal and federal system, which bred corruption and ignored the basic needs of the tribal people; and b) anger caused by the ongoing military operations and drone operations, which have killed civilians, damaged property (including religious sites), displaced large volumes of people and created chaos.

In both cases, the underlying cause is the feeling that 'injustice' has been committed against the tribal people at the hands of the rulers. That is, inherent social and structural imbalances have left gaping wounds, the deepest being that of 'injustice.' It could be argued that it is this particular sentiment among the local population that leads them to sympathize with the TTP, as well as radicalizing them and creating new militants.

Locals interviewed in South Waziristan have credited Baitullah Mehsud with the restoration of ‘law and order’ in the area, and went on to explain that:

Baitullah Mehsud is gaining the advantage of indiscriminate bombing and killing of common tribesmen [at the hands of army operations]. Sympathies are increasing for him with every passing day. [...] Those who are not supporters of Osama bin Laden or Baitullah, even they have been forced by the indiscriminate military operations to harbour sympathies.¹⁸⁵

This suggests that, from the perspective of tribesmen, the extent of ‘injustice’ committed by the GoP overshadows any ideological discrepancy they may have with TTP.

Militant leaders like Maulvi Nazir, commander of South Waziristan’s Wazir tribe, have elaborated on the ‘injustice’ of the military operations: in a March 2009 interview with *As-Sahab*, Nazir incriminated the Pakistani regime for being ‘unjust and cruel; having martyred so many of our tribesmen ... and sent blameless persons to Cuba in return for dollars,’ and he went on to stigmatize the Pakistani army by accusing it of attacking mosques, symbols of Islam:

We are Mujahideen and we never carry out martyrdom operations in the vicinity of Muslims. It is the Army upon which we execute such operations. It is the ISI that executes operations on mosques.¹⁸⁶

Attacking mosques – like the infamous raid on the Lal Masjid in Islamabad in July 2007 – plays on the latent religiosity of most Pakistanis. It can be viewed as an assault on Islam – a blasphemous crime. It is therefore not surprising to observe that TTP leaders often accuse the GoP of desecrating mosques or indulging in other ‘un-Islamic’ acts.

Nazir stresses that, without the support of the local population, the TTP would not be able to exist:

They are eager to have us with them for meals and feel honoured to serve the Mujahideen and believe this to bring great reward to them. Even if they cannot

¹⁸⁵ Aamir Latif, ‘Pakistan’s Most Wanted,’ *Islam Online*, 29 January 2008.

¹⁸⁶ Maulvi Nazir interview, *As-Sahab*, March 2009.

participate in *jihad* practically, they want at least to serve the Mujahideen. So all our tribes are behind our back and are with us.¹⁸⁷

A program by Pakistani journalist Talat Hussain further lends credence to the theory that support for Tehrik-e-Taliban may be rooted in socio-economic frustration. Hussain aired a show that drew on empirical surveys conducted in FATA in order to understand why locals might support the Taliban. To the question, ‘What is the most important facility that the government can provide you?’, 73% of the 2,000 people interviewed replied *insaaf* or justice, followed by education, hospitals, electricity, and water and sanitation.¹⁸⁸ Syed Irfan has echoed this by stating that the fold of jihadis encompassing the Taliban in Pakistan are a veritable cocktail of actors, and ‘perhaps the one thing they have in common is that they all feel like the victims of state injustice.’¹⁸⁹

A majority of the twenty-three *maliks* interviewed by Shuja Nawaz in North Waziristan agreed with the importance of creating employment opportunities for young people on the borders of FATA, as well as the need for irrigation, education and basic health care.

