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Profile

Hizbut Tahrir in Pakistan Discourse and Impact

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Introduction

Islamist organizations in Pakistan have been struggling in many ways to achieve their respective agendas since the country was founded. Their primary strategic focus has remained on Islamization of the state and religio-socialization of society. It was mainly due to Islamist pressure that the Constituent Assembly first defined the ideological discourse of the state in the shape of the Objectives Resolution of 1949, which stated that Muslims would be enabled to mould their lives in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam. Declaring Pakistan an 'Islamic Republic', providing supremacy of 'divine injunctions' over parliament, and enacting one view of *Shariah* as legislation during military ruler General Ziaul Haq's regime are some of the other successes claimed by Islamist organizations and clerics. Pakistan indeed faced a similar religiously justified conflict at the time of its independence from colonial rule. Though Pakistan vied to transform itself into a secular state, sectarian tensions started to emerge with the passage of time. Before the partition of India, the All India Muslim League had sought the support of religious and Islamist quarters to win the crucial provincial elections and stake the claim for an independent homeland for Muslims of the Subcontinent. These groups had promised their voters that Pakistan would be an "Islamic state". The Objectives Resolution and the subsequent Islamization efforts were therefore expected outcomes.

The anti-Ahmedi movement of 1953 was another turning point in this regard.

¹ The modernist ruling elites were disturbed by this, and the following agitations against Pakistan's first military ruler Ayub Khan's Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961 – a law designed to regulate certain aspects of Muslim family law such as divorce, polygamy, minimum age of marriage, and registration of marriage, and which Islamist organizations and clerics deemed un-Islamic – but they remained undecided, confused and co-opting in their response. Ayub tried to resist such Islamist movements but he too legitimized the role of religious clerics, albeit indirectly, when he persuaded some religious leaders to issue a *fatwa* (edict) that under Islamic law a woman cannot be the head of the state. In the 1965 elections, Ayub was up against Fatima Jinnah, sister of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Measures such as these further facilitated the Islamization of politics.

The Legal Framework Order introduced by President General Yahya Khan (1969-71) also required that the National Assembly preserve the "Islamic Ideology" of Pakistan. It was during Yahya's rule and the campaign for the 1971 general elections that the term "Islamic Ideology" was explicitly used for the first time and acquired a new meaning.² The ideological conflict intensified during and after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime (1971-1977). The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 provided more Islamic injunctions than the two previous constitutions of the country. And in 1974, a change in the country's constitution³ declared Ahmedis a religious minority after an anti-Ahmedi movement resurfaced.⁴ This classification of Ahmedis as non-Muslims renewed the Islamization of politics. Bhutto's regime also became the target of Islamists when he tried to implement socialism, which Islamist forces regarded as synonymous with secularism and contrary to Islamic teachings. To counter this agitation, Bhutto fell back on such ritualistic aspects of Islam as inviting the Imam of the Kaaba, the most sacred site in Islam, in Saudi Arabia to lead Friday prayers in Karachi, enforcing certain prohibitions, and declaring Friday, instead of Sunday, as the weekly holiday. These measures did not appease the agitators; instead they gave further momentum to the politics of Islamization in Pakistan.⁵ In July 1977, Bhutto's government was overthrown by army chief General Ziaul Haq in the wake of an Islamist movement led by the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam.

When Zia assumed power in 1977, the politics of Islamization also helped him legitimize his rule and provided him the opportunity to develop a relationship with Saudi Arabia and Muslims around the world in general on similar basis. Zia introduced normative and structural changes to the political system. For criminal offences, “Islamic” punishments were announced and implemented. At the structural level, in 1973, ‘*Shariah benches*’ were introduced to enforce laws justified by Islamic jurisprudence. To Islamize the economy, on February 10, 1979, the Zakat and Usher Ordinance was announced, making it compulsory for Muslim citizens of Pakistan to pay 2.5 percent as *Zakat* on assets and savings in excess of a prescribed amount, and 10 percent as *Usher on* agricultural produce to the official Zakat fund which was supposed to distribute the proceeds among the Muslims in need. Interest-free banking was introduced and was hailed as a major step towards developing a framework for an “Islamic” economy. Learning Arabic was encouraged and ‘Islamic studies’ was made a compulsory subject at the high school and college levels.⁶ Zia’s Islamization drive was also coupled with Jihadist sentiment during the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan.

This state-led Islamization of society and politics resulted in Islamist organizations and clerics becoming greatly empowered. The main goal of such organizations is the complete Islamization of the state, so as to assert themselves strongly in the political affairs of the state. Most, if not all, of these organizations think that this objective cannot be achieved unless they control the state apparatus. This motivates them to set their political agendas around capturing power. Parallel to the Islamization measures cited above, the increasing role that religion is now playing in the socialization of Pakistani society can also strengthen Islamist organizations’ expectations of achieving their ultimate goal. Islamists seek to sell their ideology to, and recruit from, the following forms of religious expression in Pakistan: conservative religious orders,⁷ modern-obscurantist religious movements,⁸ modern-reformist religious trends⁹ and Sufi spiritual orders.¹⁰ Additionally, and in many cases unlike these religious groupings, Islamists are exceptionally adept at propagating their political ideology and narrative to traditionally secular and irreligious sections of society.

From a political perspective, a simple categorization of Islamist groups or organizations can be made by their political participation, belief in the electoral process and views of the constitution or law. Muhammad Waseem divides Islamist organizations into first-generation and second-generation; the former being generally supra-sectarian, focused on changing the law, striving to come into power through elections, and operating through literature, while the latter attempt to change the rules of the game not through peaceful means such as elections but through the barrel of the gun.¹¹ Examples of the latter include the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and the Pakistani Taliban. The common characteristic of all such groups is their lack of popularity among the masses and the unlikelihood of their coming into power through the electoral process, which many of them refuse to believe in regardless.

Oliver Roy identifies Waseem’s ‘second-generation Islamists’ as ‘neo-fundamentalists’, who combine political and militant Jihadism against the West. To Roy, “Islamism” is a brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism which claims to recreate a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing their version of *Shariah*, but by establishing first an “Islamic” state through political action. Islamists see Islam not only as a religion, but also a political ideology that should be integrated into all aspects of society, including politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy, etc.¹² According to political scientist Ishtiaq Ahmed, Islamism – without any distinction of first and second generations which are based on absence of and resort to violence, respectively – simplifies Islam to a set of beliefs and practices which are ostensibly anti-intellectual, anti-modern, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic. Thus, as a political ideology, Islamism –

also known as Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, radical Islam and so on – generates a mindset that is invariably hostile to non-Muslims, ‘deviant’ sects, women and liberal Muslims. Such a mindset translated into political action tends to be violence-prone and can give impetus to terrorism.¹³

In Pakistani context, however, Waseem’s description is more relevant because there are many groups that fall somewhere between first-generation political Islamists and second-generation neo-fundamentalist Islamists. Such groups believe that the change they desire is impossible within the Constitution of Pakistan and the existing system. They consider democracy and the democratic or electoral process inadequate for change, contrary to first-generation Islamists who profess a belief in the electoral process and constitutional norms. However, also in distinction to second-generation Islamists or neo-fundamentalists such as the Taliban – with whom they share many ideological traits – these in-between groups do not yet resort to the use of force or violence against the state, its institutions or people to effect change, despite not recognizing the legitimacy of the current constitutional set-up. This is the category identified by Maajid Nawaz as ‘revolutionary Islamists’, sitting between non-violent ‘political Islamists’ and the violent ‘militant Islamists’.¹⁴ Examples of these in-between groups are the Tanzeemul Ikhwan and Tanzeem-e-Islami,¹⁵ Jamaatud Da’wa, the *Khilafah* movement, Al-Muhajiroon and Hizbut Tahrir. Hizbut Tahrir is the oldest and the most globalized of these groups which forms the focus for this paper.

