

RETHINKING US-TALIBAN WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

Azeem Gul, National University of Modern Languages
Sumeera Imran, National Defense University
Arif Khan, University of Buner
Javed Hassan Hashmi, National University of Modern Languages
Hassan Farooq, International Islamic University
Syed Arslan Haider, Sunway University
Moiz Khan, National University of Modern Languages

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the US and the Taliban war in Afghanistan and its effects on various dimensions of Pakistan's security. The major rationale of the US waging war against the Taliban was the contradiction in political outlook between US and the Taliban leaders led the Taliban leaders' refusal to comply with the US policy of punishing the terrorists who had attacked world trade center and Pentagon in September 2001. In the first phase of the US-Taliban war, the US used hard power to topple the Taliban regime. The Taliban responded to the strategy with guerrilla tactics when US led forces advanced in different areas of Afghanistan, leading to the US exhaustion of military power in 2014. The second phase of the US war strategy included training the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) against the Taliban. This strategy also led to confessional strategic failure as US General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has expressed categorically. In the third phase, the US aimed to resolve the conflict through peace talks, which was successfully leading to US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 31, 2021. Against this backdrop, the central theme of the paper revolves around the effects of US and the Taliban war on Pakistan's various dimensions of security and its Afghanistan relations. First, a major mistrust with the previous former governments in Afghanistan and the most important military and economic security disadvantageous position Pakistan ever faced since 2001. The current study is significant for academics, politicians, policy-makers knowing how conflict in Afghanistan has shaped situation in Pakistan.

Keywords: US, Taliban, Pakistan, Security, Afghanistan, War on Terror

INTRODUCTION

The US and the Taliban war began in Afghanistan after the two sides were found in contradiction on the event occurred in 9/11, 2001. The major cause of the US war in 2001 against the Taliban regime was the presence of Al Qaeda network led by Osama Bin Laden operating from Afghanistan. The US President George W. Bush rationalized the war, while approving Operation Enduring Freedom on the pretext that the Taliban had attacked World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 9/11, 2001. Operation Enduring Freedom aimed at eliminating terrorists inside Afghanistan much to the dismay of the Taliban regime (Urban, 2016). The US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces swept in and pushed the Taliban to areas where the US military power eventually was unable to detect the Taliban leaving the defeated to resurge again.

The US war strategy for Afghanistan was operated in many phases. The first phase was hard power indicating its military power. Through modern weaponry and spies the US and allied forces conducted search operations clearing major cities of Afghanistan (Salt, 2018). The Taliban attacked the US convoys, leading to moral and military exhaustion of the US and allied

forces. In the first phase of the US war strategy, the US used military power as dominant part of its war strategy till 2014. Experts have highlighted that the US had started to lose the War against the Taliban by then. To achieve political goals, the US rationalized its second war strategy, leading to the creation and training of Afghan National Forces. As the Taliban used guerrilla warfare controlling and regaining territories, the Afghan Army aimed at fighting the Taliban, backed by the US military (Younossi et al., 2009). The third phase of the US strategy of war in Afghanistan emerged as peace talks with the Taliban began during the Trump era (2017-2021). As a result of the peace talks, the US and the Taliban agreed to end the war in Afghanistan (Idrees et al., 2019; Gul et al., 2021a).

The US policy of war on terror and the Taliban becoming resurgent reshaped global security. The most repeated actions were taken in the security policies of Pakistan. It was not only the US but the Taliban's revenge from the US also affected various dimensions of Pakistan's security. Pakistan's response to the US and the Taliban war had been conditioned by its domestic and international factors. Pakistan adjusted its policies related to the political, security, military, economy and cultural dimensions. The aim of this paper is to review current literature in the following context. First, to understand the US and the Taliban war, while focusing on how both the US and the Taliban fought the long protracted conflict spanning from 2001 to 2021. Second, to understand Pakistan's domestic and international position with regard to its security. Third, by focusing how Pakistan revised its security policy being a central part of the US invasion of Afghanistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent history of Afghanistan has shown that superpowers such as the former Soviet Union ousted by the guerrilla forces of the Taliban and the most recent example when the same Taliban expelled the US military forces has left USD \$85 billion of modern weaponry in the control of the jihadists (Smith, 2021). The first successful attempt of the Taliban movement started in 1994 from the Kandahar city, which led to reshape the political landscape of Afghanistan much to the dismay of the western liberal order. The Taliban in their first victory captured and controlled Kabul in 1996. The US, which provided support to the Taliban to oust the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, later turned its policy against the Taliban regime in the post-Cold War era (Laub, 2014).

On September 18, 2001, the US President Bush was permitted the AUMF (Authorization of Use of Military Force) by the Congress to invade Afghanistan. After failing of negotiations between Mullah Omar and American officials, operation Enduring Freedom was launched on Oct 7, 2001, which formally started the War on Terror. The strategy of America regarding Afghanistan was to not involve alone but to engage the defense forces of its allies too in the Afghanistan War. In this regard, NATO forces led by the US entered Afghanistan after 9/11 to ensure that the country must not become the safe-haven of terrorist organizations or other attacks similar to 9/11. In 2003, NATO also led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which ended in the transition of power to Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) to fight against the Taliban forces in 2014. As a former Canadian commander of ISAF articulated that things in Afghanistan were heated up as America pushed the NATO alliance to capture and kill as more Taliban. The collective alliance of security forces headed by America waged war against the Taliban government and retreated them hastily. The U.S led forces overthrew the Taliban government in a short span of time that had been in power since 1996. On December 09, 2001, Taliban government collapsed giving full control to American forces (Bergen, 2011).