What emerges is a struggle between *kashar* – tribesmen from poorer backgrounds and belonging to minor lineages – and *masbar* or the ‘elite,’ including *maliks*, elders, political agents and businessmen. Especially in the post-9/11 era, the *kashar* are seen to be evolving into what author Shuja Nawaz has called ‘tribal entrepreneurs’ – that is, exploiting the changing political environment to their advantage and using it to thwart the governing tribal structure. Baitullah Mehsud serves as an example of one such *kashar*. The phenomenon explains the changing social dynamics in the tribal belt, which has resulted in a new breed of TTP actors who are not tribal leaders, but base their legitimacy on their ability to fight and garner local and financial support.

A trend similar to that observed in the FATA has apparently unfolded in Swat, where the Pakistani Taliban has won immense military and political power in recent years. The Swat Taliban has, to an extent, effectively won the support of the local population by filling in the vacuum left by government negligence and/or corruption and creating a demonized image of the Pakistani state.

¹⁸⁷ Maulvi Nazir interview, *As-Sahab*, March 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Live with Talat, Aaj TV, 21 April 2009. It is interesting to note that ‘fighting extremism’ scored low on the list.

¹⁸⁹ Syed Irfan, telephone interview, February 2008.

The Swati rebels claim that local opinion is in their favour:

We are children of these people and they are our own. We live like brothers. We have a healthy relationship with them where they give us food and shelter, and we cooperate on matters. [...] We are always in touch with the locals and share with them their burdens/grievances.¹⁹⁰

It is possible that, by feeding off the social and economic frustrations of the local population in the north-western belt, the Pakistani Taliban militants have managed to garner public support. For example, by taking over emerald mines in Swat, the TTP offered the poor locals an income. Similarly, after seizing the Shamozaï and Gujjar Killi mines, the Taliban employed a large number of local labourers. Speaking with a BBC Urdu journalist, a senior Taliban commander and caretaker of the mines said:

Every year the government would deceivngly claim that the mine business was suffering a loss and therefore nothing could be offered to the locals; whereas, in reality, all the profit was going in the pockets of officers and 'bigwigs' [...] Two months ago when we took control of this area... and we opened the doors for the local workers... and 1/3 of the proceeds go to the Taliban while 2/3 is distributed to the workers.¹⁹¹

It would seem that the TTP exploits the resentment of the locals against the Pakistani government, and strengthens its own image and standing in the region by creating job opportunities for the unemployed or impoverished. By denouncing the 'elitist' ways of the Pakistani government and army and giving a 'piece of the pie' to the common man, it is feeding on class divisions and advocating a system based on equality that is likely to appeal to the Pakistani masses, most of whom live below the poverty line.

Furthermore, the militants in Swat have set up a parallel 'civil bureaucracy', installing work units in 'abandoned posh houses' from where they 'dispense justice, carry out finance services and contract marriages.'¹⁹² Again, by taking over 'posh houses' to perform judicial, financial and social services, the Taliban is reasserting itself as an egalitarian institution benefitting all social strata of society.

¹⁹⁰ Hafizullah interview, *As-Sahab*, June/July 2009, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>.

¹⁹¹ Riffat ullah Aurakzai, 'سوات: زمرد کی کانوں پر طالبان کا قبضہ', BBC Urdu, 25 March 2009.

¹⁹² Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Nothing Sells Like Terror,' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research and Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Nothingsellsiketerror.html>, accessed 21 May 2009.

This is confirmed by other reports that state that driving away landlords from the Swat area was pivotal to the Taliban's success in the valley.¹⁹³ This was achieved by feeding off the long-festering frustrations of the local people and converting them into reserve *lashkars*, or armed militias, for the Taliban. And thus, led by Swat-based Taliban commander Ibn-e-Amin, the Taliban set out to chase away 43 of the 'most wanted' landlords and politicians in Swat.

Swat commander Hafizullah conveyed the following sentiments, reflecting how the Taliban would make a better ruler than the Government of Pakistan:

We have built roads [for the Swati people] where in over 60 years the government could not. The locals are happy with us. They no longer need to pay tax to the government. We have built pipelines and provided water to people. [...] Also we resolved decade-long rivalries that had been going on and which the government failed to bring about peace. The Taliban have appointed *ulema* to solve these cases and bring peace.