Hizbut Tahrir

Hizbut Tahrir (HT) is a global revolutionary Islamist movement, with branches in around 50 countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States. However, HT claims that it is a political party that has Islam as its ideology.¹⁶ Established in Jerusalem in 1953 by Taqiuddin an-Nabhani (1909-1977), a religious cleric and an appeal court judge in the Shariah court in Jerusalem, HT’s goal is to establish an expansionist super-state they would call the *Khilafah* (caliphate).

A former associate of Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization established in Egypt in 1928, Nabhani thought that the Brotherhood had become too accommodating in its ideology and went on to set up the more radical HT. He rejected capitalism and democracy as *kufr* (apostasy), which remains a basic tenet of HT’s ideology even today, and declared that Islam and Western civilization were incompatible.¹⁷ He set out the goal for HT to unite all Muslims of the world under one political entity governed by his interpretation of *Shariah*. Nabhani led HT until his death in 1977. He was succeeded by Abdul Qadim Zallum, a Palestinian cleric. Ata Abu Rashta, the engineer who is currently the global leader of HT, succeeded Zallum in 2003.¹⁸

While HT’s political activities were confined to Jordan, the West Bank and Lebanon throughout the 1950s, the popularity of the party increased in other Middle Eastern countries in the 1960s. This rise in popularity was followed by HT staging military coups in the early 1970s in unsuccessful bids to seize power in Syria, Jordan and Iraq.¹⁹ After the failure of the coups and the arrest of its members, support for the party declined in the Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s. Some members of HT from the Middle East moved to the UK, Germany and Sweden in the 1980s and 1990s to set up party chapters in Europe. HT quickly garnered support from some second-generation European Muslims.²⁰ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, HT made inroads into Central Asia in the latter half of the 1990s.

Imtiaz Malik, who had been the underground leader of the party in Pakistan for a long time, formally set up HT in Pakistan in the 1990s. After Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, HT Britain sent at least 10 senior members to Pakistan to set up HT cells in all major cities of the country. It secretly enlisted some

officers of Pakistan Army, who were receiving training at Sandhurst, the elite British military academy. The army officers' links with HT were later discovered by the regime of military ruler General Pervez Musharraf and they were arrested in 2003.²¹ In the wake of the army officers' arrest, HT was banned in Pakistan.

Far from being deterred, HT has continued its efforts to infiltrate into high echelons of Pakistan Army and the elite of the Pakistani society. Shahzad Sheikh, the designated spokesman of HT in Karachi, was quoted as saying that the party had been persuading the army to stage a bloodless coup in the country to overthrow the government.²²

The message of HT in Pakistan revolves around three polemical claims. First, that the rulers are agents of the United States, and are working for American interests. Second, the US and the Pakistani governments are killing innocent men, women and children in drone attacks and military operations in the name of the war on terror. Third, the private US security agencies and intelligence agencies, protected by the Pakistani government, are behind suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks in the country.²³

Addressing the Pakistani people in a video uploaded on HT's website on the occasion of presentation in Islamabad on May 9, 2010 of the 'Declaration to the People of Power', a reference to army officers, Naveed Butt, the chief spokesman of HT in Pakistan, said:

"...Today Pakistan's oppressor rulers... shield the Americans *kuffar* [infidels]. Moreover, the Americans lead these rulers in the fight against Muslims under the banner of strategic dialogue... It is these oppressor rulers that allow the American *kuffar* to conduct relentless drone attacks on Pakistani territory that target the old and the young, the men and the women, collapsing houses on the heads of Muslims."

Urging the Pakistanis to rise up in rebellion against their democratically elected government, Butt says: "It is these oppressor rulers that permit the *kuffar* private security agencies and intelligence agencies to arrange a campaign of assassinations and bombings throughout Pakistan, attacking civilians, security forces and the armed forces alike. They [the Pakistani rulers] even shield these American murderers from the local forces, ordering their release whenever they are caught so that they can work without interruption through their infiltration of Taliban...O people of power, respected brothers, these rulers neither care for you nor [for] those whom you have sworn to protect. They care nothing for the *deen* [religion] you carry in your hearts, nor Allah, nor the Holy Prophet. They care nothing for the blood of Muslims...O people of power, raise your swords to uproot these rulers and establish *Khilafah* in their place, remembering your brothers in arms who preceded you in establishing Islam as a state and a rule in Madina."²⁴

HT levels the same charge against the Americans and President Asif Ali Zardari's government in an open letter to *ulema* (clerics) of Pakistan. Issued on December 15, 2009 the letter implores the *ulema* to join HT to establish a *Khilafah* in Pakistan: "O *ulema* of the Muslims in Pakistan! The suffering of the Muslims today in Pakistan and other Muslim countries, the occupation of Muslim lands, the violation of sanctities, the assault upon honour, the looting of wealth and resources, and the hardship in all Muslim countries; these and all other afflictions suffered by the Muslims are the result of the absence of the Islamic state, the Islamic *Khilafah*, and the absence of the *Khaleefah* [caliph]... It is your duty is to join hands with the sincere callers to Islam [Hizbut Tahrir] and establish a second Rightly-guided *Khilafah* state, of whose establishment Rasul Allah [the Prophet] gave good tiding, which is now well within sight, closer than the

blink of an eye, through which the Laws of Allah will be implemented, frontiers and souls will be protected and the scheming of the *kuffar* will blow up in their faces.”²⁵

Although working within a limited sphere in the presence of a multitude of religious organizations striving for similar causes in Pakistan, Hizbut Tahrir tries to distinguish itself on three levels. First, it thinks and advocates that change is not possible within the existing system and emphasizes a struggle beyond constitutional and legal constraints. HT claims that the Constitution of Pakistan and the current democratic system are un-Islamic, and are major hurdles in the way of renewal of the *Khilafah* system in Pakistan.²⁶ For example, the first campaign launched by HT in Pakistan was the anti-Constitution movement in 2001.²⁷ Secondly, HT claims that it has a comprehensive plan—which it asserts other Islamist groups lack—for how the *Khilafah* system will work when it replaces the current system after a revolution.²⁸ And finally, HT does not believe in mass struggle for change and wants to bring change through intervention by the military and the elite.²⁹

It is debatable whether Hizbut Tahrir is the only organization in Pakistan that has, or claims to have, these three characteristics. That will be discussed later in the paper. However, one unique feature of HT is that its leadership appears modern in its outlook, most of its members wear western clothes and are fluent in English. This proves to be an effective tool to influence the modern elite.

Although it is still far from realizing its goal, HT has succeeded in creating some impact on the educated youth in Pakistan. As discussed earlier, HT presents itself as an agent of change. Such slogans appeal to a desire for change among the youth, especially when most of them are under immense pressure of radicalization amid shrinking space for moderate, secular and left-wing tendencies and narratives. What is obvious is that organizations such as HT, which have an attractive agenda, are trying to fill this growing void, associated with a desire for change.