One of the main purposes of US policy of invasion of Afghanistan was to kill terrorists, which the Taliban harbored. The Taliban resurged under Mullah Omar launching counter-attacks. The US invasion of Afghanistan was unacceptable to the Taliban who adhered strictly to religion and never wanted to see any foreign influence in their political or religious matters.

Foreign troops' presence up-surged the resistance in that country. This core issue had to be dealt with immediately by implementing terms of Jihad against the western forces (Collins, 2011). The major cause of the US war against the Taliban was Osama Bin Laden presence in Afghanistan. The US wanted him to be handed over for punishment. The Taliban refused to hand him over to the US. The Taliban treated Osama as their guest under the Pushtoon code of *Pushtoon-Wali* and refrained to give him to the US government. Osama was the most wanted person in the list of the US intelligence agencies. However, in backdoors, various analyses have revealed that behind *Pushtoon-Wali*, the Taliban wanted to use Osama Bin Laden as a bargaining chip in order to gain political incentives and influence. Taliban rightly acknowledged the value of Osama as a political leverage. The issue of Osama Bin Laden not only escalated the tension between the US and the Taliban but it also created rift between the Taliban factions inside as well (Malik & Jan, 2021; Rashid, 2010). Other reason of their rivalry is the strict adherence of Taliban to Islamic customs in their controlled areas in Afghanistan. Managing their rule, the Taliban opened "Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice" under the command of Moalvi Qalam-Ud-Din (Herzer, 2001).

Islam has deeply penetrated in the hearts of Afghans since centuries till date. Any misconduct of the Afghan citizens to the Islamic code of life, the Taliban started physical punishment to enforce strict Islamic practices, including banning of social activities like western music, dancing or watching television. The Taliban had laid down rules for education, according to the Sharia Law, which the international community had criticized. Another major contradiction, which the Taliban has considered against Islam is Bhuddism and within this context, the Buddha statue in Bamiyan was erased. The US condemned such actions and was against the Taliban human rights practices and wanted preservation of the world heritage. In the UN, the U.S pressurized the Taliban to review its policies (Alm, 2021).

In the post-2001 war strategy till 2014, the US hunted the Taliban inside Afghanistan through their networks of spies and overt military operations; however, the war strategy of the Taliban emerged supreme over the US war strategy. The Taliban captured in many places the US weaponry and it enhanced the firepower of the Taliban under the command of Mullah Omar (Rubin, 2002). The policies of Mullah Omar were based on realist approaches. Even after him, the new Taliban leaders carried out his legacy such as Mullah Mansour, a Taliban leader inclined towards the peaceful resolution of the Taliban conflict with the US.

The death of Mullah Omar further infuriated the Taliban. On the contrary, the US wanted resolution of the US and the Taliban war through military power in the initial phase of their war strategy. For example, many Taliban leaders such as Mullah Mansour were killed through a drone attack. After the death of Mullah Mansour, the recent chief of the Taliban Mullah Haibat Ullah Akhwanzada has been regarded as more of an Islamic scholar than a military tactician. However, the Taliban achieved great success under his command. This violent or hard politics shown by the Taliban leaders further escalated the already on-going war between the US and the Taliban (Thomas, 2018).

After the defeat of Taliban in Afghanistan, majority of them disappeared from the central theme of war and hid themselves in the shadowy areas. Prominent places where the Taliban were hiding were Tora-Bora Mountains undergrounded and protected by the Taliban and the northern areas of Pakistan. Afghan Taliban, though defeated in Kabul, reorganized themselves and carried out guerrilla warfare against the US led coalition. The Taliban were considered to be the best guerrilla fighters who attacked on the NATO convoy, harmed it and disappeared in the Rocky Mountains. American forces were not only failed to encounter them but they even could not reach out to their hide-outs made in the very dense jungles or on a grassy hill. The best strategic tool carried out by the Taliban was to regulate their forces in small factions circulating from Afghanistan's border with Pakistan areas to the battle-zones of Afghanistan (Johnson & DuPee, 2012). These groups remained for some time in their targeted areas, did their mission and then backed to the original position. In 2005-2006, the tribal areas of Pakistan were the new theatre of war chosen by the insurgents groups. The Taliban achieved special status and deeply

influenced the people in the bordering areas, adjacent to Pakistan who violated the latter's territorial integrity. Border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan were used by the Taliban secretly, despite the US and Pakistan's military forces strict observations.

Within this context, the Taliban operations against the US had major effects on the various dimensions of Pakistan's security. As a repercussion of the US-Taliban war, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was formed, threatening Pakistan's sovereignty and comprehensive security. On the other side, violence increased across Afghanistan during the summer in 2006 when the number of suicide attacks multiplied from 27 to 139 in one year. With snowball effect of the Taliban gaining victory and military strength in Afghanistan, the US president Obama proposed the Afghanistan and Pakistan (AF-PAK) strategy, which stated that from now on Pakistan and Afghanistan would be considered as single theater of war (Shahzad, 2012; Khattak et al., 2017).

