



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2347-6710

IJRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in
SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 10, Issue 12, December 2021

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.569

 9940 572 462

 6381 907 438

 ijirset@gmail.com

 www.ijirset.com

Impact of Taliban on Terrorist Activities in South Asia

Dr. Smita Pandey

Assistant Professor, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Acharya Narendra Deo Kisan PG College, Babhnan, Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT: The fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban has resurfaced several anxieties of terrorism and internal unrest for South Asian nations. The Taliban's close relations with various terror outfits and its incapability to govern the whole of Afghanistan will provide a safe haven and space for various terror outfits; thus, contributing to radicalisation, terrorist training and funding, and illicit weapon and drug exports. This inevitably acts against the national interests and integrity of the smaller South Asian nations. To substantiate, Bangladesh has had a history of its citizens fighting and training alongside the Mujahidin, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda. Most of these fighters even returned home to train and radicalise the Bengali youth and the refugee-seeking Rohingyas. This has led to the creation of significant and dreadful terrorist organisations such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI-B) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).



Security challenges to the Maldives

With most of their activities now being limited, there is a potential for the re-emergence and re-energising of these terrorist organisations with the Taliban takeover. This seems more evident with several Bangladeshis now travelling to Afghanistan to support various terrorist organisations.

A similar set of challenges confront Sri Lanka. The last time the Taliban ruled over Afghanistan, it had created a deep network of illicit drug, finance, and weapons networks amongst several south Asian terrorist and separatist organisations, including the LTTE. This had created a huge boost for the LTTE in terms of weapons and finance, which even lasted after the defeat of the Islamic Emirate in 2001. Thus, the re-emergence of the Taliban with more advanced weapons and supply of drugs, at a time when Sri Lanka is witnessing an increase in Islamic terror, Sinhala-Muslim differences, and speculations of revived Tamil separatism has triggered huge anxieties for Sri Lanka.

Similarly, for the Maldives, which has the highest per capita foreign terrorist fighters who fought alongside al-Qaida, ISIS, and other terrorist organisations. It will now find Afghanistan a hotspot for reviving their activities. This, with the trend of increase in home-grown terrorist attacks, will pose severe security challenges to the Maldives.

KEYWORDS: Taliban, terrorist, south Asia, activities, Afghanistan, military, country

I. INTRODUCTION

The Taliban won the war in Afghanistan. America and its allies lost. While the Taliban holds press conferences, thousands of desperate Afghans flank the runway at Hamid Karzai International Airport, desperate for a flight out of the country. Several fell hundreds of feet to their deaths trying to cling to a U.S. military aircraft during take-off.[1]



Taliban embrace social media

The short-term imperatives of saving as many Afghans as possible will soon give way to an assessment of what the new Afghanistan means for international security. For countries in South Asia — particularly India — the withdrawal of U.S. forces, collapse of the Afghan military, and ascendance of the Taliban pose a massive counter-terrorism threat. Transnational groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, as well as their affiliates and regional branches, will likely step up their activities from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Anti-India terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed could eventually use the country as a base to launch attacks in Kashmir or other parts of India, as they did in the 1990s. While the Pakistani Taliban has lost much of its strength, it could reconstitute in Afghanistan and launch attacks into Pakistan. All of this will have immense implications for the future of jihadism in South Asia and beyond.[2]



Revitalizing south asian terrorist groups

After two decades, the Taliban returned to power through brute force. Chaos and fear engulfed the city of Kabul and surrounding areas, with tens of thousands of people stuck and trying to escape harm's way. The collapse of Afghanistan left the Afghan people in distress and servitude under the Taliban's rule. The Afghanistan crisis threatens to embroil the entire region with chaos and mayhem.

