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**The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan:  
Ideology and Beliefs**

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# The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan: Ideology and Beliefs

Simon Ross Valentine<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

On 5 August 2009 Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* [TTP], was reportedly killed with one of his wives in South Waziristan, by a missile fired from a US drone.<sup>2</sup> Twelve days later the capture of Mullah Umar, leading spokes-person for the TTP, was another major set-back for the TTP.<sup>3</sup> On 22 August Faqir Mohammad, TTP's deputy, announced that Taliban's central *Shura* had nominated Hakimullah Mehsud as the new head of the group.<sup>4</sup> The aim of this paper is to briefly examine the ideology and beliefs held by the TTP. Firstly, the history, development and aims of the TTP, will be considered, thus placing the group in the context of Pakistani history and politics generally. Other issues will then be raised: how is the TTP organized and how active, and influential, is the group, especially in the light of recent events? In appraising the ideology and beliefs of the TTP emphasis will be placed on its teaching on global *jihād* and the idea of a united *ummah*; critiques of the Pakistani government and American foreign policy; the *Takfiri* doctrine and the implementation of *Shariah*. The article will conclude with apposite observations and remarks on the strength of the TTP.

## What is the TTP?

The *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (Students' Movement of Pakistan) is an umbrella group of various Taliban factions operating mainly in the South Waziristan agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. With the main aim of removing foreign presence [ie., mainly the western non-Muslim secular presence] from Pakistan soil, the TTP calls for the restoration of *Khilafat* and the establishing of a *Shariah* based homeland. Many of the *jihādists* recruited by the TTP, as with Islamic extremism generally in Pakistan, were originally trained and “indoctrinated” by the CIA, to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> As Mullah Nazeer Ahmad, *Amir* of the Taliban *Mujahideen* in South Waziristan remarked, militant Islam in this region as elsewhere is “CIA from start to finish .... as it led a Western crusade” to

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<sup>2</sup>The Times Online 8 August, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6742384.ece>, accessed 9 August 2009.

<sup>3</sup>17 August 2009, SANA, South Asia News Agency, <http://www.sananews.com.pk/english/2009/08/19/top-ttp-spokesman-held-in-mohmand-agency-officials>, accessed 19 August 2009.

<sup>4</sup>“Hakimullah new TTP chief”, 23 August 2009, <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/23-Aug-2009/Hakimullah-new-TTP-chief>, accessed 23 August 2009.

<sup>5</sup> J. Stern, Foreword, H. Abbas, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism, Allah, the Army and America's War on Terror*, East Gate, New York, 2005, p. xlii.

“save the gods of Wall Street”.<sup>6</sup> The TTP arose out of the residue of the *Mujahideen* left redundant after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. Such fighters, trained and eager for *jihad*, established numerous militant groups in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Pakistan, groups which in turn influenced the emergence of later factions including the TTP.<sup>7</sup>

Mainly a Deobandi Sunni organization, the TTP, officially emerged as a group on 14 December 2007.<sup>8</sup> Baitullah Mehsud was appointed the TTP *Amir*, Maulana Hafiz Gul Bahadur from North Waziristan the senior *Naib Amir* (senior vice chief) and Maulana Faqir Mohammad from the Bajaur Agency was appointed the third in command.<sup>9</sup> Strongly linked with *Al-Qaeda*, unlike other *jihadist* groups in Pakistan, the TTP included the Pakistan government as one of its main enemies. In early February 2009, Mehsud joined with certain sections of the Afghan Taliban, mainly Maulvi Nazir, to form the *Shura Ittehadul Mujahideen* (SIM), also known as the *Shura Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen* and the Council of United *Mujahideen*, announcing their allegiance to Mullah Umar as their *Amir-Ul-Mumineen*.<sup>10</sup> On 14 February, the NWFP government agreed to a peace accord with the *Tehrik Nifaz-i-Shariat Mohammadi* (TNSM), effectively conceding the area of SWAT to the Taliban, of which the TTP forms a major part. This accord was seen by many as “a capitulation by a government desperate to stop Taliban abuses and a military embarrassed at losing ground after more than a year of intermittent fighting”.<sup>11</sup> A temporary ceasefire was agreed by the Taliban while the government agreed to allow the implementation of *Shariah* in the region once violence had stopped. On 24 February Muslim Khan, spokes-person for the TTP, publicly announced that TTP would observe an indefinite ceasefire.<sup>12</sup> On 13 April this year President Zardari signed the *Nizam-e-Adl* regulation with the Taliban, effectively giving it control of the Malakand Division. Baitullah Mehsud was regarded by the US as the “root cause of all evils”<sup>13</sup> and as a “key *al-Qaeda* facilitator”<sup>14</sup>. Special envoy Richard Holbrooke remarked: “Baitullah Mehsud is a