In the prism of AF-PAK strategy, the US launched military drone attacks on the Taliban leaders from 2004-2018. The drones attacked were launched on both sides of the Durand line, aiming at target killing and smashing terrorists' hide-outs. In Pakistan, various reports have revealed that total 81 high level insurgents were killed including Mullah Akhtar Mansour, Mullah Fazl-ullah, and Baitullah Mehsud and Hakeem-ullah Mehsud. In Afghanistan, total 13,072 minimum strikes were confirmed that killed numerous Taliban militants. Drone policy proved to be a success story of the US strategy and the turning point of US Taliban war. However, due to increasing number of civilian casualties, it was greatly criticized as involving the violation of human rights (Shaffan et al., 2019; Boyle, 2013).

Contrary to the US military policy, the Taliban also established special training centers in various hidden places. These places were used by the Taliban extensively against the US troops in 2006 to 2014. Taliban were also very active in their battle zones where their field commandoes marched on their motor bikes and invigorated the Taliban fighters against the US forces. The Taliban mostly used the outside-in strategy from unknown places near the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Another war strategy was hit and run strategy, which made the Taliban capable of fighting a guerrilla warfare (ambushes and raids), conventional tactics (massed assaults, multi prongs attacks), terrorist tactics (car and truck bombs), intelligence activities (target assassinations, kidnappings, night letters, death threats) influence and information warfare (media and information operations, shadow diplomacy) and criminal activities (drugs, smuggling). To implement these tactics, Taliban used small arms and Improvised and Explosive Devices (IEDs); they also had heavy machine guns, heavy mortars and sniper rifles. They were able to overrun numerous ANDSF installations, keeping access to night vision goggles, armored vehicles and laser optics. It also created the RED UNIT' to carry out special attacks on particularly important and sensitive targets across Afghanistan (Johnson, 2013).

Taliban from its part sustained the war expenditure and defense budget through various means. Drug trade including hashish, opiates or crystal methamphetamine and other sources were the major cash earnings. They also earned well by mining of precious stones, talc and rare earth metals. They have had the well – developed structure for collecting the revenue and taxed in their controlled areas along with bundle of wealth obtained by donations. Moreover, in the recent engagements, they have modern American ammunition as well. Foreign donations by the states, non-states across or individual personality allowed the Taliban to increase their area of wealth to fight the US troops (Schroden, 2021).

Failing to counter the Taliban effectively since 2014, the US shifted its war strategy against Taliban resurgence. The new strategy contained withdrawing the US forces when the domestic and international pressure mounted. The security responsibilities were transferred to the Afghan Security Forces commonly called as ANDSF. The US decision to change its war strategy was to prepare the Afghan military forces to fight the Taliban. The new war strategy was counter-measured by the Taliban through suicide attacks as the number of suicide attacks increased in 2015 to 2016. Despite the US training of the ANDSF through modern weaponry,

the Taliban gained more territorial victories over the ANDSF and the US troops. The influence of the Taliban was also creating security issues in Pakistan when the latter came up with policy of Operation Zarb-E-Azab in 2014 which pushed the Taliban to disperse in various hidden places (Tariq, Amir & Bano, 2021).

Lastly, the US policy option for conflict resolution through peace talks appeared when the military strategy was failing. With this long-tired war, the US era of conflict resolution began *via* peace talks rather than continuing with the firepower policy. For example, the first intra Afghan talks started in Murree (2015) that hoped for stable Afghanistan but the process was stalemated by the death of Mullah Omar. In 2016, a Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) was formed that included China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and America to discuss pertinently the Taliban issue (Idrees et al., 2019; Sargana, Bukhari & Sargana, 2020). President Trump coming into power clearly diverted from Obama's War legacy. Trump showed harsh attitude towards the Taliban initially and clearly designated the prolonged war, showing no concern towards the peace deal. In 2019, a U-turn was noted in the US policy. Trump's political idiosyncrasies resumed the called off peace talks again, resulting in the failure of the peace deal. The US policy reemerged in February 2019, as the US and the Taliban agreed to sign a peace deal in Doha, intending to end the war. The Doha accord stated that US would withdraw its forces by May 2021 and Taliban would not allow using its soil against foreign terrorists. Following this, a phase of intra-Afghan talks began in September 2020 (Salim et al., 2019; Islam, Iqbal & Khan, 2021). On November 17, 2021, the US troops began withdrawal and the Taliban could utilize the gap left by ANDSF, successfully securing the release of more provinces from Afghan control.

The next US President Joe Biden while assuming power acted on the US previous policy of evacuation by 31st August 2021. Amid the widening gap left behind the US troops and zero resistance of the ANDSF, the Taliban could reach Kabul capturing whole of Afghanistan excluding Panjshir valley. Kabul again fell to the Taliban in August 2021 after Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani fled Tajikistan and then UAE (Chohan, 2021). The Taliban war with US affected both global and regional security in various degrees. In terms of human casualties and other losses such as economic, political, social, Pakistan was recorded as the greatest victim of the US and the Taliban war. Various governments and non-governmental sources have revealed rapid policy changes in Pakistan involving the US and the Taliban. Against this backdrop, current academic attention has described the US and the Taliban conflict. However, academic literature has not revealed the causality relationship in a scientific way—involving the impact on Pakistan's major policies regarding military, political, economic and social security. Within this context, the next section highlights Pakistan's key security policies that were shaped during the US and the Taliban war in Afghanistan.