Wherever they [the army] have gone, they have committed atrocities, killing children and the elderly, who have nothing to do with the Taliban. And they have looted their homes, stealing anything that is remotely valuable.¹⁹⁴

Again, the Taliban assumes the role of a surrogate government by providing its citizen's basic amenities – roads and water, as well as justice, which the local population feels deprived of, believing that the Pakistani government has time and again ignored the developmental needs of this region.

On top of this, the commander conjures up a horrific picture of the Pakistani army; he pins the blame for collateral damage during warfare on the military, who not only take innocent lives, but also steal from peoples' homes. These are the words and imagery the Taliban deliver in places they conquer, thus feeding on the vulnerabilities of local populations who have lost their relatives or friends in the ongoing conflict or been displaced or disoriented by it. Indeed there have been cases where the tribesmen have insisted that their Islamabad-based Member of the National Assembly request

¹⁹³ Jane Perlez and Pir Zubair Shah, 'Taliban Exploit Class Rifts in Pakistan,' *New York Times*, 16 April 2009.

¹⁹⁴ Hafizullah interview, As-Sahab, June/July 2009, <http://ansar.fliggo.com/video/rhGEPi2A>

the military to target only Taliban bunkers and not bomb surrounding villages, but their calls went unheeded.¹⁹⁵

In the aforementioned program by Talat Hussain, a villager from Swat complained:

We filed years ago [but] are still awaiting decision by the courts. We are tired of this judiciary system where justice is doled out only to the rich. Allah has answered our prayers – the Taliban are here now to establish *sharia* and give us justice.¹⁹⁶

Frustrations like these are open wounds on which the Taliban parasites can feast, and indeed they bring more grist to their militancy mill. Maulana Fazlullah's spokesman Sirajuddin claimed, for instance, that the Taliban were not responsible for the killing of the soldiers; instead: 'the locals are seeking revenge as the army's gunship helicopters had killed a large number of innocents.'¹⁹⁷

Some observers maintain that the locals' support of the extremists is exaggerated. One journalist believes that not more than 10-15% of the locals in the Pashtun belt could be said to hold 'pro-Taliban' views, while '80% are anti-Taliban.'¹⁹⁸ As far as the KPP is concerned, it should be remembered that it has a democratically elected provincial government, where the locals have voted into power a secular political party, the Awami National Party (ANP).

In FATA and the KPP, there have been numerous cases where tribesmen instigated 'civil society movements' or formed *lashkars* (local militias) to stand up to the Taliban. Recently, in May 2009, it was reported that residents organized a local defence force and apparently fought off Taliban elements who were attempting to re-enter the area.¹⁹⁹ In the Dir region of the NWFP, hundreds of armed locals attacked villages that were allegedly harbouring Afghan militants affiliated to the Taliban.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Tribesmen on their own,' *Dawn*, 17 June 2009.

¹⁹⁶ Live with Talat,' Aaj TV, 21 April 2009.

¹⁹⁷ Hamid Mir, 'Taliban has the Responsibility to Arrest Musharraf,' Rediff News, 6 November 2007.

¹⁹⁸ Syed Irfan Arshad, *Dawn*, telephone interviews on 7 and 15 May 2009.

¹⁹⁹ 'People take on Taliban,' *Dawn*, 25 May 2009.

²⁰⁰ Delawar Jan, 'Jaag Utha Pakistan, Cry Villagers,' *The News*, 7 June 2009.

