

## US Endgame in Afghanistan: Impacts on Terrorism in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*After 9/11 Pakistan decided to be a non-NATO ally of the US coalition in the war against terrorism. Due to 2400 KM long shared border with Afghanistan, the majority of the Al Qaeda members and other terrorists continue to enter Pakistan in the form of refugees and involve in terrorist activities. Objectives: To investigate the facts that how the US war on terror in Afghanistan affects the law and order situation in Pakistan. This study will also make a comparison on terrorist attacks in Pakistan, when US forces were fighting and when the US announced to withdraw from Afghanistan. Method: This research adopts a mixed-method technique. Researchers collect quantitative data through content analysis from four leading national newspapers of Pakistan i.e. Two Urdu and Two English dailies. While qualitative data is collected through in-depth interviews from the most relevant intellectuals and experts on the subject. Results: Results show that there is a significant relationship between terrorism in Pakistan with the presence of US forces in Afghanistan. Conclusion: The researchers conclude that terrorism continue to increase in Pakistan, due to the US forces presence in Afghanistan, and it decreases when the peace dialogue starts with the Taliban in Afghanistan.*

**Keywords:** Security Dilemma, Terrorism, Security, Conflict, War, Stability, Peace Dialogue.

### Introduction

There is no clear consensus on the definition of the word terrorism. One person can be a terrorist for some people while freedom fighter for other people. (Dittrich, 2005). According to (Afzal, Iqbal, & Inayay, 2012) terrorism is defined as a systematic use of violence, terror, and extortion to achieve an end. (Brandt & Sandler, 2009) terrorism is the use of force, threat, and violence by individuals or groups of people to obtain personal, political, economic, or social objectives through the fear of a large audience. International terrorism becomes a prominent means of political agenda in the late 1960s. When the word terrorism was first used for the Palestinian for the struggle of getting their political rights. After 9/11 the phenomenon of

terrorism has drastically changed the dynamics of the whole world. It has changed the socio-economic and politics of the world. Terrorism as a result of extreme violence shaken the social fabric and world peace (Michael, 2007).

Just after the attack of 9/11 America announced that Osama bin Laden is the suspect of this attack and demanded the Taliban government in Afghanistan to hand him over for further proceedings. Afghanistan government denied warning of America due to which Afghanistan is attacked to take revenge from Al Qaeda. Although there were hidden concerns of America behind the attack of Afghanistan. One aim was to block the political Islam, second to limit the growth of Pakistan as a nuclear state and the third aim was to stop China's economic growth which was a challenge to US hegemony. (Farooq & Khan, 2014).

The US knew that without the support of Pakistan they will never win the war in Afghanistan, therefore Pakistan was convinced to support the war on terror in Afghanistan. President Pervez Musharraf agreed to make Pakistan a front line state and a non-NATO ally of the coalition in the war against terrorism. Initially, it was estimated that the cost of this war to Pakistan would be \$ 2.669 billion in the year 2011-2002 based on the estimate that war will end at the end of 2001, and after that everything will be normal in Afghanistan. (Farooq & Khan, 2014). Due to 1500 miles long share border, and 300 passes links that link Afghanistan with Quetta and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the refugees and Al Qaeda have no other option but to seek asylum in Pakistan (Hilali, 2017).

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spans an area of 74,521 sq.km and has a population of 14 million in which 73 percent speak Pashtu. Likewise in Tribal areas now part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the number of Pashtu speakers is 99 percent. Due to similarities in culture and language, these areas were most suitable for their shelter and long term stay (Bennett, 2002). These Al Qaeda members along with the Jihadi group of Taliban become a security challenge which creates economic, social, and political problems for Pakistan. According to (Wigle, 2010) from 2004-2010 Pakistan has faced a total of 2766 armed attacks, 2825 bombing attacks, and 230 suicide attacks that destroyed Pakistan socially, politically, and economically.

