



An Analysis of Hakimullah Mehsud's Handwritten Autobiographical Notes October 2009

A NEFA Special Report on Hakimullah Mehsud's Handwritten Autobiographical Notes October 2009

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Hakimullah Mehsud authoring autobiographical notes

Following Hakimullah Mehsud's meeting with tribal reporters last week, the NEFA Foundation gathered a brief autobiographical sketch handwritten by the TTP leader in order to provide a reliable account of his life and origins to the media. Significantly, the 'notes' are written in Urdu and not in Pashto, the language with which Hakimullah is certainly more familiar, as to prove the TTP leader's literacy in the 'lingua franca' of Pakistan. Interestingly, Hakimullah switches between third and first person narration without apparent reason, and the result is a curious document that adds to his image as a 'warrior prince' who leads his men from the front. The Urdu he uses, however, does not appear to be of the best quality, nor grammatically correct.

Hakimullah pointedly clarifies his own tribal origin and provides information on his two marriages with a Mehsud girl and with a second wife from Orakzai, possibly from the Orakzai tribe, as Hakimullah takes care to point out the girl is not an Afridi. From the narrative, we can evince that Hakimullah first sees himself as a Wajikhel Ishangi Mehsud, as tribal affiliation seems to have absolute priority in this brief piece of writing. Hakimullah also mentions his madrassa education, but makes clear he also attended secular schools until the eighth grade.

The most significant paragraph of this brief autobiographical sketch outlines the early days of the Pakistani Taliban, which, according to Hakimullah, first emerged alongside their Afghan brethren in Khost Province, namely the Haqqani network under the leadership of commander Maulvi Sangeen. Significantly, Amir Baitullah, who Hakimullah succeeded at the helm of the TTP, is mentioned as one of the early leaders, alongside Nek Mohammed Wazir, the first figurehead of the Pakistani Taliban, and Abdullah Mehsud, his successor for a brief period. Also, Hakimullah takes care to mention both Al-Qaida and the Uzbek insurgents, with whom he has reportedly been associated since his early days. He also seems to point out that he directly succeeded Nek Mohammed as the paladin of Uzbek and Al-Qaida fighters, even under Baitullah's rule.

The tribal agencies of Kurram and Orakzai, where Hakimullah established his rule in 2007 alongside Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan fighters seem to be prominent in Hakimullah's personal geography. It must be noted that Hakimullah's bid for power, following Baitullah Meshud's death, was conceived most probably on the basis of an alliance between Sunni sectarian groups of the LeJ type, Yuldashev's Uzbeks, and Hakimullah's tribal Taliban.

The document provides interesting insights into to what Hakimullah Mehsud thinks about himself and about the Pakistani Taliban movement. Hakimullah signs the document "Hakimullah alias Zulfiqar Mehsud", the alias he adopted until he became a high profile leader in 2008.

Curiously, the sketch ends with the sentence "This is the life of Hakimullah," and this appears to be another symptom of the fact that Hakimullah Mehsud regards himself as a tribal leader in need of a biographer and a media savvy player who disappeared for weeks after Baitullah's death before reemerging with a theatrical coup alongside his 'rumored' opponent.