An Overview of the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a long border which divides major ethnic Pashtoons. Both states share deep historical and cultural links and are co-members of South Asian Association for Regional Organization (SAARC). Religion is the common denominator, deeply entrenched and plays a great role in the both states politics. Due to close proximity, Pakistan has been affected directly due to any conflict occurring in Afghanistan, especially the US-Taliban war since 2001 (Small, 2015). Pakistan is being accused by rival states for supporting the Afghan Taliban in the US-Taliban war (Shah, 2021). Historically, Pakistan suffered greatly by the Russian occupation and then by the US-Taliban confrontation. Pakistan's military security has been jeopardized by the rise of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) directly under the command of Afghan Taliban, which further escalated the already on-going militancy in Pakistan. Most of the Taliban leadership was graduated from the Pakistani madrasahs. Basically, Jamiat-Ulema-Islam (JUI)-Taliban coalition played a bridging role in Afghanistan-Pakistan nexus. Meanwhile, Molana Sami ul Haq, considered as the ambassador of Taliban in Pakistan, claimed to have

produced the most Taliban cadres from his madrasah at *Akkora Khattak, Dar-Ul-Uloom Haqqania*. This organized group was the ideologue of *Jihaddiese* and demanded Afghan Taliban type rule in Pakistan (Husain, 2018). Hostile elements to Pakistan have called the madrasahs at *Akkora Khattak* as the 'University of Jihad.' Various analyses have shown that the madrasah was considered to be at the cross-roads of religious militant violence for years.

Pakistan also relocated to the menace of extremism due to Taliban insurgency. The emergence of religious rightwing parties rocketed political instability in Pakistan. Different hard core parties like Harkat-Ul-Mujahedeen, Harkat-Ul-Jihad-e-Islam, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Hizb-e-Mujahedeen, Harkat-ul-Insar were some parties keenly active in Pakistan. They also had had a large role in mounting terrorism in Pakistan (Aslam et al., 2020). The ideological or practical stature had a bitter spillover effect on societal setup in Pakistan due to Afghan's war and Taliban's skirmishes with the other stakeholders in Afghan politics. These vigorous acts of terrorism geared an un-precedent level of political as well as security instability within Pakistan (Abbas, 2015). The US-Taliban war has significantly affected Pakistan. Pakistan by siding with the US has faced disruption to its various dimensions of security. As Kissinger stated that "to be an enemy of America is dangerous, but to be friend is fatal" (Montano, 1999). At the political level, the relation between Taliban and Pakistan went off bitter right after "*Operation Enduring Freedom*". Taliban thought Pakistan's act as a betrayal and launched a massive military campaign. Mostly the Taliban found Pakistan as a safe shelter due to porous border of Afghanistan with Pakistan while the northern alliance moved towards the Central Asian states. Various sources have revealed that the top leadership of the Taliban including Mullah Omar had left for Pakistan. He remained in Quetta in 2002, where he stayed at a guest house run by JUI. The Bloch capital became the un-official capital of the Taliban movement. Not only the Taliban but the major influx of other terrorist organizations likes AL-Qaeda and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which led to deteriorating the overall security dynamics of Pakistan.

Political Security

Afghanistan looms large when it comes to analyzing Pakistan's political security. Essentially, this aspect of security relates to the organization and process of a government, and the ideology that gives the rulers of particular country legitimacy. As far as political security is concerned, Pakistan has emphasized that a country's political system must not be changed by another country, its sovereignty must not be encroached upon and its internal affairs must not be meddled with by other states. The sections below would highlight how Pakistan was affected when the US was engaged in Afghanistan regarding its political security where as a result of political alienation, Indian influence in Afghanistan increased which deeply affected Pakistan's political influence in Afghanistan, impacting the latter's relations with India (Gul et al., 2021b).

In case of the US military engagement in Afghanistan, experts have noted that the first major blow to the foreign policy of Pakistan was the point of divergence towards Taliban was Islamabad's assistance to the US in the War on Terror. It was the most difficult decision Pakistan had ever taken. Pakistan's policy towards the Taliban transformed and it adopted a pro-US policy. This policy shift in Pakistan's foreign policy badly affected its security due to the rise of extremism and terrorism by insurgent groups inside Pakistan. The overthrow of the Taliban after the US invasion of Afghanistan affected Pakistan's relations with the Taliban negatively. The biggest threat for Pakistan was to step back from the Taliban support. Pakistan enjoyed a great chronology of political relations with the Taliban when the US and other were also kind to the Taliban. When the US was funding the Taliban against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistani army showed the pleasure of the US interests and dubbed Taliban as *our boys*. However, after the declaration of War on terror, Pakistan became an ally of the US against the menace of terrorism. This change in foreign policy of Pakistan was seen as a betrayal by the Taliban officials. The fragmentation of the Pakistani decision to let the US in the country and jointly conduct operations against the insurgent groups put Pakistan into very difficult situation.

For Pakistan, the biggest problem with the President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai interim government had been exclusion of the Taliban in power sharing. Pakistan being the US non-NATO ally remained committed to the accommodation of the Taliban in the power structure of Afghanistan. Consequently, Hamid Karzai's attitude deprived the Taliban participation in the electoral process. This further instigated the Taliban's mindset and when Pakistan recognized the Karzai government, the Taliban became more trouble-makers for Pakistan (Khan, 2017).