Lacking an armoury to match that of the terrorists' and without any backing from the government, these *lashkars* have been unable to sustain themselves. Still, local anti-Taliban resistance has been reported across FATA and KPP; for example, elders of the Ali Khel tribe in Orakzai agency have attempted to thwart the spreading control of the TTP. Their *lashkar* allegedly received no assistance from the security forces and was eventually silenced by the Taliban, who proved considerably more resourceful. The militants rammed an explosive-laden car into a *jirga* (tribal council) of the Ali Khel tribe in October 2008, killing at least 82 elders.²⁰¹

Disillusionment with the government is widespread. A Swat local claimed that inhabitants of district were forced to follow the Taliban's aerial messages so that they can keep in touch with the latest edicts issued by the militants.²⁰² As one Swati elder eloquently put it:

Earlier we were hopeful that the army would come if the police fail to rescue us. But the cold water of Swat River has washed away all our fantasies, and now we are learning to live the militants' way.²⁰³

Since early summer 2009, the Pakistani army has stepped up military operations in Swat and parts of FATA. Part of their strategy has included arming tribesmen to stand up to extremist elements in their region. However, this has arguably backfired as it has led to many casualties, resulting from violent skirmishes between extremists and pro-government *lashkars*.²⁰⁴

Thus incidents where the Taliban are perceived as having garnered public opinion in their favour could be due to the local population being too fearful of disobeying the Taliban's edicts or demands. This creates a 'gun-point support' scenario, where, with the force of their rifles and terror, the militants manage to secure public votes and assistance. That is, the local population are left with little or no choice.

One resident of Swat claimed that most of the people of the valley only listened to the Taliban's radio messages so as to be able to obey the latest edicts issued by them,

²⁰¹ 'Orakzai Blast Toll Rises to 82,' *The News*, 12 October 2008.

²⁰² 'Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,' (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

²⁰³ Syed Irfan Ashraf, 'Nothing Sells Like Terror,' (May 2009), Aryana Institute for Regional Research Advocacy, <http://www.airra.org/analysis/Nothingsellsiketerror.html>, accessed 21 May 2009.

²⁰⁴ 'Taliban Kill Seven Pro-Government Lashkar Members in Bannu,' *The Daily Times*, 25 September 2009.

and that people are generally ‘depressed’ and helpless in the face of the Taliban; ‘our mouths are locked ... our thoughts are locked.’²⁰⁵

Similarly, reporters present at Hakimullah Mehsud’s maiden press conference in Orakzai Agency in November 2008 observed that Orakzai tribesmen appeared to dislike the militants but were fearful of making their feelings apparent.²⁰⁶

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of locals who turn to violent Islamic extremism out of fear or coercion. Talibanization in the form of terrorist acts and rebel governance has been on the rise inside Pakistan, especially since the military raid on the Red Mosque in Islamabad in July 2007. It has especially taken root in FATA and KPP.

The literacy rate in FATA remains stunted at 17% (3% for females) and the number of persons per doctor in FATA is a staggering 7,670, while the number of persons per hospital bed is 2,179. Figures for KPP are similar, and both are lower than for the rest of Pakistan.

Given this background, and the services offered to the local populations by the Taliban militants, local populations may turn to the extremists for succour and an end to their long-standing grievances. Extremists have traditionally set up charity fronts to help the needy and have indeed played a prominent role during major natural catastrophes in Pakistan, such as earthquakes and floods.

Moreover, the Taliban militants in FATA and KPP belong to the same region and culture as the local populations, and this affiliation adds to their success in harnessing public support. The Pakistani security forces, on the contrary, are viewed as ‘foreigners’ who invade their land, launch heavy-handed operations that result in high levels collateral damage, and force them to relocate. Over 60% of the Pakistani army remains ethnically Punjabi, and cannot relate or interact with the locals in the Pashtun areas. Hence the sympathy of the local population is naturally inclined towards the Taliban more than the military.

Ironically, despite their exploitation of prevailing socio-economic frustrations, the TTP seldom brings up the issue verbatim in its speeches or as part of its propaganda.

²⁰⁵ Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, ‘Pakistan: Children of the Taliban,’ (April 2009), PBS, http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/pakistan802/video/video_index.html, accessed 24 May 2009.

²⁰⁶ Rahimullah Yusufzai, ‘Hakimullah Unveils Himself to Media,’ *The News International*, 30 November 2008.

