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Pakistani Taliban Emir Calls for Unity, Jihad, and Global Caliphate

By Bill Roggio

4/19/2017

Mullah Fazlullah, the emir of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan (TTP), said that his group's ultimate goal is "to implement the law of Allah on the Earth" and called on Muslims to unite and wage jihad to achieve that end. Fazlullah, one of the most extreme commanders in a group filled with extremists, also said that attempts made by Pakistan's military intelligence service to break up the TTP have largely failed and his group has reorganized following a tumultuous period.

Fazlullah made the statements in a video released yesterday by Umar Media, the propaganda arm of the TTP. Umar Media also provided an English language transcript of Fazlullah's speech. He outlined the group's primary goal in his opening statement.

"The aim of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan [TTP] is to implement the law of Allah on the Earth of Allah. And this will be the result of our Jihad. For Islamic ideology we have to accord sacrifices. By the grace of Allah, those who believe that implementation and uprising of Shar'iah [Islamic law] is their actual goal and absolute ambition, know that the implementation of this Shar'iah is impossible without practicing Jihad and Jihad is impossible without unity," Fazlullah said.

Throughout the speech, Fazlullah quoted the Koran to provide religious justification for the TTP's war against the Pakistani military and government, and said that it is the obligation of clerics to rally Muslims to the cause.

"It is your responsibility to wake up the public, make them zealous for Islam and humanity, tell them their level and inform them about the system provided by the Allah almighty," Falzullah implored.

Later in the speech, he outlined the obligation and responsibility of all Muslims to wage "defensive jihad."

"In Islam there is concept of Jihad," he noted. "At this time Jihad ud Daf" (defensive jihad) is being conducted which is obligatory to each and every Muslim. It is written in Islamic books that when Jihad becomes Fardh Ayen i.e. obligatory for each Muslim no one has to take permission from any one, jihad becomes obligatory for each and every men and women and every Muslim becomes a fighter and a Murabit (Defender of borders). Everyone has to sacrifice themselves for protecting Islam."

Fazlullah also said that "the cracks which were developed by ISI," or the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate – Pakistan's military intelligence branch – "in this Tehreek and organization have almost uprooted."

"[T]he step to make the Tehreek well organized, has been completed," he continued.

Falzullah is referring to the reorganization of the TTP after the death of its last emir, Hakemullah Mehsud, and his appointment in 2013. Several powerful branches of the TTP chafed at the appointment of Fazlullah and broke away. The TTP finally brought one of the last major factions, the Khalid Mehsud Group, back into the fold earlier this year. [See Mehsud faction rejoins the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan.]

Additionally, Fazlullah said that "it is the best time to target the blasphemers of our prophet," and it doesn't matter if "they are students of colleges and university or any other institution ...". In the past, the TTP has launched numerous attacks against Pakistani schools, including the deadly assault in Peshawar in Dec. 2014 which resulted in the deaths of at least 148 people. Most of those killed were students.

Fazlullah, who is also known as Mullah Radio for his radical sermons broadcast throughout the northwest, has been among the top leaders of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan since its founding in 2007. He engineered the Taliban takeover of Swat and neighboring districts from 2007-2009, and brutally ruled over a cowed civilian population. The Pakistani military intervened only after Fazlullah's forces broke a truce invaded Buner and advanced to just 60 miles from the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. He has vowed to continue the fight to regain control of the Swat Valley.

He is one of the most extreme commanders in a group filled with extremists. He was one of the first leaders to have opposed polio vaccinations. In 2012, he ordered the assassination of Malala

Yousufzai, the young schoolgirl who has spoken out passionately against the Taliban in Swat, and accused her of violating sharia, or Islamic law. In 2012, his forces were responsible for the beheading of 17 Pakistani soldiers. And in 2013, he took credit for the assassination of a Pakistani Army general who commanded operations in Swat.

Fazlullah is also closely tied to al Qaeda. When he openly ruled Swat from 2007 to 2009, he said al Qaeda fighters were welcome and training camps operated there. One of his top deputies, Ibn Amin, also served as a leader of one of six known brigades in al Qaeda's Lashkar-al-Zil, or Shadow Army. Amin was killed in a US drone strike in Khyber in Dec. 2010.

The Taliban emir is known to take shelter in Afghanistan's remote northeastern province of Kunar as well as in Nangarhar province. US forces largely withdrew from Kunar and neighboring Nuristan province beginning in 2009 after isolated Army outposts came under deadly attacks. At the time the withdrawal was announced, US military officials predicted the insurgency would recede from those two provinces and that al Qaeda would lose support since US forces fueled the insurgency. Instead, the opposite happened, since al Qaeda and groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan became entrenched in Kunar and Nuristan with the US withdrawal.