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<sup>6</sup> See Interview by Peter Chamberlin with Mullah Nazir, As-Sahab, “Paramilitary Pretense, Who Controls the Predators?”, [www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2009/04/](http://www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2009/04/), accessed 10 April 2009, also found on URUKNET.INFO, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=53340>, accessed 18 May.

<sup>7</sup> H. Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism, Allah, the Army and America’s War on Terror*, op.cit., passim.

<sup>8</sup> The name “*Tehrik-i-Taliban*” had been used prior to the 14 December announcement. An organization with a similar name emerged in FATA’s Orakzai Agency in 1998, see H Abbas, “A Profile of *Tehrik-i-Taliban* Pakistan”, West Point, NY: CTC, vol. 1, pp. 1-4. See also Pakistan Defence Forum, nd., <http://www.defence.pk/forums/pakistans-war/32311-disintegrations-ttp-what.html>, accessed 14 August 2009.

<sup>9</sup> The International News, 28 August 2009, [http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=195420](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=195420), accessed 29 August.

<sup>10</sup> “Taliban form *Shura Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen* in Waziristan”, *Geo-Pakistan*, 22 February 2009, <http://www.geo.tv/2-22-2009/35712.htm>, accessed 27 February 2009.

<sup>11</sup> J. Perlez, “Pakistan Makes a Taliban Truce, Creating a Haven”, *The New York Times*, 16 February 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/17/world/asia/17pstan.html>, accessed 16 February.

<sup>12</sup> J. Perlez, “Taliban Accepts Pakistan ceasefire”, *The New York Times*, February 24 2009, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/25/world/asia/25pstan.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/25/world/asia/25pstan.html?_r=1), accessed 25 February 2009.

<sup>13</sup> J. Ismail, *All Things Pakistan*, 4 August 2009, <http://pakistaniat.com/2009/06/15/decisive-offensive-against-baitullah-mehsud/>, accessed 6 August 2009.

<sup>14</sup> See page on Baitullah Mehsud, Rewards for Justice Website, <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=mehsud>, accessed 3 June 2009.

terrible man. He is a great danger to Pakistan, to Afghanistan”.<sup>15</sup> Mehsud, since coming to prominence in February 2005, by killing off rivals and sheer force of personality, virtually established an independent zone in parts of South Waziristan.<sup>16</sup> In March 2009 the United States offered a \$5 million reward for his capture.<sup>17</sup> Estimates of the number of men under his command vary, ranging from 5,000 fighters in early 2008<sup>18</sup> to between 20,000 to 30,000 fighters by April 2009.<sup>19</sup> News reports about the present state of TTP have been contradictory. Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, stated on 19 August, that he had taken over as acting head of the group in Pakistan, but denied reports that Baitullah Mehsud had been killed.<sup>20</sup> However, despite this declaration, on 22 August he announced that Hakimullah Mehsud, a man “known as a ferocious fighter” and “a ruthless enforcer of loyalty”,<sup>21</sup> had been appointed as the new leader of the TTP.<sup>22</sup> Faqir Mohammad has claimed that both Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadar were happy with the decision of the *Shura*.<sup>23</sup> He also announced the appointment of Tariq Azam [also known as Hafiz Noor Said] as TTP spokesman. However, on 1 September Pakistan security forces declared that Hakimullah Mehsud was definitely dead, and a private TV channel, citing intelligence sources, said it was Hakimullah’s brother who had given recent interviews to the BBC.<sup>24</sup>

### Activities and influence of the TTP

The TTP has been blamed for several attacks in Pakistan, including the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto on 27 December 2007. Baitullah Mehsud strongly denied this. Uncorroborated reports claim TTP was responsible for the murder of Qari Zainuddin, leader of the Abdullah Group, in June earlier this year.<sup>25</sup> TTP have been linked with the suicide attack in Chakwal in April 2009 although Maulvi Umar, before his capture by the government on 17 August, denied

<sup>15</sup> R. Holbrooke, IBN Live, 9 April 2009, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/us-envoy-invokes-indias-help-in-fighting-mehsud/89828-2.html>, accessed 10 April 2009.