HT: An International Narrative

In the early years after its establishment, HT’s prime focus remained mainly on Middle Eastern countries. A brief note on the history of HT in its manifesto³⁰ states that it was between 1977 and 2003, under the leadership of HT’s second head Abdul Qadim Zallum, that the organization started its operations in more than 40 countries, including many Islamic countries. According to organizational claims, millions of people had by then associated with HT and it had emerged as the largest ‘political party’ in the world working for the establishment of an Islamic *Khilafah*.³¹ The present *amir* (head) of HT Ata Abu Rashta has been associated with the organization since his early age. Before assuming leadership of HT in 2003, he had also served as the party’s spokesperson in Jordan.

KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACE

With the aim to establish a trans-national *Khilafah* state—initially consisting of Muslim-majority states and ultimately expanding to the rest of the world—Hizbut Tahrir employs a central strategy of engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah*, literally, victorious material support, to establish the *Khilafah*.³² However, the tactics for achieving its objectives may differ from place to place. For instance, in the UK, HT had for some time followed the ‘keep your ideology in your heart’ strategy without vocally or tacitly supporting the violent acts carried out by Islamist militants. But in Pakistan, the organization not only accuses Pakistani and Western governments of involvement in acts of terrorism but also extends its sympathies and support to militant groups who are, according to HT, sincerely fighting to establish

Islamic rule and strongly resisting the “nefarious designs of the infidels against the Muslims of Pakistan and Afghanistan”.³³ HT’s approach to such issues in the UK will be totally different, where it increasingly disguises its support for jihad, anti-Semitic beliefs and intolerant ideologies after the 7/7 terrorists attacks.³⁴

Such a variation of tactics and approaches indicates the adaptive nature of HT. In the case of Muslim-majority countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Central Asian states, HT exploits the weaknesses of ‘corrupt’ regimes, their inability to deliver good governance, their pro-West policies and heavy influence of Western culture on a societal level. By doing so, it represents itself as a better alternative to repressive, corrupt and pro-infidel regimes. It is safe to say that HT is not only the most vociferous and open critic of governments in Muslim-majority countries but also does not seem willing to compromise on its ideological and operational activities in accordance with ‘engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah* for establishment of an Islamic state’. That is why it has been banned in so many countries and is put under strict surveillance. A clampdown on HT over time by different countries such as Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Libya and Turkey is an example of how governments of Muslim-majority countries view the organization. In Muslim-minority countries, however, HT considers certain compromises within the respective legal frameworks.

One understandable reason for this difference in HT approach in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries could be the fact that HT aims to first establish the *Khilafah* system in Muslim-majority countries. But HT’s focus on Muslim-minority countries, especially in Europe, offers them certain benefits. For example, being based in Europe, it enjoys freedom of speech which it can use to lobby and influence Muslims for the establishment of the *Khilafah*. Many Muslims from Muslim-majority countries either live in European countries or go there for study or business. HT enjoys complete freedom to reach out to these individuals in those countries to try and persuade them to join the party’s cause. It also has few curbs in establishing networks among Muslim communities in these countries to win their support.

HT’s tactical variations to achieve its political objective of establishing a worldwide system of governance, the *Khilafah*, demonstrates that the party is not averse to fine-tuning its tactics to fit local contexts.

Evolution in Pakistan

Imtiaz Malik, a British-born Pakistani had been the long-term underground leader of the group in Pakistan.³⁵ Naveed Butt, however, is arguably the most prominent leader of HT in Pakistan. A graduate of University of Illinois, Naveed joined HT in the United States, where he worked for Motorola for some time.³⁶ Naveed, who is in his 40s, speaks fluent English and Urdu and extensively quotes from the Quran and *Hadiths* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) in his speeches. He is also well-versed in HT’s Islamist polemics.

Imran Yousafzai, another prominent leader of HT Pakistan, is the deputy spokesman of the party in the country.³⁷ While little is known about Imran, his appearance, accent and last name, Yousafzai—a Pashtun tribe living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—suggests that he hails from north-western Pakistan. Shahzad Sheikh is the other deputy spokesman of HT Pakistan and the main recruiter of the party in Karachi. Imtiaz Malik is believed to have informally set up HT in Pakistan in the early 1990s. In 1999, a call was sent to British Hizbut Tahrir members to move to Pakistan, prompting the movement of some of the UK’s “top quality” activists to South Asia.³⁸ The Pakistan branch of Hizbut Tahrir was thus formally

established in December 2000 when a group of British youth of Pakistani descent, headed by Malik and guided behind the scenes by British-Pakistanis Dr. Abdul Wajid in Lahore and Dr. Abdul Basit Shaikh in Karachi among others decided to use Pakistan as the base camp for their movement to establish the *Khilafah* in the world.³⁹ HT Pakistan's spokesperson, Naveed Butt, clarifies that he is a Pakistani national. However he too was enlisted while in the US. Naveed sees this emphasis on a foreign connection as propaganda against HT and says that the Pakistani branch of HT does not operate out of Britain.⁴⁰ Another HT member, Shahzad Malik, believes it was just a coincidence that the movers and shakers of HT hailed from the UK.⁴¹ British newspaper The Sunday Times has claimed that HT UK targeted for enlisting Pakistani military cadets sent to train at Sandhurst.⁴² Conversations with members of HT Pakistan reveal that it retains strong connections with HT UK. In fact, Tayyab Muqem, an HT member reported to have assaulted former member Maajid Nawaz in Lahore is a British-Pakistani from Stoke-On-Trent, UK. He, like many others, moved to Pakistan to further the aims of the party.

This British connection has fuelled suspicion among Pakistani officials that HT was launched in Pakistan by MI6, the British intelligence agency.⁴³ Naveed denies the charge. He argues that the Pakistani state is a puppet in the hands of the US, and that it is afraid of HT's alternative plan and rising power in the country.⁴⁴

In addition to recruits, financial support for HT to set up operations in Pakistan also came from HT UK. At the time of its establishment in Pakistan, HT launched an extensive publicity campaign in various Pakistani cities, particularly Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Karachi and set up its office in Lahore. The campaign focused on the need for an "Islamic" revolution by establishing *Khilafah* rule.⁴⁵ The first national-level conference of HT in the country was organized in Lahore in November 2003, two and a half years after its formal establishment in Pakistan, and attracted thousands of youth.⁴⁶ Just three days after this conference, HT was banned by the government of Pakistan. It challenged the ban in the Lahore High Court but the court dismissed the writ. In 2006, the party again filed a petition against the ban before the Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court, and the case is still pending.

According to Nawaz, and some analysts, HT's focus on Pakistan was motivated by the nuclear tests carried out by the country in 1998, as the group wanted to facilitate the acquisition of nuclear technology for the *Khilafah* state.⁴⁷ Secondly, HT considers Pakistan's strategic location, particularly its proximity with Muslim-majority countries including Central Asian states, suitable for implementing its agenda.