Instead, of the two key factors (mentioned above) that may be driving the TTP insurgency in Pakistan – a) frustration caused by the existing political system, which breeds corruption and ignores the basic needs of the tribal people; and b) anger caused by the ongoing military operations and drone operations, which have killed civilians, damaged property (including religious places), displaced large volumes of people and created chaos – it is (b) that is frequently referred to by the TTP. The Tehrik keeps its attention geared towards the ‘injustice’ related to the GoP’s alliance with the US and the Pakistani Army’s operations in the tribal areas, both of which are seen as reflecting the submission of the Pakistani state to ‘infidel’ powers and a betrayal of the Pakistani people, who are being victimized in the process (through drone attacks, displacements, arrests, and so on.)

TTP activities also give rise to a paradox: while their anger is rooted in the perceived infringement of their tribal honour at the hands of the GoP, Taliban militants breach tribal honour themselves by thwarting the existing tribal structures (for example, by carrying out suicide attacks on *jirgas* and forcing the displacement of fellow tribesmen).

The Tehrik-e-Taliban plays the ‘religion card’ and the role of ‘defensive *jihad*’ in preference to advocating socio-economic issues relevant to tribal society. The presence of the Pakistani military and its adverse consequences for the tribal people are used by the TTP to justify its war against the Pakistani state. This justification, especially when pushed by a religious impetus, sanctions the TTP to act outside of the parameters of tribal honour codes.

It is also interesting to note that the first Pakistani fighting force in Kashmir was comprised of tribesmen from Waziristan. The memory of this appears to be strong among Waziristanis: for example, Hakimullah Mehsud recently made mention of it in a video interview with *As-Sahab*:

History is a witness that we are the sons of the free tribes, and that we have sacrificed much for the sake of Pakistan and for the sake of free Kashmir, and today we are accused of being agents of foreign countries ...²⁰⁷

Hakimullah goes on to promise that, if the Pakistani army severs its ties with the US, then

²⁰⁷ ‘Message from Emir Hakimullah Mehsud and Maulana Wali-ur Rehman,’ 15 October 2009, *As-Sahab Media*, <http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?t=234982>, accessed 7 November 2009.

We will head towards the border with India and devote ourselves to fighting the Hindus who have killed our Muslim brothers in Hyderabad and Kashmir, and shed the blood of the mujahideen.²⁰⁸

That Hakimullah Mehsud – who was not born at the time – should refer to this engagement between the Mehsuds and the Pakistani army in his interviews suggests that collaborating with the Pakistani army was, and could still be, an honourable deed for the Mehsuds. It also implies that the Waziristanis feel betrayed, on a personal level, by an Army whom they once considered to be a ‘friend.’ This is likely to have further fomented the anger of the former towards the latter.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

8 Conclusion

This report shows that the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is a conglomeration of various actors and groups. Baitullah Mehsud had managed to network successfully with militant factions across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, securing zones of influence in all the tribal agencies. As a result, the TTP has commanded a significant presence in FATA and has extended its reach to parts of the KPP, as well as to Punjab and Sind provinces.

An examination of the demographic traits of the Tehrik-e-Taliban cadre reveals that the average age of most leaders is relatively young (mid-30s), that they come from rural and poor backgrounds and that they have little or no formal education. The exact number of TTP fighters is unknown, but reliable estimates approach the 10,000 mark. Ultimately, this figure depends on which factions and affiliates of the TTP are included; for example, given the Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban's focus on Afghanistan, would its members be included with the Baitullah or Hakimullah Mehsud's group, who are battling the Pakistani regime? Similarly, should extremists and/or criminals in Punjab and Sind who collaborate with the militants in the tribal areas fall under the rubric of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan? The situation becomes more enigmatic when we consider the internal rifts and fault lines within the TTP, the organization's fluctuating priorities, and the making or breaking of new fronts (e.g. the creation of the Council of the United Mujahideen in February 2009, which appears to be more of a political manoeuvre than a real reconciliation between the rival Taliban leaders in Waziristan).