<sup>16</sup> See S. Nasir, “Baitullah Mehsud: South Waziristan’s Unofficial Amir,” *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 3, 5 July 2006; H Abbas, “A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan”, op.cit; Raja, *Asian Tribune*, 10 July 2009,

<http://asiantribune.com/07/10/time-for-baitullah-mehsud-to-give-up-militancy/>, accessed .Asian tribune, 12 July 2009; Hasan, “Profile: Baitullah Mehsud,” BBC, December 28, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Rewards for Justice Website, <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=mehsud>, op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> Abbas, op.cit.

<sup>19</sup> *Daily Times*, 24 June 2009,

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory\\_24-6-2009\\_pg1\\_5..](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory_24-6-2009_pg1_5..), accessed 27 June 2009.

<sup>20</sup> See 20 August, 2009, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE57HOL220090820>, accessed 20 August 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Zahid Hussain, *The Wall Street Journal*,

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125103758449251853.html>, accessed 23 August 2009.

<sup>22</sup> *The Times of India*, 22 August 2009,

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/world/pakistan/Hakimullah-Mehsud-appointed-as-new-Pak-Taliban-chief/articleshow/4922755.cms>, accessed 23 August 2009. Rehman Malik had claimed that Hakimullah had been killed in a shootout among rival Taliban factions during a meeting over the succession question.

<sup>23</sup> 23 August 2009, <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/23-Aug-2009/Hakimullah-new-TTP-chief>, accessed 23 August 2009.

<sup>24</sup> “TTP leader ‘Hakimullah Mehsud dead”, Dawn.com, 1 September, 2009,

<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/13+ttp+leader+hakimullah+mehsud+dead-za-02>, accessed 2/9/09.

<sup>25</sup> *Daily Times*, 24 June 2009,

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory\\_24-6-2009\\_pg1\\_3..](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory_24-6-2009_pg1_3..)

responsibility.<sup>26</sup> Mullah Nazir rejects claims that the Taliban were part of the group that attacked Mumbai, between 26-29 November 2008.<sup>27</sup> Baitullah Mehsud did however claim responsibility for the attack on the Manawan police academy in Punjab province, which killed at least 13 people and wounded more than 100. Mehsud stated: “Yes, we have carried out this attack,” asserting it was “in retaliation for the continued drone strikes by the U.S. in collaboration with Pakistan on our people.”<sup>28</sup> The former TTP leader also claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a security convoy in Bannu killing four security personnel and wounding nine others,<sup>29</sup> and the bombing of the Islamabad police station, both in March 2009.<sup>30</sup> TTP has been linked with the bombing of the *Pearl Continental* Hotel in Peshawar in which 17 people were killed and at least 46 people injured,<sup>31</sup> and the killing of a prominent anti-Taliban cleric, Dr. Naeemi, in a suicide attack at Jamia Naeemia mosque in Lahore.<sup>32</sup> TTP is also linked with the bomb blast at a petrol pump in Charsadda., near Pehsawar, on 17 August 2009.<sup>33</sup> Both Mehsud and Maulvi Umar have stated that such suicide missions would continue in cities throughout Pakistan until the US drone attacks ceased.<sup>34</sup> More recently TTP have claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on 27 August at the Khasadar check post in Torkham in Khyber that killed 22 policemen.<sup>35</sup> As TTP spokesman Azam Tariq declared: “We claim responsibility for the blast. This is our first response since the death of our chief Baitullah Mehsud. We will continue similar attacks in the future also” .<sup>36</sup> In 2008 it was reported that TTP kidnapped 70 people throughout Pakistan, including Karachi and Lahore, mainly as a revenue boosting exercise.<sup>37</sup> With the occurrence of militant activity in Lahore and Islamabad, during the early part of 2009, there have been concerns that the influence of the TTP could move from its base in the FATA to other urban centres. It is a matter of conjecture as to the strength of support TTP may have amongst the Pakistani population generally, many people viewing the *jihadists* as freedom fighters, “standing up to the Americans” .<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See *Daily Times of Pakistan*, [www.dailytimes.com.pk](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk), accessed 7 April 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Maulvi Nazir, As-Sahab, [www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2009/04/](http://www.worldproutassembly.org/archives/2009/04/), op.cit.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters, 31 March 2009, <http://changinguppakistan.wordpress.com/2009/03/31/beitullah-mehsud-claims-responsibility-for-manawan-police-attack/>, accessed 1 April 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Daily Times, 31 March 2009, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C03%5C31%5Cstory\\_31-3-2009\\_pg7\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C03%5C31%5Cstory_31-3-2009_pg7_2), accessed 1 April.