Ashraf Ghani, the successor of Hamid Karzai was elected as the President of Afghanistan in 2014 and re-elected in 2019. Contrary to Karzia, Ghani was believed to have well background of Afghan political norms. Ghani government remained anti-Pakistan and anti-Taliban and pro-Indian. Ghani accused Pakistan and supported Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and Indian sponsored acts of terrorism in Pakistan. Henry Kissinger has noted that the major flaw in the political attitude of Ashraf Ghani was accusing Pakistan which led to American failure in Afghanistan. Kissinger's argument is well-substantiated with the help of Ghani remarks about Pakistan in different occasions. For example, in Uzbekistan, Ghani slammed Pakistan for supporting the Taliban. In addition, his government committed to place Pakistan in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) which also increased the gap for Pakistan's relations European states (Aslam & Aslam, 2019; Ghani urges Europeans to get Pakistan on board, 2021; Idrees et al., 2020)

Another important independent variable affecting Pakistan's political influence in Afghanistan was the Indian factor (Gul et al., 2021b). Both Pakistan and India have long been enmeshed in the territorial rivalries. India from its part has utilized the War on Terror as a political leverage in Afghanistan to influence the latter's political culture in many ways. India has invested in political, military, economic, social and diplomatic areas where Pakistan's policy makers have considered it detrimental to Pakistan's national interests. India was the first to offer full assistance to the US in WOT. It dragged Pakistan into the war by force. India was also a major stake holder during the two US led interim governments. Additionally, it approved a heavy budget of almost 1.3 \$ billion as a contribution for the development of Afghanistan. A full fledged embassy was operated in Kabul since 2002. Indian officials also approved construction package for Afghanistan worth of 70\$ million. For example, Salma dam project and parliament building has been also a gesture of Indian political hegemony considering Afghanistan. The influence of India also has been expanded by holding a strong institutional capacity that eyed on every single political upheaval in Afghan matters. This growing Indian influence was a matter of great concern for Pakistan (Salim et al., 2018; Hussain, 2005; Yaqoob & Sattar, 2021).

Military Security

Military security is as significant as other dimensions of security such as political and economic security of a state. In international relations, military security is used as a traditional security of a state to ensure a state survival against any military aggression both internally and externally. Pakistan since its inception has faced threats to military security due to un-negotiated border both from India and Afghanistan (Gul & Ahmad, 2019). Geographically, Pakistan shares a long porous border of length 2640 KM with Afghanistan. Superpowers involvement such as the former Soviet Union and the US in Afghanistan dragged Pakistan into chaos and violence. For example, Pakistan's army sealed its western border, and supported the US accommodation of two naval bases, three air force bases and the air space to US which has also been a question mark for its internal sovereignty. Pakistan also had deployed more than 70,000 troops near the Afghan border and launched 38 full-fledged operation to counter infiltration ensuing from the Afghan border (Khalid & Roy, 2016). Sloppy, rushed jungles, tingling streams and steep valleys terrain between Pakistan and Afghanistan has also significant effect on Pakistan's security. Rugged terrain were efficiently used by militias during War on Terror. Al-Qaeda made a

strategic step to cover the areas of Hindu Kush which spread across all over Provincially Administrated Tribal Areas (PATA) and Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA).

According to General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani “The more imminent threat to Pakistan’s security came from Islamic terrorists rather than from arch-rival India”. The wild plain of Hindu Kush were used by the militants to sabotage Pakistan’s traditional security apparatus. This was a great impediment for Pakistan’s military (Ahmed, 2009). Keeping in view the very destructive environment and the fierce attacks towards the border, Pakistan started fencing its borders in March 2017. With various impediments, it had completed almost 85% of border fencing and the rest would be completed by the end of 2021. For a long time, the Durand region had been used by the Taliban as a reaction to the US invasion of Afghanistan on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border. Pakistan by fencing and patrolling the border has recorded a decline in the number of cross border attacks from Afghanistan from 82 in 2019 to just 11 in 2020 (Basit, 2021).

The US attacks against the Taliban and Pakistan’s policy of siding with the US triggered the Taliban who carried out massive retaliatory campaigns in different forms. For example, Pakistan’s policy towards the Taliban was a complete failure. The Taliban had especial realistic film-shooters. Prominent to these were the AMAT studio. The videos of AMAT studio became popular and was spreading horror in the minds of Pakistani army and paramilitary forces such as Frontier Constabulary (FC) and levies. In addition, the Taliban targeted the Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff General Musharraf, General Khattak. The Taliban called them infidel and targeted other military places such as Tochi-Scouts checkpoint. The civilian sector was also targeted such as Pakistani journalists. Bait-Ullah Mehsud clearly articulated that “media war is a real war” this info tactic of war became very successful with the Taliban (Ashraf, 2021). The F.C troops who saw their fellow videos, killed brutally became un-willing to oppose Taliban. Pakistani army troops in FATA suffered a growing number of dissertations. For example, Pakistani army suffered 150 dissertations. Some 250 Pakistan army men surrendered to a few dozen militants in 2008 (Keller, 2008), the entire check-point was handed over to the Taliban (Adamsky, 2009). This morale-down tactics of Taliban became the strongest soft power tool to oppose the policies of Pakistan. Pakistani Taliban named as TTP were funded by rival states which spread massive disruption in Pakistan.