The available literature shows that soon after 9/11 Pakistan is in deep crisis in terms of politics, economy, and stability. But now after 18 years as negotiation stars between the US and Taliban and the US announced to withdraw from Afghanistan and security will be handover to Afghanistan forces. The implication of this research will help us to conclude the implications for Pakistan after ending the game in Afghanistan.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is the major cause of terrorism in Pakistan?
2. What is the impact of the US presence in Afghanistan on terrorism in Pakistan?
3. What is the future of Pakistan after the US forces withdraw from Afghanistan?

## **Literature Review**

Afghanistan is called the graveyard of empires as after defeating of Soviet Union now the US is also looking for a safe exit. Now after the war of 18 years, killing thousands of people and spending billions of funds, the US realizes that the military is not the solution for any problem and the only solution is to talk with people (Bearden, 2001). The Soviet-Afghan war starts in December 1979 and ends in February 1989. Freedom fighters now called the Taliban (holy warriors) were trained to fight Soviet Union forces. This nine-year war not only affects Afghanistan but all the surrounding areas are affected. It has transformed relations, weakened stats, and legal economies throughout the region (Reuveny & Prakash, 1999). This war created a challenge to the security of Pakistan and the country emerged as a frontline state. Apart from internal and external security threats to Pakistan, many refugees come to Pakistan and promote drug usage, spreading of weapons, sectarianism, and endless law and order situation (A. Z. Hilali, 2002). Likewise, in

2001 USA attacked Afghanistan after 9/11 to fight terrorism. This time Pakistan stands with the US, provides air bases and fights on the front line. Due to the shared border of Pakistan with Afghanistan, the militants move to Pakistan pretending to be refugees and initiate war against Pakistan. This 27-year historic war in Afghanistan has effected economy, infrastructure, and peace not only in Afghanistan but in Pakistan and the whole region (Rubin, 2000).

After 9/11 the word *terrorism* arises with new definition as those once called freedom fighters became terrorists and some other such groups emerge, Terrorism word is generally used to describe the maximum degree of illegitimate deeds where most of the population is affected. (Michael, 2007) proposed that types of terrorism include revolutionary terrorism, establishment terrorism, nationalist terrorism, religious terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, and group terrorism, etc. terrorism is caused by helplessness and hopelessness, political and economic deprivation, poverty, and economic exploitation, easy access to weapons, and lack of education, etc. (Crawford, 2015) stated that from 2001 to 2015 total of 47,817 civilians, 3,442 NGO workers, and 76 journalists are killed in terrorist attacks. It is estimated that a total of 200,000 people are killed only in Pakistan in these attacks. (Afzal et al., 2012) investigated the impact of terrorism on the economy of Asian counties, they found that developed countries are not affected by terrorist incidents as they are in a better position to handle such incidents and their economy level is high. While in the developing countries terrorism reduces economic growth and they are facing adverse economic consequences.

The majority of hopeless and helpless people are funded by the international organization for terrorist activities. Many international organizations fund the madrasas or religious schools in third world countries to deliberately keep them away from education and most of the time they are used for extremist movements within the country or other neighboring countries. (Krueger & Malečková, 2003). likewise (Farooq & Khan, 2014) concluded the impacts of terrorism on foreign direct investment, they investigated that terrorism has affected the tourism industry, foreign direct investment, human development, capital formation, and the living standard of the people. (Michael, 2007) highlight that Pakistan is a non-terrorist country that provides the majority of troops for the UN Peace mission. Due to the stand of Pakistan in Afghanistan Pakistan became the target of terrorists which has shaken social fabric, economic progress, political system, and security. (Rabbi, 2012) stated that terrorism in Pakistan is a multidimensional problem which includes wrong policies of the Government, economic challenges and lack of education. Impartial justice system, quality education and better government policies can help in eroding terrorism and improving security, economy, and harmony in the country.