<sup>30</sup> CBS News, 23 March 2009, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/23/world/main4884632.shtml>, accessed 24 March 2009.

<sup>31</sup> 9 June 2009, see BBC News, 10 June 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/8092147.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/8092147.stm), accessed 11 June 2009.

<sup>32</sup> 12 June 2009, BBC News, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/8096776.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/8096776.stm), accessed 12 June 2009.

<sup>33</sup> 17 August 2009, International News. <http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=85142>, accessed 19 August.

<sup>34</sup> News statement made on 31 March 2009, op.cit.

<sup>35</sup> Thaidian News, 29 August 2009, [http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/torkham-attack-our-first-revenge-ttp\\_100239743.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/torkham-attack-our-first-revenge-ttp_100239743.html), accessed 30 August 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Thaidian News, op.cit.

<sup>37</sup> Ismail Khan, Dawn.com., <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/08-Fight-for-spoils-splits-Taliban-ts-06>, accessed 21 August 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Pervez Hoodbhoy, “Pakistan: Intolerance running riot”, 12 April 2009, <http://pakteahouse.wordpress.com/2009/04/12/pakistan-intolerance-running-riot/>, accessed 16 April 2009.

## Beliefs and ideology

TTP, sharing “a common culture and anti-western world-view” with *jihadi* groups generally in Pakistan,<sup>39</sup> works for an Islamic revolution and the freeing of Pakistan from western influence. Although regarding western culture per se as *jahili*, ignorant and corrupt,<sup>40</sup> particular animosity is felt towards the US. TTP condemns totally US air-strikes on Pakistani soil, some of which result in the deaths of innocent civilians, and US involvement in neighbouring Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> The war on America is seen, not only as being a struggle against US forces within Pakistan, but also on the wider, international level. Baitullah Mehsud, in a news statement made on 31 March 2009 threatened to launch an attack on Washington that would “amaze everyone in the world”. He stated *inter alia*: “The maximum they can do is martyr me. But we will exact our revenge on them from inside America.”<sup>42</sup>

The Pakistani government, particularly that of Musharraf and his successor Zardari, is criticized by Pakistani militants generally as being “lapdogs”, and “cronies of America”,<sup>43</sup> and for supporting “America’s dirty war”. TTP believes that many of Pakistan’s leaders work for the American government, and regards the ISI as an extension of the CIA.<sup>44</sup> In January 2004, to the chagrin of militants generally, Musharraf, under pressure from the US, made an agreement with Vajpayee, the Indian prime minister, agreeing that Azad Kashmir would not be used to support terrorist activity against India.<sup>45</sup> The Musharraf-Armitage agreement, made earlier in June 2002, had similarly supported the notion that the Pakistan government was merely a lackey of US foreign policy. Officially, the Kashmiri issue is not one of the aims of TTP. As Nazir remarked: “The Kashmiri *Jihad* does not help us forward in achieving our objectives”.<sup>46</sup> Concerning Afghanistan Mullah Nazir contends that the TTP, rather than being disunited with the Afghan Taliban, is actively supporting the war effort in that country against the US led NATO ISAF forces. As he states “we fight with them in Afghanistan too and are enemies of the occupation forces there”.<sup>47</sup>

Adopting the *takfiri* doctrine of the Medieval jurist Taqi ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, and revived by Sayyid Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb, TTP, justify their stance of fighting other Muslims.<sup>48</sup> Under this doctrine the Pakistani government, due to its allegiance to western *kufir* states, is regarded as *ridda* [apostate or non-Muslim], *fasidah* [“corrupt rulers”], corrupted by *ghazw fikri*, the enchantment of western ideas. As such TTP wages what it terms “defensive *jihad* against the

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<sup>39</sup> Z. Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan; the struggle with Militant Islam*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 75.

<sup>40</sup> *Jahiliyyah*, Arabic term meaning “ignorance”, usually used in reference to pagan idolatrous religion in pre-Islamic Arabia.

<sup>41</sup> Anti-war.com, <http://news.antiwar.com/2009/04/19/us-drone-strike-kills-up-to-eight-in-south-waziristan/> accessed 19/4/2009.