The Consolidation of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

One of the adverse effects of the US and the Taliban war is the emergence of TTP in the northern areas of Pakistan. TTP is another non-state actor posing significant military threat, which has jeopardized the traditional security of Pakistan since 2003. In December 2007, the TTP began to shake Pakistan’s military security under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud. It has been recorded that 27 militant organizations pooled their sovereignty under TTP. It mainly consisted of 10,000 fighters active in FATA (Now PATA) areas of Kohat, Lakki Marwat, D.I.Khan, Swat, or Darra Adam Khel. TTP is also actively engaged in the Punjab or Sindh province as well. The commanders of TTP are young recruits carrying aim of terrorizing unarmed people in Pakistan. Their mode of activities included suicide bombing, target killing or circulation of Dvd’s and Cd’s. The source of financial integrity depends upon funding from Pakistan’s hostile states and non-state actors across the globe (Jadoon, 2021). The biggest threat that Pakistan faced due to the rise of TTB was the ideological warfare. The three main goal of TTP were identified as:

- Enforcement of Sharia Law
- Unite against coalition forces in Afghanistan
- Perform defensive jihad against Pakistan army

TTP carried out targeting Pakistan’s top security institutions who have claimed that Pakistan by siding with the western policies would face such irritable security situation. The far right Islamist accepted attacking the General Head Quarter (GHQ) Rawalpindi, Pakistani Bases,

attack on Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar were the major threats to Pakistan's prevailing security policies when Pakistani leaders shaped in line with the War on Terror (Murphy, 2012). General Pervez Musharraf the President of Pakistan's regime transferred power to another civilian government amid in a deteriorated military security of Pakistan. For example, terrorism reoriented Pakistan's military policy. Many TTP trained personals carried out terror activities against the Shia community of Pakistan by target killing and suicide bombing. On contrary, the Shia community supported by Iran was also active in the Pakistani region. These sects rivalry formed the legacy of rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Gul, Abbasi & Haider, 2021). As a result, Pakistan faced the violent layers of religious militancy and extremism all across the country (Rizvi & Jamil, 2019).

The Tehrik-e-Nifaze-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) belonging to TTP captured Swat and ready to wage war on Islamabad and Peshawar as well (Basit, 2014). Actually there were organized steps to gain political influence described as "Talibanization of Pakistan". The Taliban also plotted some assassination attempts on General Musharraf, military troops and political officials. The military security situation worsened after the incidents of Lal Masjid (Red mosque) in Islamabad in 2007. The Taliban broke-off all their deals with the government of Pakistan and started to join hands again with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organization to destabilize Pakistan. In 2011, the law-enforcement agencies came under criticism when Osama Bin Laden was found in Abbottabad. There was national as well international wave of violence in Pakistan. On one side, law enforcement agencies were trying to justify their position in front of the world against terrorism while on the other hand, they were under the violent attacks by militants (Ahmad, Bakht & Hassan, 2016).

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban victory has worried Pakistan that TTP may use the territory of Afghanistan under the second Taliban rule to jeopardize Pakistan's security. Kabul fell to the Taliban for the second time on August 15, 2021 after the ANDSF defeat and the US exit from Afghanistan. Expert have belief that the TTP can escalate and trigger Pakistan's fragile security situation. However, Taliban's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, clearly articulated that there is no place for the TTP and Afghanistan cannot allow any terror group to operate across the border in Pakistan.

Another important security threat of the US and the Taliban war in Afghanistan has been Pakistan's nuclear security. Pakistan was pushed to deal with foreign occupation in Afghanistan and tightening security of the command and control of Pakistan nuclear arsenals. Mostly scholars deliberated the possibility of a strong chance for militias to capture Pakistan nuclear assets (Shapoo, 2017). In 2007, two attacks were also carried out by militants in Sargodha and Kamra; both were very sensitive nuclear areas. On August 21, 2008 Pakistan ordinance factory came under fierce attack. This deadly attack sent strong shockwaves to WAH's extensive explosive related infrastructure considered as assembly site for Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Attack was claimed by the TTP which was gaining strength over the time. Another attack on Uranium Mine in Dera Ghazi Khan was a clear indication of the security threat to Pakistan which the TTP posed on October 10, 2009 (Clary, 2010), and an attack on GHQ claimed by TTP was disastrous for Pakistan national security where attackers were managed to hide themselves inside the office and had intentions to kill the high officials of Pakistan army (Times, 2017).

Economic Security

Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, it inherited weak economic infrastructure and the leaders tried to fill the gap with the international funding from various financial institutions such as IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other Muslim states. Pakistan's economic security like other states' economic security became effected both positively and negatively. M. Zakaria has examined that increasing 1% of terrorism has reduced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by 0.104%, domestic investment by 0.039% and economic growth by 0.02%

(Zakaria, Jun & Ahmed, 2019). Different studies have estimated that Pakistan suffered from 67.93\$ billion to 5037\$ billion in just a decade. The worst years were 2009-2012 in which Pakistan had lost total 49.31\$ billion between 2009 and 2012 equivalent to the Pakistani rupees 10,373 out of 123.13 \$ billion in total. The total expenditure losses over the years of war on terror were 10,373.36 million (Khan, Estrada & Yusof, 2016). The War on Terror affected many economic policies of Pakistan. For example, tourism industry was destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people became jobless. Sports culture had been destroyed. Investors in Pakistan lost their trust due to weakening security situation in Pakistan. Pakistan's export declined. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate fell down to 50 percent in just 5 years (Yaseen & Awan, 2017).