II. OBSERVATIONS

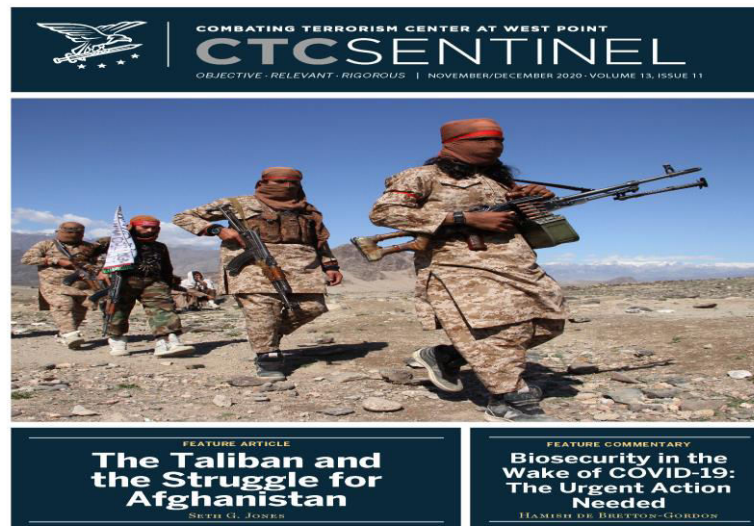
In September 2018, a powerful blast ripped through a busy market in the restive-but-picturesque Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. The dastardly attack left more than two dozen dead and scores injured, according to local news reports. Among the deceased were Amrat Lal, Mannat Lal and Saram Chand, three Hindu traders and breadwinners of the respective poor families. THE WEEK reached out to the Hindu community members close to the men who died, but they refused to talk

on how the religious minorities took the impact. The main target of the attackers seem to be another set of minorities, Shias, who suffered the most casualties as the bomb exploded outside a religious seminary. The Islamic State or Daesh took responsibility for the attack. It occurred in the volatile Orakzai agency, and it was neither the first nor the last terrorist activity recorded there. But, the 2018 blast case gives a better understanding of the gene material and behaviour of the current Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), that is wreaking havoc in the neighbouring Afghanistan. [3]



Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)

What happened in Orakzai was implemented on a much larger scale by ISKP in the last one week through suicide bombing, which led to around 100 deaths of Shias in two separate incidents even as Taliban struggles to contain the radical islamist group which has its roots in Orakzai agency. It is from here that the first batch of ISKP members emerged. The first emir, or head, of the ISKP was Hafiz Saeed Khan or Mullah Saeed Orakzai, who pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi in late 2014. He was earlier associated with the Afghanistan and Pakistan Taliban movements. Before his death in a drone strike in 2016, Khan, along with his fighters from Orakzai agency, crossed the porous mountainous border to setup a base in Nangarhar province in Afghanistan. The ISKP consolidated there, terrorising the locals and even occupying certain parts of territory including the Tora Bora caves which was once the hideout of the 9/11 mastermind and Al Qaeda founder, Osama Bin Laden. In the following years, ISKP received moral and financial support from the main IS branch in Syria and Iraq which helped it take on both the Taliban and the Afghan government forces. [4]



Around the same time, there was also an influx of foreign fighters into ISKP, and a group of youngsters from Kerala also made their way to Nangarhar. While the men died, the fate of the women who accompanied them is unknown after they were lodged in prison by the Afghan government. Hafeez Saeed Khan or the subsequent leadership from Orakzai may not be alive today, but their objectives of targeting civilians and minorities continue to be implemented in toto by their successors. The ISKP bombed a school in Kabul last year leading to dozens of deaths of girl students belonging to an ethnic minority, Hazaras who are mostly Shias. In the same year, ISKP members stormed a gurudwara killing more than 20 Sikhs, a religious minority in Afghanistan. [5]

All these years, in many instances, the ISKP failed to showcase itself as a single unit. For instance, in the norther province of Jowzjan, a local commander raised the banner of ISKP and fought the Taliban, which resulted in a bloody battle in Darzab

district between the two groups in 2018, which extended for days. There is no evidence that this self-styled group were backed by ISKP supporters from the eastern Afghanistan, where it had significant presence.