Comparison and Ties with Other Political Groups

a. Political Islamist Parties

The ideological, political and tactical narratives of HT are deeply rooted in the political Islamist movements of the Cold War era. These movements were initiated by the educated youth in Muslim-majority countries and they had borrowed the tactics of leftist movements such as using study groups, demonstrations, and influencing the elite classes, for effecting change. In Pakistan, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was an extension of such international Islamist movements. HT follows a similar model in Pakistan. It would be interesting to compare between the two to understand the prospects of HT in Pakistan. The JI had also tried to establish influence within the military and the intellectual elite. HT puts a great deal of emphasis on the economy just like the JI has been doing, the only difference being that the JI invested all its energies in developing an economic narrative to counter Communism. Both groups share certain

commonalities in their concept of the state as an agent of change, their emphasis on an organizational structure and their tactics.

The JI has so far failed to create any mass movement and its electoral record is also not impressive. JI's emphasis has remained more on international issues rather than those of local. JI's influence in the military, however, has aided it in creating a support base. Its close association with the establishment allowed it to develop as a pressure group, which was used to destabilize governments in the past. But the political discourse and trends on the public level are different and the party has failed to convert its support base into a mass movement. However, that has not prevented the JI from dominating and monopolizing certain public spaces, such as student unions. Such monopolization, as has been the case with Punjab University, the Lahore-based main university of the province of Punjab, has seriously stifled debate and hindered the natural development of students' views. In this sense, the JI could be considered to play a considerable destabilizing role.

On a strategic and tactical level, HT is following a similar pattern. However, it lacks in three important aspects of leadership. First, it does not have a charismatic ideologue like Maulana Maudoodi, the JI founder; HT's Middle Eastern leaders have little appeal or influence in Pakistan. Secondly, though the HT leadership, comprising mainly of foreign-educated young men, has good communication skills, they do not stand as 'ideologues' and cannot create an impact. Thirdly, the HT leadership has not been brought up in Pakistan and their *Salafist* tendencies could be a hurdle in gaining popular support.

Two important aspects which make the HT discourse in Pakistan different from that of the JI and put it at a disadvantage are its anti-constitutional agenda, and aims of bringing about a revolution through a military coup. Many nationalist parties in Pakistan pursue anti-constitutionalism but the mainstream discourse in the country does not encourage such tendencies. HT could win the support of youngsters in Pakistan but penetrating the military establishment cannot be effective particularly on account of its anti-constitutional program.⁴⁸

Another inherent weakness associated with the HT discourse is that the party is developing introvert tendencies among the youth. It teaches its new recruits that everything one knows about anything is wrong and *haram* (sacrilegious). One has to begin with a clean slate in HT and there is no room for opposition.⁴⁹ The organization discourages common members to interact with other political and Islamist party workers, which is developing a phenomenon of 'group think' in HT.

With the exception of partial cooperation with the JI and Tanzeem-e-Islami founded by the late Dr. Israr Ahmed, HT is generally not on good terms with Islamist forces in Pakistan. But HT's leadership in Pakistan views such cooperation as a mere coincidence.⁵⁰ As mentioned earlier, HT believes that other religious groups and Islamist parties working in Pakistan for an "Islamic" revolution, or the *Khilafah*, lack a concrete roadmap and are part of the existing constitutional system; hence they are unable to bring about change. This perception within HT's ranks has generally worked as a factor in keeping its political outlook at odds with that of other Islamist parties in Pakistan. For example, it developed differences with Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)—an alliance of six Islamist parties sharing the provincial governments in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) during General Musharraf's regime—when it rejected the MMA's claim of being a true representatives of Islam. HT labeled the MMA as part of an imperialist democracy that should not have called itself an 'Islamic alliance' because it did not fulfill the essential requirements of an "Islamic" government. The HT spokesperson took the view that the MMA government was collecting taxes whereas there was no concept of collecting taxes or charging for utilities

according to Islam. Secondly, “the *Hisba* Bill introduced by the MMA government in NWFP was an un-Islamic bill and could not be an alternative to the Islamic system of jurisdiction.”⁵¹ The opposition for the MMA led to HT facing a lot of hardships, especially in the NWFP (now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), where Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), one of the constituent parties of the MMA, stopped HT from carrying out its activities in JUI-controlled mosques.

Members of HT have favorable views of Tanzeem-e-Islami of the late Dr. Israr, a prominent Islamist cleric in Pakistan. One of the reasons for this is that Dr. Israr had also worked for the establishment of *Khilafah* in Pakistan from his own platform. HT members are also not critical of Dr. Israr’s roadmap for *Khilafah*, which an HT member claims has actually been borrowed from them.

HT seems keen to develop ties with mainstream politico-religious groups of the country. Addressing an HT press conference, Muhammad Akmal, an activist, said that HT is interested in forging ties with other religious-political parties of Pakistan.

b. *Militant Groups*

HT is ostensibly against militancy and calls all destructive activities in Kashmir, Afghanistan, etc. unproductive acts. It believes that Muslims should first establish a *Khilafah* after which it would be proper to take care of all concerns and problems via a state-sponsored “jihad”. “Our workers are working peacefully without getting involved in any kind of terrorism,” claimed the HT spokesperson in Lahore.⁵² Interviews with HT members suggested that the group believes in bringing about a bloodless military-led revolution and will never resort to Jihadism to establish their *Khilafah* state.

It was during its confrontation with the MMA that HT declared all Pakistani *Jihadist* organizations state puppets, which led to a direct clash between HT activists and militants. Militant groups have beaten up HT members on several occasions, mainly on the occasions of their congregations while HT members were distributing their party’s literature among the militant group members.

There is some ambiguity in the HT discourse with regard to its stance on militant narratives in Pakistan. It criticizes both the militants and the Pakistani government’s ‘crackdown’ on the militants. HT also seems hesitant to point fingers at the militants for their actions against civilians and security forces in Pakistan. One assumption that informs most HT arguments, disseminated through media and literature, is that Muslims, Pakistan-based militants in this case, could not possibly be responsible for the horrific acts of terrorism being carried out across Pakistan. At the same time some leaflets and other HT literature assert that terrorism in Pakistan is a reaction to the anti-Islam policies of successive governments and a revenge of sorts against the killing of Muslims. However, it is not stated who is involved in these ‘activities of reaction and revenge’, though it is repeatedly asserted that the Pakistani government and the United States are involved in this bloodshed of Muslims.

Leadership and Organizational Structure

After a clampdown on HT in various countries, particularly in the Arab and Central Asian states, where its members were arrested and put behind bars, HT has made its organizational network more obscure to avoid any breakdown. Being a banned organization, HT has no offices in Pakistan and its organizational affairs are mainly looked after from members’ homes. Furthermore, HT members have complained about media attitudes, saying it creates problems for them in running organizational affairs.⁵³ HT spokesperson Naveed Butt refused to disclose the number of the party’s members in Pakistan, citing security concerns.

However, even in the UK, where divulging membership figures would apparently pose no security concern, HT refuses to do so. Questions have been raised whether this is a ploy to hide the lack of a mass membership base. Though HT may not necessarily aspire to mass membership in countries like Pakistan, it could still be embarrassed by perceptions of a lack of mass membership.

HT discourages the concept of 'leaders' within the organization and all members enjoy equal status. For example, there is no concept of public office-bearers in HT in Pakistan; there is only a chief spokesman who has two deputies.⁵⁴ There are, however, office-bearers for internal party structure. No member other than the chief spokesman can issue any statement to the media. No member can deliver sermons or lectures without the permission of the spokesman, who is also bound to follow the instructions of an underground central leadership.⁵⁵ The central body is bound to follow the instructions from HT's global office and keep in touch with the UK office for consultation.⁵⁶ No member can stay permanently at one station in a country and they usually migrate every six years.