The first few years of Pakistan siding with the US faced major turn in the economic sector. For example, the inflation rate increased from 4 to 7.9 percent. There was a trade deficit with almost increment of more than 50 percent in just four years. While, the State Bank of Pakistan issued the statistics in which the external debts jumped from USD 32.46 billion to USD 50.14 billion. The economic indicators further declined in progress and its negative impacts were recorded in the national budget. For example, Government was unable to spend the key budgets to other social issue areas like health, education, agriculture (Haider et al., 2021). According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Afghan war was totally disastrous for the economy of Pakistan especially in the years 2009-2012 collectively costing USD 42.25 billion (Malik & Zaman, 2013). The fragile security situation in Pakistan such as Lal Masjid operation where militants were targeted by the security forces and this event led to the spill-over of violence to areas of Pakistan. Various sources have revealed that it affected FDI, declining to 3.72 \$ billion from 5.4 \$ billion in just one year. The textile export retarded 11 percent amid the peak years of the War on Terror by USD 10.8 billion to USD 9.78 \$ billion (Siddique, 2008). Along with these conflicts, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the frontline due to its direct geographical link with Afghanistan.

The industrial workforce shrank on the other side from 57000 in 2008 to 24000 in 2009 when the TTP caused country wide fear among people due to its various suicide bombing and propaganda. In addition, infrastructure had been destroyed and the menace of poverty became the top most problem in Pakistan. The government offered some compensation scheme but terrorism in Pakistan cost 75% decline in the commercial activities as well. In this regard, almost 73% industries were tried to cash out by the Taliban that reduced the exports rate from USD 1.5 billion to USD 150 billion. The AF-PAK Transit Trade Route was also affected because due to the absence of peace and stability it led to decline in trade and moreover destruction, chaos and violence in the border areas. It was estimated that the poverty line in border areas rose by 2.3% to 36.1% and another 9% rate increment was also detected. During that time, Pakistan stood at 141 out of 182 in poverty index and 101 out of 135 in human poverty index under which 63% were transitory poor, 32 % were chronic poor while 5% were extremely poor. The only 2008 data has shown that poverty increased from 23-28 % in only 12 months (Khan, 2013).

Another important independent variable which affected the economic security of Pakistan was tourism. Pakistan was genuinely considered as one of the coolest spot in the tourism plan of the world. The higher peaks, dwindling valleys, four well established weathers and the combination of humid and dry places attracts many tourists on its resort. The militancy relinquished it all. The biggest spot was the Swat Valley which was the theater of war on TNSM and TTP. It was also hide outs of several militants that seized the area having full control in the valley. Pakistan was spotted 113 out of 133 in the tourism index. The industry had lost some USD 8 billion which was estimated up to USD 50 billion if terrorist activities upsurge (Khan, Bibi, Lyu, Raza, Hayat & Meo, 2020). Sports are the identity of any nation in the world. Moreover, it is also a tool for the economic uprising of any country. Pakistan has been also a great contributor in world's sports like cricket, squash, hockey and Olympics. The menace of terrorism and the US Taliban war deteriorated the image of Pakistan extremely. Sri-Lankan

cricket team was attacked in 2009. Pakistan lost the chance of number of international sports events to be hosted in the country listed below.

- ICC cricket world cup
- New-Zeeland cricket tour to Pakistan
- Australia cricket tour to Pakistan
- ICC champion trophy Pakistan 2009
- Asia-Oceania zone group two Davis Cup ties against Oman and Philippines
- An international squash event
- A table tennis event.

The manufacturing industry had also been hit hard by frequent incident of terrorism and has been created an uncertain environment resulting into low level of economic growth. The manufacturing industry has witnessed a lowest ever shares of 18.2% of GDP over the last five years. In addition, the small and medium sized enterprises which are the key areas of Pakistan have been affected across the country because of power shortage and recurrent terrorist attacks/ due to war on terror, local's people of war ridden areas tried to migrate. These people had left their homes, business and properties. This large influx of people and their rehabilitation greatly affected Pakistan's economic security. Un-employment is still prevalent and most of the Pakistani GDP had been sharing to the defense and war activities. The total estimated loss of WOT since 2001 have been rendered as 123.13 \$ billion which have negative effects on the overall the growth of Pakistan (Mamoon, Akhtar & Hissam, 2011).

Cultural and Social Security

It is believed that another dimension of Pakistan's security which was badly affected is the cultural and social security. It had seminal effects on various Pakistan's policies for cultural and social security. When Pakistan sided with the US war on terror it affected cultural belonging of various factions especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province of Pakistan. The root of cultural violence started after Afghan-jihad in Pakistan. The Arabs-jihadists of Osama Bin Laden further add fumes to flames. As the Taliban have deeply ethically embedded with the Pashtuns in KPK and other provinces promoted the Pashtun ethno-nationalist agenda in Pakistan. These Pashtuns further bi-furcated in Deobandi sect and the Sunni and Shia issue became as a security threat to the national integrity of Pakistan. The TTP fought proxy wars against the Shia sect. TTP have believed in the practices of fundamental principles of Islam by following Deobandi teaching of Islam. In addition to the issue of sectarianism, the Taliban Strictly adhere to their *Pahtunwali* they had had the signs of hatred among other nations. Quetta based Taliban considered Punjabi as a threat to their objectives (Kaltenthaler & Miller, 2015; Wasai et al, 2019; Khan et al., 2019).