The permutations and combinations also changed region-wise. In Jowzjan, the Afghanistan government was accused of being soft on the ISKP group fighting Taliban, giving them an opportunity to surrender when they were cornered by the Taliban, thus saving their lives. In Sar-e-Pol, the Taliban and the ISKP launched joint operations against the pro-Afghanistan government forces. In eastern Afghanistan, reports suggested that ISKP fought the alliance of the Taliban and the Afghanistan forces. Then there are also independent cells, especially in urban areas of the country, who act in the interest of ISKP.[6]



Rise of Taliban in Afghanistan

However, it is a thing of the past. The war between the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan government seem to have helped the ISKP redraw its strategy and rework its organisational setup. After the Taliban takeover of the country, the battlefield is no more foggy for the ISKP. With a fighter strength of close to 4,000, the ISKP have branded the Taliban as Western stooges while portraying themselves as the true jihadists, who want to form a caliphate in the Khorasan region, beyond Afghanistan, covering Pakistan, India, Iran and neighbouring countries. [7]

The sudden resurgence of ISKP is evident. From large-scale suicide blasts to low-intensity targeted attacks on the Taliban, the ISKP has stepped up in a big way. According to Jihad Analytics, a Twitter account specialising in tracking global jihad with special focus on Islamic State, there is a huge increase in attacks of ISKP after September 18. As per the data compiled by Jihad Analytics, which takes into account ISKP media announcements and ground news, the group has claimed to conduct 27 attacks in a span of just 10 days in September month in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Parwan and Kabul. Most of the attacks took place in Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar province. The analysis shows that almost all these attacks were aimed at the Taliban. It can be said that after the Taliban seized power, ISKP have resorted to around 40 attacks till date, almost averaging an attack a day. The ISKP struck at the funeral memory service of the mother of the Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid, and also killed a district police chief of the Taliban. There is an overwhelming feeling among analysts and journalists covering Afghanistan that in the coming days hardliners within the Taliban and also the disgruntled factions might switchover to the ISKP.[8]

III. DISCUSSION

Today, a similar but even graver threat seems to confront Bangladesh and its neighbors, India and Myanmar. The likelihood of Taliban control in Afghanistan is increasing alongside the demand for Islamic ideology and nationalism in Bangladesh, even while millions of Rohingya refugees continuing to live in desperate situations within Bangladesh's borders. A similar challenge will appear to confront the Maldives. The introduction of Salafi Wahabism into the Maldives since the 1990s, accompanied by economic difficulties caused by the 2004 tsunami, and fundamentalist propaganda propagated by authoritative rulers Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and Abdulla Yameen have created ripe ground for fundamentalist and anti-democratic sentiments in the Maldives. The recent terrorist attack against former President Mohamed Nasheed is further evidence of the thriving fundamentalism in the country.[9]