It is interesting that HT members, working in different departments, generally know little about each other. For example, those working with army personnel will have no contact with those working with lawyers or traders. There are only a few occasions where there may be a possibility of knowing members working in other areas. Those who are in charge of relevant departments take their instructions from UK office and send their reports to the chief spokesman who directly reports to the centre.

Usually HT members do not disclose organizational affairs, information about the number of members, and their contacts with the media or with non-members. An HT member in Islamabad, who only gave his name as Imran, claimed that the party's members in Pakistan number in thousands and they are working in all major cities of the country. The HT seminar in November 2003 in Lahore was attended by more than 2,000 members. It is the only Islamist organization in Pakistan that has a large number of female members, who usually appear in demonstrations and protests held by the party.

Discussions with HT members revealed that at present Taimur Butt, Naveed Butt, Imran Yousafzai, Shahzad Shaikh, Muhammad Irfan, Nadeem Khan, Professor Nasir Safdar, Dr. Irfan Paracha and Saad Abdul Raheem, most of whom hail from the UK, are amongst the most prominent members of the party in Pakistan. However, the true leadership in Pakistan remains undisclosed, even to the members, due to security fears. At the time of HT's launch in Pakistan a decade ago, the central leadership committee was headed by British-Pakistani Imtiaz Malik. Until 2003, HT Pakistan's campaign to enlist military officers was led by Omar Khan, a British-Pakistani who had become an HT member during his stay in the United States. In 2003, Omar was detained by Pakistani authorities for being the brain behind the exposed coup plot.⁵⁷

HT: Discourse in Pakistan

In Pakistan, HT focuses on a six-point agenda under their broader theme of *Khilafah*:

- 1) Economic reform
- 2) Judicial reform
- 3) Foreign policy
- 4) Good governance and reform in the administrative structure
- 5) Social justice
- 6) Education

A brief description of this agenda is strict accountability of the rulers, distribution of wealth and resources among the citizens, prompt justice for all, an 'Islamic' rather than 'Western' social system, an Islamic media, a foreign policy "based on Islam" which will take "humanity out from the darkness of *kufr* [infidelity] to the light of Islam" through preaching and jihad, a domestic policy based on equality, and education for all.⁵⁸ It is noteworthy that though HT uses the word 'reform', the intent is to overthrow the existing system and replace it in accordance with its manifesto. Perhaps the word 'reform' indicates the difficulties in getting Pakistanis to adopt a more revolutionary stance against the constitution.

The HT spokesperson in Pakistan claims that the party provides a clear roadmap to achieve the goals and objectives on its agenda: "Hizbut Tahrir has a very strong and clear blueprint to replace the democratic and imperialistic systems with the *Khilafah*."⁵⁹ He vows that HT will provide the world with an alternative that would rid the people of all injustices. He asserts that HT's concept of *Khilafah* is a comprehensive alternative to the capitalist system and that the party has done its homework regarding its implementation by working out details of the economic, political, judicial and administrative alternatives.

As mentioned earlier, the main political emphasis of HT Pakistan is on replacing the present constitutional framework and democratic parliamentary system with a "Shariah-based Islamic *Khilafah* system". In 2003, HT organized three seminars in Lahore, Peshawar and Islamabad on the "1973 Constitution and *Khilafah*", concluding that the constitution of Pakistan was un-Islamic.

Strategies and Tactics

As discussed earlier, HT's central strategy in Pakistan revolves around engendering popular support and seeking *Nussrah*. Within this strategic domain, it has been using two main tactics; first, challenging the existing system; and secondly, targeting only the literate and influential segments of society such as intellectuals, students, military officers, journalists, lawyers, businessmen and policy makers. HT members claimed in their discussion with the author that it was only recently that the party started to target and reach out directly to the masses. This process was initiated to consolidate and expand 'popular' support for HT after the party felt that it had been successful in cultivating contacts in influential circles. To create a space in the public also means increasing the demand for *Khilafah* and increase pressure on the government.

HT claims that change in Pakistan is only possible by moving influential segments of society. Considering the special context of Pakistan, creating an area of influence within the army would offer a certain control over the country and the decision-making process, and HT is focused on reaching out to four or five such military leaders who may help it establish *Khilafah* in the country, hence the party's emphasis on the elite and the military establishment.

According to an HT member, the military is their prime target because it is the most powerful institution in Pakistan: "It (military) does not follow the Constitution or any law and comes to power whenever it wants to. That is why we have been persuading military officers to establish the *Khilafah* and we have been very successful in doing that."⁶⁰ Winning support from the political and religious parties, judiciary, the lawyers' community, bureaucracy and the media is the second priority of the group.

HT's plans regarding the media seek to make conditions favorable for the party, persuading the people of the soundness of its viewpoint, and winning sympathies of powerful institutions and individuals in the country. HT has been known to set up stalls outside offices of mobile phone companies, seeking to enlist

staff who can share the personal and contact details of key figures in Pakistan. Once that was achieved, HT began a mass SMS campaign to all leading journalists, regularly updating them on HT news.

HT's focus on major cities is fuelled by its belief that the people of major cities play an important role in forming public opinion in the country. Furthermore, the HT leadership thinks that it should recruit a number of bureaucrats, who would be capable of running the affairs of the *Khilafah* according to HT's plan. Hence, HT has targeted the academic institutions that are best known for producing civil servants, such as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

HT has encouraged the establishment of various front organizations that offer advice and help to students in getting visas for the United Kingdom. One Lahore-based member, British-Pakistani Shahzad Karim, has set up a company with other HT members, advising prospective students on the practicalities of living and studying in the UK. HT has also successfully planted its members as lecturers in various institutions across the country, including institutions such as the Punjab University, LUMS and the International Islamic University in Islamabad. Bagging such teaching positions is especially easy when British-Pakistani members have qualifications from foreign universities, and in some cases, hold lecturing positions in universities in Britain. Sheffield-based Dr. Muhammad Nawaz was one such individual who moved from a lectureship in a UK university to Punjab University in 1999, facilitated by Maajid Nawaz.

It is difficult to generalize and compare these strategies and tactics as a whole with those of one or two Islamist groups in Pakistan. Even if there are some similarities in tactics, they are probably not being used to further the same ends. For example, many Islamist groups use public pressure tactics, but there may not be a similar demand for establishing a *Khilafah*. Others may use this tactic in order to demand enforcement of their version of *Shariah* like the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi in Swat. Similarly, HT and Jamaat-e-Islami both try to influence the military but their objectives in doing so are not the same; Jamaat-e-Islami's attempts are not aimed at bringing about a 'military coup' and an eventual Islamist revolution.

Communication and Ideological Propagation

HT describes its ideological propagation as an 'awareness campaign' to inform the public about the difference between their concept of *Khilafah* and other systems of governance in the world.⁶¹ HT employs multiple tools to spread its message and propagate its ideology. Besides relying on print and online dissemination, it also has a comprehensive program for ideological indoctrination and training of its members, particularly new recruits. It also has a very clear roadmap for the media and the information ministry of its desired *Khilafah* state, which is included in HT's manifesto. Before and after its May 9, 2010 'Declaration to the People of Power' in Pakistan, HT has mounted an aggressive advertisement campaign in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, using billboards, banners, pamphlets and text messages.⁶² Banners advertising the HT declaration could be seen in markets, neighborhoods and on main roads of the two cities. A brief description of HT's tools of communication and ideological propagation is given below.