<sup>42</sup> Sindh Today.net, 1 April 2009, <http://www.sindhtoday.net/pakistan/81844.htm>, accessed 3 April 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Maulvi Nazir, As-Sahab, op.cit.

<sup>44</sup> Interview, Maulvi Nazir, ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Z. Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan*, op.cit., pp. 102, 104.

<sup>46</sup> Maulvi Nazir, ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Maulvi Nazir, ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See E. Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 90f.

Pakistan army”.<sup>49</sup> Although *ulema* generally regard *takfiris* as “heretics of Islam”, Baitullah Mehsud argued that Pakistanis who cooperate with westerners are not true Muslims, they are collaborators of infidels, and deserve to be killed.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the Pakistani army, is not regarded as a Muslim army, but “a mercenary army on the payroll of the US”.<sup>51</sup> Hakimullah Mehsud has made strong-worded statements against leaders of *Pakistan Peoples Party* (PPP), *Awami National Party* (ANP) and *Mutahida Qaumi Movement* (MQM) and threatened attacks against them.<sup>52</sup>

Reminiscent of Abdullah Azzam’s dictum: “Jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences and no dialogues”,<sup>53</sup> Baitullah Mehsud stated that “only *jihad* can bring peace to the world.”<sup>54</sup> The aim of global, not just local *jihad*, and the uniting of Muslims worldwide, is clearly stated by Mullah Nazir: “our *Jihad* is against *kufir*, and to get back our lands that *kufir* has occupied, and our *Jihad* is meant to make supreme the Word of Allah and to establish the system of *Shariah*”.<sup>55</sup> As such declares Nazir “Our *Jihad* isn’t limited to Pakistan or Afghanistan. Our *Jihad* is a global *Jihad*, and we aim to liberate Muslims throughout the world and obliterate tumult, oppression and mischief, and establish the system of *Shariah* all over the world. We want the Law of Allah on the Land of Allah”.<sup>56</sup> In carrying out such *jihad* TTP, despite media reports of suicide bombings killing civilians, declares that it never intends to kill innocent civilians. Nazir, has stated: “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. The Army is our target because it has aided the Americans. We do carry out martyrdom operations throughout Pakistan but we renounce and condemn those of them in mosques and marketplaces. It is our enemy that does it”.<sup>57</sup>

In criticizing the Pakistan Constitution as not being completely Islamic, Muslim Khan remarked that “the TTP does not accept any constitution other than *Shariah*”.<sup>58</sup> The implementation of *Shariah* involves a rejection of that which is not Islamic. Qari Hussain, a deputy of TTP under Baitullah Mehsud, had previously issued a ‘*fatwa*’ declaring that it is permissible to rob banks because they are un-Islamic, and to rob minorities because they do not follow Islam.<sup>59</sup> Early in April this year TTP members set on fire TV sets, pictures and paintings and audio and video cassettes in the Buner District. They locked the shrine of *Pir Baba* and stopped followers of the saint from

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<sup>49</sup> Pakistan Defence Forum, nd., op.cit.

<sup>50</sup> Pak Tribune, nd., <http://www.paktribune.com/news/print.php?id=216877>, accessed 12 April 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Pak Tribune, op.cit.

<sup>52</sup> The Times of India, 22 August 2009,

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/world/pakistan/Hakimullah-Mehsud-appointed-as-new-Pak-Taliban-chief/articleshow/4922755.cms>, accessed 23 August 2009.

<sup>53</sup> A. Azzam, Quoted by P. Bergen, *Holy War: Inside the secret world of Osama bin Laden*, London: Phoenix, 2003, p. 56.

<sup>54</sup> Abbas, “A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan”, op.cit.

<sup>55</sup> interview with Mullah Nazir, op.cit.

<sup>56</sup> Mullah Nazir, *ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> Nazir, *ibid*.