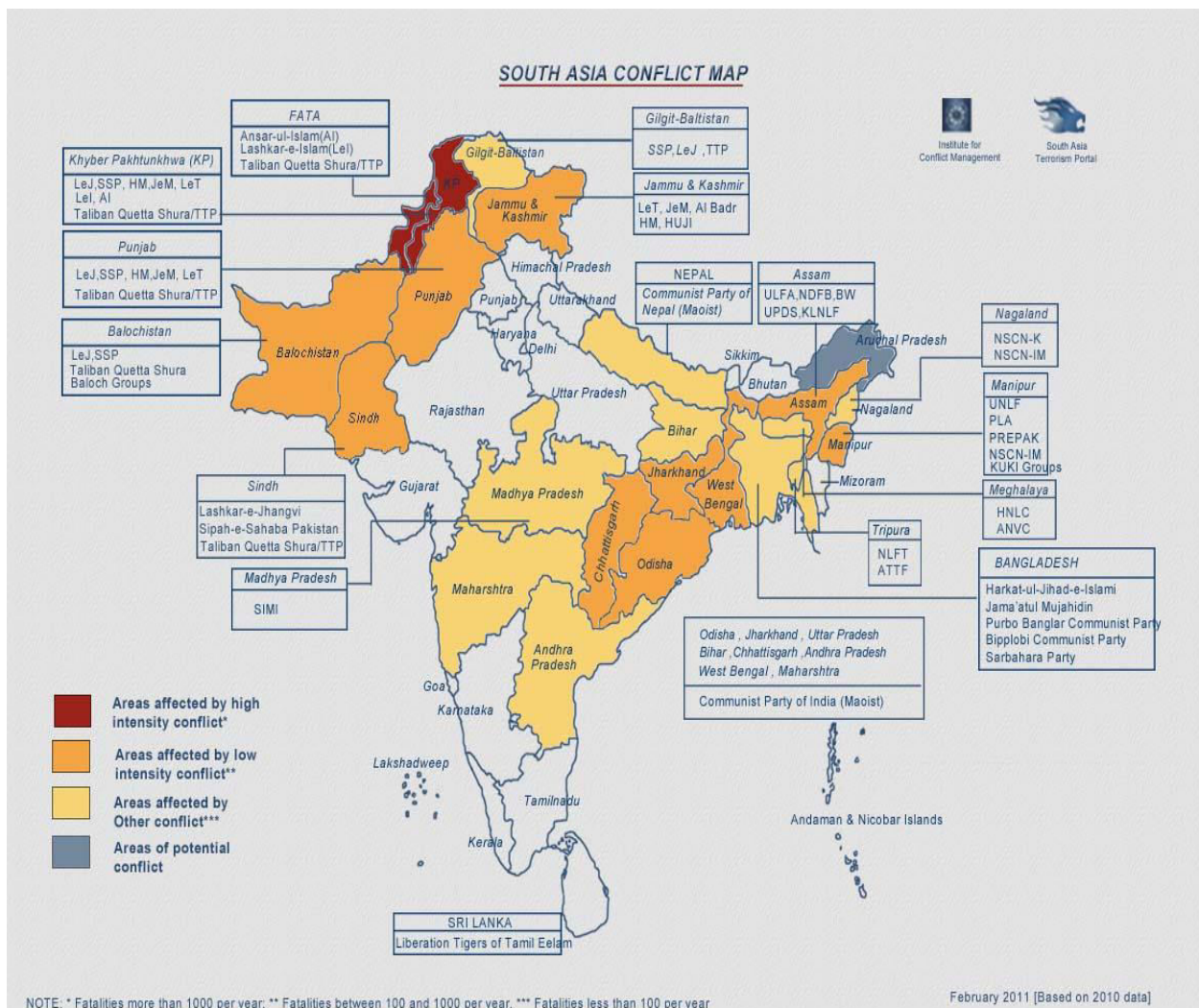
Although the Maldives has seen only a few isolated homegrown terrorist incidents such as in 2007, 2017, 2020, and 2021, the country has the highest per capita contribution to foreign terrorist fighters. That statistic has kept regional politicians and security agencies worried. While some of these terrorists had fought in the Afghan-Pakistan border alongside al-Qaida and its affiliates, others had done the same for the Islamic State and its affiliates in the Middle East. But with their aspirations of a



Caliphate being distorted, some of them have now returned to the archipelago. The revival of the Taliban’s governance in Afghanistan will provide a new platform to promote radicalization and push these fighters to continue their war at home and abroad. The effects will impact India, considering the Maldivians’ increasing anti-Indian sentiments and some radicalized individuals’ prior aspirations to carry out attacks in sensitive regions of south India.[10]

But this threat is not restricted to the Muslim-majority South Asian states alone. Even states such as Sri Lanka are likely to face a similar kind of challenge. Following the end of the civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka witnessed simmering tensions between its Muslim and Buddhist communities. This has contributed to violence on multiple occasions, such as in 2009, 2014, 2017, and 2018, and had furthered radicalization and violent retaliation from fundamentalist jihadist groups such as the National Tohweed Jamath (NTJ) – the organization responsible for the 2019 Easter bombings. In turn, the government’s response to the bombings – which included closing over 1,000 Islamic schools, banning burqas, and introducing a temporary COVID-19 cremation policy for Muslims – has furthered these tensions and ripened the ground for radicalization. This has also created a perception of the state as alienating and discriminating against Muslim communities, at a time when al-Qaida and the Islamic State already have a direct and indirect presence in the country. Both terrorist networks are also increasing their local recruitments through a narrative of Sri Lanka being unjust toward Muslims.[11]

Several of these Sri Lankan terrorist organizations are closely linked with and supported by terror networks in India, especially from the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Even the NTJ was an offspring of a Tamil Nadu organization that is promoting Salafi Wahhabism. Evidently, the Indian security agencies were also concerned about the Indian High Commission being targeted in Sri Lanka during the Easter blasts. The seeds of fundamentalism in Sri Lanka, and its transnational linkages with mainland India, will further be exploited by the Taliban, al-Qaida, and Pakistani organizations if the Taliban gain full control of Afghanistan.