Print

Pamphlets, booklets, books, press notes, open letters, and HT publications such as magazines are the major print media tools of the party. Distribution of one- or two-page pamphlets outside mosques after Friday prayers accounts for a significant part of HT's 'awareness campaign'. The party also conducts

door-to-door campaigns for this purpose. Sometimes HT also distributes booklets, usually containing around 10 pages, in the same manner. It also engages illiterate and unemployed youth to distribute their pamphlets and put up posters. In 2008, police in Karachi arrested boys aged between 14 and 15 for putting up such HT posters. The boys were not HT members and had no idea what the content said. They were being paid 100 rupees per day to put up the banners.⁶³ The group also relies on leaflets to launch campaigns. For example, in 2009, HT distributed hundreds of thousands leaflets denouncing 'American presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan'.

According to Naveed Butt, HT publishes books, booklets, and pamphlets, mainly in English and Urdu, about the 'system of the *Khilafah* which explain the political, social, judicial and economic systems under an 'Islamic' government.⁶⁴

The party also publishes a monthly Urdu magazine called *Khilafat*, which is in breach of the law for publication of magazines and newspapers in Pakistan, as it does not have the mandatory official permit.

Electronic and Online

Since HT is banned in Pakistan, the media is reluctant to give coverage to the party's activities and ideology. Therefore, HT is rather successfully using the Internet as an alternative medium to spread its ideology. The party's Urdu and English websites have a wide range of HT publications, including HT Pakistan's manifesto, videos, electronic copies of books, as well as pamphlets, booklets, articles, press releases, comments on news, analysis of important events, information about HT's organizational activities and press coverage of HT activities.⁶⁵ Apart from the websites of HT Pakistan, one can also find on YouTube a plethora of videos of HT Pakistan seminars, and messages to the Pakistani people. The video of HT's press conference in Islamabad on May 9, 2010, on the occasion of presentation of its 'Declaration to the People of Power', was available on YouTube on May 10.⁶⁶

HT also relies on social networking sites, particularly Facebook, to recruit Pakistani youth. The party has set up a group called 'Rise of Khudi' on Facebook, which has more than 1,500 members.⁶⁷ HT advertises forthcoming events on Facebook and posts pictures of earlier events on the social networking site. News feeds, videos, articles and *Hadiths* that support HT's worldview are uploaded on the 'Rise of Khudi'. Links to publications of HT Britain are also available on the Facebook group. In short, the 'Rise of Khudi' is a complete radicalization package that the youth may succumb to.

HT relies extensively on modern tools of communication to spread its message. Its blogs and websites contain vast amounts of material on ideological, political, economic and organizational issues. This is an inexpensive but extensively effective source of indoctrination, to which HT directs the interested youth, instead of its literature, especially since the organization is banned in Pakistan. HT regularly demonstrates its resilience and technological prowess by launching new websites soon after the cyber crime wing of the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) shuts down previous ones. After their websites on Pakistani servers were shut down, HT now uses Afghanistan-based satellite systems to host their websites.⁶⁸ The party uses the same system to sending short messaging service (SMS), another effective communication tool for HT.

While HT has essentially been using the Internet to promote its ideology, the party has recently made desperate efforts to persuade the mainstream media to cover its activities. Before its press conference at

National Press Club Islamabad in May 2010, HT contacted several senior journalists requesting coverage of the event.⁶⁹

Demonstrations

Holding of peaceful demonstrations is a legitimate right in a democratic society, but as a banned organization HT faces curbs on the right to assembly and protest. Yet, HT often holds demonstrations not only to register its protest but also to demonstrate its manpower. After the November 2003 ban, the number of participants in these demonstrations fell to a few dozens, but number has recently been increasing. HT successfully managed to gather hundreds of demonstrators for anti-US rallies in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar on May 30, 2009.⁷⁰ More than 200 activists were arrested across the country at the time while participating in rallies organized by HT. Demonstrations lead to dissemination of HT message in two ways; directly among the participants; and through media coverage of the event.

HT argues that the curbs it faces in Pakistan are unjustifiable and claims that its action should not be covered by prohibition of hate speech or of violent activity under the country's anti-terrorism laws but under guarantees of freedom of expression, and that it is entitled to peaceful demonstrations.⁷¹

Training and Other Events

According to an HT member, the training of a new member takes between three to six months. "First we identify a person who has the potential to be useful for HT and then focus on convincing him to join the *Khilafah* cause. When he is ready, the training process starts, and five to six members develop close association with the new member. The first phase consists of correcting his beliefs—to convert him to *Salafism*—and the second phase aims to teach him about HT objectives and strategies. In the last phase, his potential and duties are identified and he is assigned responsibilities, either in the organizational structure or in persuading other people to join the party."⁷² Thus, training also works as a chain process to recruit more people for HT.

HT also arranges weekly study circles to educate its members and to recruit new activists. Before the party was banned in Pakistan in 2003, the study circles were organized in mosques or restaurants, but now they are held at the residences of HT members on account of what the party calls 'security reasons'. Though the message remains the same, HT has changed its *modus operandi* to persist with its dissemination.

HT uses other methods, such as debates and seminars, to create interest among the people about its ideology. The participants usually include students, academics and scholars. At times HT holds a series of such events on a certain topic in various cities. For instance, it held seminars entitled 'Ramadan: A Month of Islamic Dominance' in major cities across Pakistan during the Muslim fasting month in 2009. A summary of these seminars, published and distributed in the form of leaflets, states that Pakistani Muslims reject America's 'political intervention' because it is *haram* (sacrilegious) to have any agreement with non-believers or infidels which authorizes their interference in the affairs of an 'Islamic *Khilafah* state'. It demands that the government shut down the US embassy in Pakistan, and expel the ambassador. It also invites Muslims to the *Khilafah* and calls upon Pakistan's army to help HT toward that goal.⁷³

Individual meetings with influential and educated people, in order to influence and convince them about HT's agenda, are another important tactic of HT members.⁷⁴

HT's Impact

The party's chief spokesperson, Naveed Butt, evaluates HT's impact in Pakistan in terms of increasing membership and popularity of the party in educational institutions. Discussions with other HT members suggest that the party is so far satisfied with its performance in Pakistan. The HT members were unanimous in stating that HT's work in Pakistan was in the preparatory phase, and at this stage the primary goal, which was attached with the main objective, was to create awareness among the masses about the *Khilafah* system, and that HT had been successful in creating an impact in that respect. However, it is difficult to independently validate these claims. Some analysts argue that it is the duty of the ideological and religio-political ethos that people seem 'sympathetic' towards such 'religious' narratives, but that this does not mean they will lend political support to HT, which is vital for its success. They quote examples of other Islamist parties which have been striving for electoral support since Pakistan was founded but are yet to achieve considerable success. They assert that although HT claims it has a concrete blueprint for implementing its concept of *Khilafah*, it offers a very crude and impracticable roadmap towards the first step, which is how to establish that *Khilafah*.