Ishaq, Saleem, & Mian (2018) investigate the perspective of leading international newspapers over the American armed operation in Pakistan. They concluded that apart from Herald which critically analyzes the actual situation the other newspapers are war-oriented and anti-Pakistan. (Shabir Hussain & Siraj, 2019) studied the coverage of Taliban in the Asian press and concluded that both in Pakistan and Afghanistan media used war-oriented frames while covering the Taliban. Most of the content is war-oriented and there is a lack of objectivity and balance. Apart from local press the international newspapers are also war oriented while they are peace oriented in other parts of the world. (Shabbir Hussain & Munawar, 2017) compared the content Urdu and English newspapers and concluded that our media give more space to war journalism than peace journalism. Overall the frequency of war frames was higher in Urdu newspapers than English newspapers. (Iqbal & Hussain, 2017) study the role of broadcast media in conflicts of Pakistan highlight that the broadcast media escalate the conflicts due to nationalist or elitist interests. (Safdar & Budiman, 2018) conducted thematic analysis of the newspapers of Pakistan found that Pakistan's media discuss Pakistan's relation with the US, terrorism, the role of Pakistan in Afghanistan, war on terror, and interest of Pakistan. Researchers concluded that Pakistani media adopted a critical stance against war and stressed the anti-war agenda. (Edy & Meirick, 2007) conclude that majority of the American favor the war in Afghanistan. Even they want to punish the Afghanistan on ground level and oppose the legal way of dealing. While around 50% oppose the war in Afghanistan. (Karim, 2017) investigated that in Afghanistan the world powers are fighting against terrorism, drugs control, and terrorists. Apart from Al Qaeda and Taliban, many countries are stakeholders in Afghanistan which make it more complicated. Pakistan's

stability is also linked with Afghanistan due to history, interest, culture etc. therefor Pakistan's security and peace has direct link with Afghanistan.

Khan (2013) highlight that ongoing war on terrorism destroys the soft image of Pakistan and Pakistan is still paying the price in the form of low economic growth, low infrastructure, and security threats. Due it increases in the intensity of war it spread to the settled areas of Pakistan especially the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which suffered a lot from terrorism. (Ahmad, 2010) studied the implications of the war on terror for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa concluded that due to sharing a border and cultural similarities of Afghanistan people with Pashtuns of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the war on terror in Afghanistan quickly spread in Pakistan. The war on terror made the life of Pashtun difficult due to bombing attacks, political instability, and security threats which create hatred in Pashtuns against the country. (Khattak, 2018) analyzed the impact of terrorism war on the education of women in Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This research concluded that during Swat operation the Pashtun norms were violated by a disturbing veil (to see girls face), they were forced to leave their homes which ultimately disturb their whole life, and especially they were deprived to get education for one year during the operation. (Mohammad, 2016) highlight that Pakistan hosts more than 3 million refugees for almost 40 years. Due to this, many terrorists and criminals come to Pakistan in the form of refugees which becomes a challenge for Pakistan stability and security. Due to these threats, Pakistan is facing crises of economy, joblessness, and withdraw of foreign investment which can be restarted after peace in Pakistan.

