

Snapshot: Baitullah is dead - what's next?

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Disrupt, Dismantle and Defeat. American technology plus Pakistani intelligence have disrupted the leadership structure of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the main Taliban umbrella group.



TTP has been implicated in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the group has in the past claimed responsibility for a whole host of suicide attacks on Pakistan Army's military complexes, convoys and officers. TTP also claimed responsibility for the March 30 attack on Manawan Police Academy in Lahore and another attack on a police station in Islamabad. In the first seven months of 2009, a total of 6,945 Pakistanis have died as a consequence of terrorist violence (of which 629 were security personnel). The accumulated casualties resulting from terrorist violence from 2003 till to-date stands at a staggering 20,430 of which 2,493 were security personnel. In 2008, Pakistan went through 58 suicide attacks and the first seven months of 2009 have already seen 43 suicide attacks.

The main culprit is dead. But, the terrorist infrastructure is still in place and even more importantly the conditions-all the security and capacity gaps-that gave birth to the whole extremist phenomenon are also still in-tact. In that sense, Baitullah was a symptom and not the disease. Lockheed Martin's Hellfire missiles have managed to depress the main symptom but the disease continues to hang around.

The real disease is the marginalization of more than 6 million FATA Pashtuns; illiteracy, severe economic deprivation and an absolute lack of government infrastructure. Imagine; 27,220 square kilometers of Pakistan-called FATA-lives in the 19th century while the rest has moved a hundred years ahead. And, the major players behind this marginalization are government bureaucrats, the FATA Secretariat and the Governor of NWFP.

Disruption is a must. Dismantling is critical and defeat still a long way