The TTP's media propaganda includes a growing number of video and audio releases (available online), in addition to the distribution of pamphlets and CDs and the transmission of messages over the radio. An analysis of TTP videos and regional/international news reports suggests that children and young boys are an important target group for the Tehrik from which to recruit new members. In the videos, martyrdom missions performed by young boys are glorified, and a significant share of jihadi anthems are sung by children, with the aim of inspiring other children to join the ranks of jihadis. Furthermore, there exist specialized branches within the TTP that are concerned with the training of child suicide bombers. Young militants who have been arrested have testified to the predatory role of the TTP commanders, who prey on children in mosques and *madrassas* and at religious gatherings.

Extremist elements in other provinces in Pakistan also appear to have been subsumed by the wider Taliban movement; the Swat chapter of the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, led by Maulana Fazlullah, formed the Swat leg of the TTP in December 2007, although signs of strengthening cooperation between Swati and FATA militants can be traced back to at least summer 2007, i.e. after the Red Mosque incident, which unleashed a torrent of jihadi activity in the Swat valley. Other districts in the KPP, including Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Bannu, Kohat, Hangu, Malakand Agency, Buner and Dir, have also experienced different degrees of Talibanization.

Comparatively speaking, Punjab has not undergone Talibanization in the same sense as FATA or parts of KPP; however, jihadi activity (particularly in the form of suicide strikes) inside Punjab and the federal capital of Islamabad, as well as in Karachi, has increased in recent years (see Appendix A).

Another aspect of the TTP is the Punjabi Taliban, that is, mainly extremists from the Punjab who are affiliated to sectarian outfits and/or previously Kashmir- or India-focused groups. These groups have bases in Punjab as well as the tribal areas and KPP. Judging from the available data, a number of Punjabi extremists, previously sponsored by the Pakistani army, grew disillusioned with their patrons in the aftermath of 9/11 when the Pakistani regime joined the US 'War on Terror' and made a turnabout by withdrawing its support of the jihadists it previously patronized. Segments of groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harakat-ul Jihad-ul Islami and the sectarian group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi came to be subsumed by the wider Tehrik.

The sources studied for this report indicate a flourishing role for the Punjabi Taliban in the context of militancy in Pakistan. Links between Punjabi extremists and the TTP appear to have strengthened in the recent past, and signs of an international link between the Punjabi extremists and the Afghan Taliban, as well as between the PT and Europe, can now be discerned.²⁰⁹ The under-researched phenomenon of the Punjabi Taliban therefore deserves further exploration.

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is allied with the Afghan Taliban and is active in Afghanistan. Certain factions of the TTP, in particular the Wazir bloc, have traditionally limited their operations to Afghanistan. Baitullah's group, as well as extremists of Punjabi origin in Pakistan, have also allegedly fought alongside the Afghan Taliban.

²⁰⁹ 'Yardimkervani,' <http://www.jamiahafsforum.com/forum/showthread.php?t=2916>, accessed 1 November 2009; 'Tehrik-e-Taliban Punjab Claims Lahore Bombing,' *A Pakistani News*, 28 May 2009.

The TTP's ideology that has emerged over the years reinforces the points advocated upon its formation in December 2007, namely installing *sharia* law, aiding the Afghan Taliban in their *jihad* against coalition forces in Afghanistan and performing a defensive *jihad* against the Pakistani regime. The TTP leader and membership has also witnessed the rise to prominence of individuals from sectarian backgrounds, resulting in a marked sectarian tinge in overall TTP activity.

There has also been a growing reference to a 'global *jihad*', whether in relation to rescuing fellow Muslims from 'occupation,' spreading *sharia* or avenging the growing US presence and drone attacks in Pakistan. The Tehrik also appears more vocal in its denunciation of the Kashmir *jihad* because a) it is sponsored by the ISI, and b) it does not aim to enforce *Sharia*. Arguably such a 'smear campaign' against the Kashmir *jihad* is intended to discourage potential jihadists from pursuing a career in Kashmir in favour of luring them to the country's western border.