<sup>58</sup> The Daily Times, 17 April 2009, <http://yuvaz.com/blog/now-taliban-demands-repeal-of-un-islamic-provisions-in-pak-constitution/>, accessed 17 / 4 / 09, accessed 22 April 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Daily Times, 5 June 2009, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory\\_24-6-2009\\_pg12\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C24%5Cstory_24-6-2009_pg12_1), accessed 8 June 2009.

visiting the site.<sup>60</sup> TTP has destroyed numerous schools which catered for the education of girls; restricted women's employment and visibility in public spaces; killed those opposed to their version of Islam; banned the shaving of beards and prevented people from availing themselves of the *Benazir Income Support Programme*, a government project to provide financial aid to women.<sup>61</sup> It is alleged that the TTP threatened doctors of public sector hospitals in Peshawar to wear traditional '*shalwar-qameez*' instead of western suits. Similarly, female doctors were directed to observe proper '*purdah*' and cover their face from their male colleagues. The TTP has denied making this threat.<sup>62</sup> The implementation of *Shariah*, and its treatment of *kufir* as second class citizens, has led to the persecution of minority groups. In particular there have been reports of the maltreatment of *Shia*, regarded as *zindique*, heretics, by Sunni Muslims, and the banishment of the few surviving native Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus from the frontier province.<sup>63</sup> Such persecution, and the fighting, has given rise to a major displacement of population, estimated at 3 million people to date.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

In the light of the death of Baitullah Mehsud, and the alleged internal fighting taking place within the group, it has been argued that "TTP will not be the TTP it was. Their time is up. We feel that the threat to national security is receding."<sup>65</sup> Such a view is for some, unduly optimistic. As Maleeha Lodhi rightly observes, "the Taliban movement survived the death of its leaders in the past, so it is too early to say it is a decisive blow".<sup>66</sup> It would be fair to say that although TTP's institutional capacity has received a serious set-back its ideological capacity to influence is far from over. It has the men, weapons and revenue to continue its *jihad* against the west, and those who support the west. In facing the challenge presented by the TTP the Pakistani government needs to regain some semblance of control over FATA, thus eliminating the safe havens of militants there. Much to the annoyance of the US, Pakistani officials are considering making deals with parts of the TTP in an attempt to split the organization.<sup>67</sup> The US government is urging Pakistan to capitalize on the present instability of the TTP and expand its offensive in Waziristan.<sup>68</sup> It is feared that indecision, and inaction, by the Pakistan government will allow Hakimullah Mehsud, or his successor, to consolidate his position and reorganise the TTP. Hakimullah Mehsud, "well known as a rash strutting fighter who has led dozens of major terrorist

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<sup>60</sup> The Hindu, Saturday 11 April 2009, <http://www.thehindu.com/holnus/001200904111453.htm>, accessed 15 April 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Radio broadcast by Maulvi Faqir Mohammad, The Hindu, Saturday 11 April 2009, <http://www.thehindu.com/holnus/001200904111453.htm>, accessed 15 April 2009.

<sup>62</sup> International News Online, 9 May 2009, <http://www.thenews.com.pk>, accessed 9 May 2009.

<sup>63</sup> The Hindu Times, Saturday 11 April 2009, op.cit.

<sup>64</sup> The Hindu Times, ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Dawn.com., <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/provinces/08-Fight-for-spoils-splits-Taliban-ts-06>, op.cit.

<sup>66</sup> The Wall Street Journal, 8 August, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124961991813313685.html>, accessed 17 August.

<sup>67</sup> Anti-war.com, 28 August 2009, <http://news.antiwar.com/2009/08/28/us-irked-as-pakistan-stalls-south-waziristan-offensive/>, accessed 30 August 2009.

<sup>68</sup> News Times, 30 August 2009, <http://newstimes.in/world-news/pak-dumps-military-offensive-plans-against-ttp/>, accessed 30 August 2009.

operations not only against the Pakistani security forces but also against the Nato supply trucks”,<sup>69</sup> if still alive, will not be an easy figure to remove.

The TTP, and Islamic extremism generally in Pakistan, cannot be overcome by military means alone however. Military intervention often gives rise to militancy rather than eradicate it. There is a need to monitor the curricula taught in the *madrassas*, hot-beds and training grounds of extremism. Assistance in providing better education for the masses is needed. A reduction, if not an end, of the “collateral damage” caused by US air-strikes would go a long way to the winning of hearts and minds. The seriousness of the situation cannot be over-stressed. As Hassan Abbas remarks: “dismantling the TTP and bringing its leadership to justice is critical for Pakistan’s internal security as well as for tackling the Taliban insurgency in southern Afghanistan”.<sup>70</sup> As one journalist reminds us, the ensuing battle between the TTP and the Pakistan government: “is a fight for the very future of Pakistan”.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The International News, 28 August 2009, [http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily\\_detail.asp?id=195420](http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=195420), accessed 29 August.

<sup>70</sup> Hassan Abbas, “A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan”, op.cit.

<sup>71</sup> Jauhar Ismail, All Things Pakistan, op.cit.