Terror threats in Pakistan rise after Taliban's victory

The emergence of the Taliban could thus challenge India's security situation and the relative tranquility that has marked its eastern and southern neighborhoods for the past couple of years. Even keeping aside how the Taliban could impact India structurally via China or the United States, India will have to be prepared for a new wave of fundamentalist and internal security challenges from its neighborhood, and this won't be easy for a state whose security challenges and policies are deeply preoccupied with Pakistan and China.[10]

IV. RESULTS

Taliban is obviously making a concerted effort to appear much different from the Taliban of 2001. Based on media reports, Taliban leaders have been trying to pose as the architects of a peaceful transition of power and seeking legitimacy.



Taliban will govern Afghanistan

The Taliban 2.0 aspires to the image of a legitimate political movement rather than a terrorist group. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a co-founder of the Taliban, has been working strategically and diplomatically for a political negotiation and settlement leading to international recognition of a new Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Taliban leaders urged the international community to recognize them and wished for peaceful relations with other countries. The Taliban also declared "amnesty" across Afghanistan and is currently allowing women to work in schools and

hospitals. The group also stated that it would protect women's rights—under the framework of Islamic law. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated that Afghanistan's territory will not be used as a staging ground for attacks "against anybody or any country." [11]

The reactions from Pakistan, China, and Iran have displayed a bit of certainty in making friendly relations with the new Taliban regime. In contrast, Russia's decision will be based on the "conduct" of the Taliban. The European Union and United States emphasized the centrality of the basic rights and protection of the Afghan people in their future relations with Kabul.

Notably, it is very difficult to trust the Taliban when looking back on its past support to al-Qaeda and its abysmal record of human rights violations. Additionally, the manner in which the Taliban seized control at gunpoint does not illustrate any distinct change in the organization's character. Significantly, the international community needs to monitor the activity and the pledges made by the Taliban leaders for the basic rights and security of the Afghan people. The Taliban must be made to "walk the talk" and not just "talk the talk" in terms of adhering to international norms and laws. [9]



The fall of Afghanistan and its implications for China

V. CONCLUSION

Now with the resurgence of the Taliban, the threat of terrorism is escalated, not only the nations of the region but for European countries and the United States as well. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley remarked, the situation provides an opportunity for al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups to reconstitute in the failed state of Afghanistan. Now, it is time to constitute a greater counterterrorism force and intelligence-sharing body with allies and partners to face the potential threat of radical and fundamentalist ideology of the Taliban and its supporters, which will be the focus. [11]

REFERENCES

- 1) "2009 Report on Terrorism" at http://www.nctc.gov/witsbanner/docs/2009_report_on_terrorism.pdf.
- 2) "9/11 Commission Report" at <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>.
- 3) Arpana Pandey, "South Asia Counter-terrorism Policies & Postures after 9/11", at <http://www.satp.org/satporgrp/publication/faultlines/volume15/Article4.htm>.
- 4) B. Raman, "Countering terrorism in India," South Asia Analysis Group, Paper no. 3384, September 03, 2009 at <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers34%5Cpaper3384.html>.
- 5) "Country Reports on Terrorism" at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/>.
- 6) Daniel L. Byman, "The Changing nature of State sponsorship of Terrorism," Saban Center Analysis Paper, Number 16, May 2008.
- 7) Eric Rosand, Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Jason Ipe, "Countering Terrorism in South Asia: Strengthening Multilateral Engagement," A Report of the Center for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation and International Peace Institute, May 2009.



- 8) "Human Development Report 2009" at http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Complete.pdf.
- 9) Lisa Curtis, "Denying Terrorists Safe Haven in Pakistan," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, No. 1981, October 26, 2006 at http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/upload/bg_1981.pdf.
- 10) Marvin Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors," U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report 162, June 2006 at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162.pdf>.
- 11) SAARC website, <http://www.saarc-sec.org>. South Asian Terrorism Portal website, <http://www.satp.org/>.



**Impact Factor:
7.569**



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

 9940 572 462  6381 907 438  ijirset@gmail.com



www.ijirset.com

Scan to save the contact details