Topics of discussion in Urdu jihadi literature tend to reflect major domestic and international news items. However, 'revenge' remains a recurrent theme in TTP propaganda material: revenge against the Pakistani security forces and politicians for supporting the military operations in FATA and KPP, revenge for US drone attacks in the tribal belt, revenge for the killing of Baitullah Mehsud by a missile in August 2009, revenge for the arrest and torture of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani neuroscientist recently indicted and sentenced to prison in the US, and so on.

The financial sources that have helped the Tehrik-e-Taliban sustain itself economically are varied: donations (from domestic and international sympathizers), criminal activity (especially kidnapping for ransom, robbery), taxes, penalties, extortion money, funds from terrorist organizations like al-Qaida, and the exploitation of gem mines, archaeological sites and timber.

There are mixed reports regarding the support given to Tehrik-e-Taliban by the local population in FATA and KPP. In some areas, the TTP has managed to sway the public in its favour by assuming the role of a surrogate government: offering job opportunities to the needy and supplanting the existing judicial system with their 'quick justice.'

Heavy-handed military operations in FATA and KPP by the Pakistani army have resulted in a number of civilian casualties, as well as the displacement of large swathes of the population. Combined with the popular belief that the Pakistani government

is fighting 'America's war' and arresting or killing Pakistani people under duress from the US, the resentment felt by local populations towards the Pakistani state has been heightened.

Increased US drone strikes in the tribal belt, the perceived growth of the US presence in Pakistan (e.g. the expansion of the US embassy in Islamabad and the widely held suspicion that Backwater/Xe or other American security contractors are operative in Pakistan) and the GoP's complicity in all this has further aggravated the situation, with adverse impacts on the local population's opinion of the Pakistani regime.

As suggested in the previous chapter, a particular society's political history and socio-economic situation plays an important role in shaping the mindset of its people, including their support for, and susceptibility to, extremist groups like the Tehrik-e-Taliban. As Talat Hussain (above) reported, the majority of people in FATA who were interviewed were not so interested in pressuring the government to bring a halt to militant activity in the region as in demanding basic rights and amenities, such as, justice, education, hospitals, and so on. Future research could benefit from building on Hussain's findings and examining more closely the social make-up of tribal society or of cities in Pakistan which makes them fertile breeding and recruitment grounds, as well as support bases, for the Taliban.

The feeling of victimization, rooted in social, developmental and economic factors, as well as the displacement, destruction and personal loss caused by military operations appears to have resulted in a situation where the local population in FATA and the Swat valley feel immense resentment towards the GoP. This may have lent leverage to the radicals, who have exploited the opportunity to further their agenda. Targeting the basic grievances of local populations and thereby assuaging their sense of resentment therefore seems to be a crucial part of countering the spread of Talibanization inside Pakistan.

Appendix A:

Suicide Bombings in Pakistan 2002-2009

	FATA	NWFP	Punjab and Islamabad	Sindh	Sectarian targets	US drone	Western targets
2002					63		9
2003			1		22		2
2004	1		4		19	1	2
2005		1			62	3	1
2006	1	4			38	1	1
2007 Jan-Jun	1	7	2	1	72	2	1
Jul-Dec	12	20	10		253	1	
2008	11	34	13	1	97	18	3
2009 Jan-Jul	4	27	9		90	25	1
Aug-Dec	2	24	10	1	16	21	1

The years 2007 and 2009 are divided into two to illustrate any differences in terrorist activity following the July 2007 Pakistani army raid on the Red Mosque in Islamabad and the August 2009 killing of Baitullah Mehsud in a US drone strike.

Source: Chart compiled by the author with the help of the South Asia Terrorism Portal website.