Some others however highlight the gradual penetration of HT into its targeted audience—which includes the educated classes who have a role in policy making, administration and decision making in the military, civil bureaucracy, business community, media, the legal fraternity and intellectuals—through which it seeks to establish the *Khilafah* rule. HT focuses not only on the people who currently hold positions of influence in the military establishment and bureaucracy but also those who could assume such roles in the future. Hence, the focus on student bodies in colleges, universities and professional educational institutions. HT Pakistan mainly has such focus in six cities: Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. That is because its members believe that any change in the country will originate in these cities, due to the influence their inhabitants have on policy making and shaping the opinions of fellow countrymen. In other cities, HT concentrates only on the youth from the elite and students of professional institutions.

This focus has yielded dividends for HT Pakistan. The Islamabad police arrested a PhD nuclear scientist, an environmental scientist and a USAID project officer in October 2009 during a demonstration against US policies.⁷⁵ An HT member confirmed that the arrested men were their activists and boasted that it was very easy to convince the elite to join the party. He said that the objectives of HT inspire most of them and if, infrequently, anyone has any objection he or she engages in an argument with HT and is almost always convinced after a debate.⁷⁶ However, he said that it was often difficult to convince the people who were already actively associated with a political, religious or sectarian organization, and HT members "do not waste their time on them".⁷⁷

However, the fact that most of the members and sympathizers of HT in Pakistan are military officers, scientists, engineers, bureaucrats and the youth with promising careers ahead of them should not be dismissed. It gives credence to the HT leadership's claims that the party has succeeded in having an impact on its targeted audience.⁷⁸

Strategic and Security Threat Assessment

HT's political discourse is based on religio-ideological narratives that are already in abundance in Pakistan and form one of the root causes of the main security threats posed to the Pakistani state and society. HT can, in fact, give impetus to the theo-political polarization in Pakistani society where space for

any discourse other than the Islamist narrative has almost already disappeared. This is a threat in general, irrespective of which Islamist organization or group is contributing to it; and HT is also a part of this threat augmentation.

HT claims to be a non-violent movement, but has been linked to a number of terrorist plots in Pakistan, including an attempt to assassinate former president General Pervez Musharraf. During an interview in Islamabad, an HT member, who requested anonymity, did not deny the involvement of HT members in some 'violent activities' – such as the plot to assassinate Musharraf and the case of an army captain who faces court martial in Kotli, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on charges of planning a coup on behalf of HT – but characterized them as personal acts of a few individuals which do not reflect the overall HT policy. "If some HT members get involved in violent activities in their personal capacity or in collaboration with some other group that does not affect HT's interests or its emphasis on non-violent means to effect change."⁷⁹

Some other factors also suggest that HT may pose potential threats to the security of the Pakistani state and society. Firstly, the disenchanted youth associated with HT may get involved in terrorist activities; secondly, HT does not denounce such activities. Thirdly, as Maajid Nawaz, a former HT member claims the party has two faces. HT does not discount the possibility of resort to violence via the military, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing the *Khilafah* state, it rather obliges it. Naveed Butt states that after establishment of *Khilafah*, part of the second phase will be to spread the borders of the state through offensive 'jihad' or aggressive warfare.

At another level, the pursuit of a Jihadist agenda cannot be ruled out in the case of HT. It believes that jihad and preaching will be used for "taking humanity out from the darkness of *kufr* (infidelity) to the light of Islam" after the establishment of *Khilafah*.⁸⁰ Perhaps HT has assumed a timeline for the establishment of their *Khilafah* in Pakistan after which it plans to pursue 'jihad' to expand the *Khilafah*'s boundaries. But the question is if things do not happen according to HT's expectations, as the dominant discourse in Pakistan suggests, who can guarantee that the party, or its members at least, will not adopt the militant or Jihadist discourse to achieve their primary objectives, especially when there are already some indications of their involvement in such activities.

Secondly, HT tries to influence the political leadership, mainly leaders of Islamist parties in Pakistan. It claims, as discussed earlier, that they do not have a clear agenda and that HT can provide them with a viable blueprint for the establishment of *Khilafah*, or an 'Islamic' revolution, that they are working towards. Most Islamist organizations are traditionalists in their approach and work under the Constitution of Pakistan. HT can lead the Islamists to a viewpoint that is characterized by opposition to the constitution. In other words, HT has the potential to compress the political and democratic space by guiding the Islamist parties and the citizens of Pakistan towards non-democratic and unconstitutional narratives of governance and state-functioning.

Thirdly, HT has been persistently targeting Pakistan Army officials for enlisting and the fact that it has the potential to augment the 'Islamic revolution' niche among some senior military officials cannot be ignored. It is pertinent to mention that in two military coup plots unearthed in Pakistan HT was the prime suspect. A military court in Pakistan-administered Kashmir identified two military officers and two civilians in January 2010 as members of HT and charged them with planning to attack Shamsi Airbase of Pakistan Air Force in Balochistan. This facility is generally believed to be used as a base for US drones which attack targets in Pakistan's tribal areas. The accused were also charged with transferring

sensitive information to HT.⁸¹ HT had also developed close links with Major General Zaheer Abbasi, the main accused in the foiled military coup in 1995.

Fourthly, HT concentrates considerably on university students and those studying in professional institutions. The infiltration of these groups, especially with an anti-state and anti-constitutional agenda, runs the risk of putting more and more educated Pakistani youth on the path of radicalization. According to Maajid Nawaz, radicalization of this section of youth could have a poisonous effect on other segments of society, eventually making the core fabric of society prone to radicalization owing to its Islamism-guided polarization.

Conclusion

HT is an ideological group that falls somewhere between political Islamists and militant Islamists, and may also be classified as a kind of a revolutionary Islamist set-up. HT emphatically asserts that the only way to progress, prosperity and development is the implementation of Islam as an ideology in Pakistan and in the whole world. In Pakistan, it has an anti-constitutional and anti-democratic outlook and agenda, and its narrative on militant and violent movements and groups in the country remains vague. It has well developed tactics to communicate with the masses and propagate its ideology. The danger in discourses such as HT's is not so much in its ability to achieve popular appeal in Pakistan. Rather, its appeal will always remain niche and exclusive. The group primarily targets Pakistan Army, the educated youth, bureaucracy and the business community to win their support and sympathies to realize their *Khilafah* plan.

By focusing on the elite and the military for achieving its ambition, taking over the Islamist discourse and pushing all other narratives to the fringes, there is little need for HT to have popular support to take control of things. Most analysts tend to watch madrassas and popular mass movements for signs of radicalization. The danger with HT is ever more serious and often overlooked because it is not always visible and does not conform to stereotypes. Vanguard ideological movements and military coups rarely have mass appeal, but they can and do succeed sometimes. It may not be able to take over by stealth, but it can certainly contribute to pushing the intellectual and positive discourses in the country to the periphery. HT certainly has the potential to polarize progress in Pakistan by injecting schismatic dogma into the very classes that Pakistan so desperately needs to progress.

KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACE

Notes:

- ¹ Under Pakistani law the Ahmedis are accused of having challenged the finality of the Prophet of Islam. Mirza Ghulam Muhammad was the supreme leader of Ahmedis.
- ² Muhammad Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1980), pp. 84-85.
- ³ Article 260 (3), Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.
- ⁴ Saeed Shafiq, *Political System of Pakistan and Public Policy*, (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1989), pp. 99-100.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Manzooruddin Ahmed, *Contemporary Pakistan: Politics, Economy, and Society*, (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1980). pp. 27-37.
- ⁷ Such as the Deobandi Tableeghi Jamaat movement and various groups of the Barelvi denomination, such as Minhajul Quran.
- ⁸ Such as the obscurantist Salafist Ahl-e-Hadith denomination.
- ⁹ These include Salafist modernist reformers such as Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and his Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences.
- ¹⁰ Like the personality-led sufi cults of the *pirs*.
- ¹¹ Muhammad Waseem, "Origins and Growth Patterns of Islamic Organizations in Pakistan," <http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/PagesfromReligiousRadicalismAndSecurityinSouthAsiach2.pdf>, accessed on July 13, 2009.
- ¹² Olivier Roy, "Changing Patterns among Radical Islamic Movements," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Winter/Spring 1999 - Volume VI, Issue 1.
- ¹³ Ishtiaq Ahmed, "Radicalization and De-Radicalization in Singapore and Pakistan: A Comparison," *Conflict and Peace Studies*, Vol. 2, Number 3, (Islamabad: PIPS, 2009), p. 45.
- ¹⁴ Maajid Nawaz, in testimony before the US Senate Homeland Security Government Affairs Committee, July 10, 2008. <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/component/content/article/39-events/206-maajid-nawaz-roots-of-violent-islamist-extremism-and-efforts-to-counter-it-hsgac.html>, accessed on June 29, 2010.
- ¹⁵ Both organizations have their origin and headquarters in the Punjab province. The former is being headed by Akram Awan and Dr. Israr Ahmed led the latter until his death.
- ¹⁶ See HT's manifesto at the party's website: www.hizb-pakistan.info
- ¹⁷ Zeyno Baran, 2005. "Fighting the War of Ideas." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.84, No. 6, p. 70.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 71.
- ¹⁹ International Crisis Group. June 30, 2003. *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizb Ut-Tahrir*. ICG Asia Report N°58 Osh/Brussels, p. 3.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Nicola Smith, *British Islamists Plot Against Pakistan*, The Sunday Times. July 4, 2009. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 15, 2010.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nyGLECUILY&feature=related>, accessed on May 26, 2010.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Open letter to the *Ulema* of Pakistan from Hizbut Tahrir Wilayah Pakistan. <http://www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/resources/leaflets/open-letter-to-the-ulema-of-pakistan-from-hizb-ut-tahrir-wilayah-pakistan.html>, accessed on May 27, 2010.
- ²⁶ See the HT manifesto on its website: www.hizb-pakistan.com
- ²⁷ Interview with Naveed Butt, chief spokesperson of HT Pakistan, Lahore, April 2010
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Available at www.hizb-pakistan.info.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² HT defines *Nussrah* as a way to achieve power through influencing the army to stage a coup.
- ³³ An Urdu language pamphlet distributed by HT Pakistan in December 2009 blamed Zardari's government and his 'American allies' for orchestrating 'bombing campaigns' in Pakistan in order to defame the "Mujahideen".
- ³⁴ Houriya Ahmed & Hannah Stuart, "Hizbut Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy" The Centre for Social Cohesion, November 2009.
- ³⁵ Nicola Smith, *British Islamists Plot Against Pakistan*, The Sunday Times. July 4, 2009. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 15, 2010.
- ³⁶ http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4377 Accessed on May 27, 2010.
- ³⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsHRJ-zsBh0>, accessed on May 15, 2010.

- ³⁸ Nicola Smith, British Islamists Plot Against Pakistan, The Sunday Times. July 4, 2009. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 15, 2010.
- ³⁹ Interview with an HT member, a software engineer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, Islamabad, January 15, 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Interview in Lahore, April 18, 2010.
- ⁴¹ Interview in Islamabad, March 22, 2010.
- ⁴² <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6638483.ece>, accessed on July 13, 2009.
- ⁴³ Interview with Naveed Butt, Lahore.
- ⁴⁴ Naveed Butt, *Khilafat*, Issue 8.
- ⁴⁵ Naveed Butt, "Why the ban on an intellectual and political party like HT? *Khilafat*, Issue 8.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Dr. Simon Ross Valentine, Fighting Kufr and the American Raj: Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Pakistan, Pakistan Security Research Unit, Brief No 56, February 12, 2010.
- ⁴⁸ The Pakistan military has faced three major coup attempts, which have been mainly ideologically motivated, and none has succeeded.
- ⁴⁹ Murtaza Ali Shah, Plotting a revolution, The News on Sunday, October 25, 2009
- ⁵⁰ Interview with HT member Shahzad Malik, Rawalpindi, March 31, 2010.
- ⁵¹ Interview with Naveed Butt.
- ⁵² Interview with Naveed Butt.
- ⁵³ Interview in Islamabad.
- ⁵⁴ Naveed Butt is the chief spokesperson of HT Pakistan and Imran Yousafzai and Shahzad Shaikh are his deputies.
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Naveed Butt.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Rashid, Ahmed, The Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/1440284/Pakistan-army-officers-arrested-in-terror-swoop.html>, accessed on June 28, 2010.
- ⁵⁸ A detailed description is available in the HT manifesto available in Urdu and English languages on its website www.hizb-pakistan.org or www.hizb-pakistan.info, accessed on April 18, 2010.
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Naveed Butt, Lahore by Ali Waqar, May 2010
- ⁶⁰ Interview with a HT member in Islamabad
- ⁶¹ Interview with HT member Muhammad Amir, Islamabad, April 2010
- ⁶² <http://www.hizb-pakistan.com/home/featured/photos-hizb-ut-tahrir-wilayah-pakistan-embarked-on-the-next-stage-of-its-campaign>, accessed on July 16, 2010.
- ⁶³ Staff Reporter, Teenagers arrested for putting up Hizb Posters, Dawn, Karachi, February 10, 2008.
- ⁶⁴ Interview in Islamabad.
- ⁶⁵ Urdu website: <http://www.khilafat.dk/>; English website: <http://www.hizb-pakistan.com/>.
- ⁶⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b4U9nY-9sA>, accessed on May 14, 2010.
- ⁶⁷ http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/RISE-OF-KHUDI/109085789112537?ref=search&sid=JQ4LEEIWHDOM_Ajmi4M3ug.1372802794..1, accessed on July 13, 2010.
- ⁶⁸ Mazhar Tufail, Banned outfit misusing cellular networks, The News, Islamabad, July 11, 2009.
- ⁶⁹ <http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/local/islamabad/hizbut-tehrir-man-flees-leaving-police-redfaced-050>, accessed on July 28, 2010.
- ⁷⁰ Staff Reporter, The Nation, Lahore, June 1, 2009.
- ⁷¹ Claim by an HT member interviewed in Islamabad.
- ⁷² Interview in Islamabad.
- ⁷³ "Ramadan Seminars – A Declaration," (Urdu), issued on September 8, 2009
- ⁷⁴ Interview in Islamabad.
- ⁷⁵ Daily Aaj Kal, Islamabad, October 20, 2010.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with an HT member.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Interview with an HT member.
- ⁸⁰ See the HT manifesto available on its website: www.hizb-pakistan.com
- ⁸¹ Daily Aaj Kal, Islamabad, January 21, 2010.

About Institute

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