The areas where TTP actively prohibited the people from social needs of life such as health. Particularly, the access to basic health was prohibited by the Taliban. The divergent ratio that was observed was 57.9% in men while 54.9% in women. According to Mehreen Usman, when refugees transit from non-endemic region to an endemic region, they are more prone to complete diseases as compared to indigenous population, as they are not immune to national strains. The same story of Afghan refugees is going rapidly in Pakistan. The research has shown the influx of Afghani refugees has suffered with increased number of: Mortality= 0.08%, Morbidity= 49.02%, TB= 49%, Malaria= 72% (Usman, 2020). The biggest cause of tension for Pakistan in health sector is the polio cases. The available data has shown that the KPK Province (155) and FATA (341) had biggest number of cases due to large Afghan community in the form of refugees present in these areas. Moreover, the polio disease was made the essence of religious contradiction, social problem or cultural violence as well. A large propaganda campaign was launched against the polio vaccine in FATA and KPK by the former militants in Pakistan (Khan

et al., 2019; Rehman et al., 2021). Beside health, education was the most endowing factor led by the Taliban.

The Taliban of Afghanistan had reservations about the western type of education in two ways. Firstly, they were against the modern liberal education. Secondly, they never wanted their girls to be educated in western values. Within this context, schools were closed as per their policy to revert people to Islamic education. Only alone in 2011, there were 440 attacks and threats against schools in Pakistan as compared to 500 in 2010. In last years, Total 150,000 students were under-privileged of education and 8000 teachers lost their jobs (Mata et al., 2021). Taliban declared female education in liberal values as an un-Islamic act. The Taliban favored Madrassas's schools against the western type of education (Malik, Zhilong & Ashraf, 2019).

Policy Recommendation

- First and foremost is the dire need to engage Taliban as a community based approach. Taliban has learned a lot from the past. They are now talking about inclusive type of government in Afghanistan, civilized norms and their instructions to the fellow citizens augmented their sense of politics. So, Taliban must be engaged in every step of political settlements considering them as a legitimate actor.
- Pakistan must need to develop a staunch position on Afghan crisis by shaping a firm stance on Afghanistan. It must establish a strategic committee cell on Afghan situation, and proper regular meetings of National Security Council should be held to discuss the crisis.
- A rigorous policy on refugee issue is needed. Pakistan has hosted already millions of refugees. There is another influx of refugees which also brings terrorism, if civil war looms in Afghanistan in future. Pakistan should also make strict regulations for the refugee problem.
- Border problem is also an issue of insecurity for both the states. Enhancing the security of border is the only viable option available. Proper check and balance policy should be adopted. The surveillance media and laser rectifier can be a good choice. Additionally, the hidden ways known only by the terrorist must be crystallized by security forces in order to make the border areas stable.
- Afghanistan is located a cross-road of clusters of regional powers sharing geography with Pakistan, Iran, China and Central Asia. The regional entities must develop a sense of consensus to work along with Afghanistan. The new Taliban government in Kabul already has signaled to work with other regional states. The stronger institutional mechanism is a good option for the well-being of Afghanistan. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), South Asian Association for Regional Organization (SAARC) and other international organizations must play their part to stabilize Afghanistan.
- According to a report, 98% of the US funding in Afghanistan went on military spending leaving behind the social issue areas. Pakistan and China can play their role, specifically, to reconstruct Afghanistan. China has a capacity to work along with the new the Taliban government as indicated by the Suhail Shaheen (Spokesman of Taliban). Both the states should devise a valid plan to uplift the social status of the war-torn country.
- The strong forecast about rise of militancy and extremism in Pakistan by the success of the Taliban regime is already on the board. To counter this, a viable Counter Violent Extremism strategy is needed to be focused. The dire need is to banish the ideological narratives spread by radicalism in Pakistan to counter-act these ideologies, modern education, moderate religious personalities and a firm strategy must be adopted to check and balance not only terrorism but also the religious-level extremism and fundamentalism as well.
- National Action Plan (NAP) started in 2014 still in a critical phase to be implemented. The first priority should be to implement the NAP as soon as possible by removing the hurdles in its ways.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan, as a neighbor of Afghanistan shares a long historical chronology of relations. Unfortunately, the war in Afghanistan affects Pakistan a lot and has also disastrous consequences across the border as well. Since 2001, the US and the Taliban were in continuous state of war under which the Taliban hid in unknown places near Pak-Afghan border and the US carried fierce attacks on them inside Pakistani territory through drones. During this so-called WOT, Pakistan suffered more than any other. Politically, position of Pakistan was weakened not just on international level but domestically every segment of society was affected also. The economy of Pakistan that was already in a delicate situation showed more downward statistics during this era. Foreign debts, poverty commercial businesses and other economic activities

were disturbed during these years of war. The spillover effect of war in the form of extremism has risen up to un-precedent levels. Northern areas of Pakistan were considered as a safe haven for militants. The insecurity on border led Pakistan army to fence this area. Hence, the US-Taliban fight was a quagmire. Pakistan ached much. However, the array of hope is still standing. Stringent policies' can be adopted in order to make Afghanistan and Pakistan more stable.

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