Ahmad (2010) stated that several military operations were carried out against terrorists and extremists in many parts of Pakistan to curb this evil from Pakistan. But still tribal areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are facing security, economic, and political challenges due to terrorism which creates hate in those people against security institutions as they lose their wealth, health, home, and lives in this war. (Hyder, Akram, & Padda, 2015) conclude that war has two side effects on the economy of Pakistan. On one side Pakistan spends a large amount to curb terrorism while on the other side Pakistan received a huge amount from the developed countries in form of aids to settle refugees and fight extremists and terrorists. (Akbar, 2015) suggested that the US withdraw without proper way can create challenges for Afghanistan such as civil war can start there. Pakistan pays a huge price to curb terrorism and plays a role in peaceful Afghanistan but now India's influence is increasing in Afghanistan which is alarming for Pakistan. Pakistan is a major stakeholder and peaceful Afghanistan is not possible without the role of Pakistan. (Buzan, 1988) sated that Pakistan is a developing country already facing many challenges and cannot afford this ongoing war on terrorism. Pakistan is always ready to negotiate with neighbors and all other forces to overcome the problem of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan and all neighbor countries.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts the Security Dilemma Theory as a theoretical framework. The security dilemma is a political situation in which actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which in turn lead to a decrease rather than an increase in the original state's security. As in the case of Pakistan, it tried to ensure its security by allying with USA and other allied countries on war against terror in Afghanistan but instead of peace it faced terrorism, extremism, and criminal activities. Looking from the perspective of Pakistan there are many factors responsible for the security situation of Pakistan. The key factors responsible for the security of Pakistan are terrorist activities due to power groups working against Pakistan through Afghanistan. Using the security dilemma theory this study is based on content analysis of newspapers to analyze the anti-state activities supported by the in-depth interviews with key experts.

## **Research Methodology**

This study utilized quantitative methodology vis-a-vis content analysis methods and qualitative methodology vis-a-vis in-depth interviews to explore the effects of terrorism on the security situation in

Pakistan. In other words, this study is an attempt to investigate the implications of the US war in Afghanistan on Pakistan. For this research data is collected through content analysis from four leading daily national newspapers, two English (Dawn and The News) dailies and two Urdu dailies (*Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt*) of Pakistan. All the four newspapers were selected primarily on the basis of their circulation stats in Pakistan as per ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulations). Dawn also serves as newspaper of record for Pakistan, while *Jang* is solely the largest selling Urdu daily of Pakistan. Any terrorism related incident is bound to be reported in these newspapers. Any and all reported news items related to terrorist activity are selected as unit of analysis for this study. Furthermore, to understand the quantitative data collected through content analysis the in-depth interviews were conducted with leading intellectuals of the subject under study. These interviews were key to provide an insight and context to the entire situation and deep understanding of the root causes of security situation in Pakistan having any link with on-going war on terror in Afghanistan.

### Analysis

The researchers conducted the content analysis in two phases to compare the results. In phase 1 researchers collected data from all the four selected newspapers from 1st December 2018 to 31st December 2018 when US forces were fighting against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Researchers counted reported terrorism events in the specified time frame. The results are summarized below.

Table 1: 1<sup>st</sup> December to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 (When US forces were operational in Afghanistan)

S.NO	Newspaper Name	Terrorism Related Stories
1	DAWN (English newspapers)	22
2	THE NEWS (English newspapers)	20
3	JANG (Urdu newspaper)	28
4	NAWA-i-WAQT (Urdu newspaper)	27

These results show that Pakistan faced terrorism attack almost daily in the presence of US forces in Afghanistan. In phase two, researchers collected data from 1st June 2019 to 30th June 2019 when the US announces to withdraw from Afghanistan and dialogue starts between the Taliban, US, and other stakeholders including Pakistan. Researchers counted all the reported stories on terrorism which are further compared to conclude the impact of US withdrawal from Afghanistan and its effects on terrorism in Pakistan. The results are the following.

Table 2: 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (When Peace Dialogue starts with the Taliban)

S.NO	Newspaper Name	Terrorism Related Stories
1	DAWN (English newspapers)	9
2	THE NEWS (English newspapers)	15
3	JANG (Urdu newspaper)	9
4	NAWA-i-WAQT (Urdu newspaper)	17

Table 2 indicates that terrorism events decreased in Pakistan when the dialogue starts between the US and the Taliban. For understanding the factors responsible for terrorism, the current situation of Pakistan, US withdrawal impacts, and future implications for Pakistan, researchers approached intellectual experts on terrorism through purposive sampling to collect the most relevant and recent information. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with experts on Pak- Afghan affairs, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa affairs. These interviews were further analyzed through NVIVO.

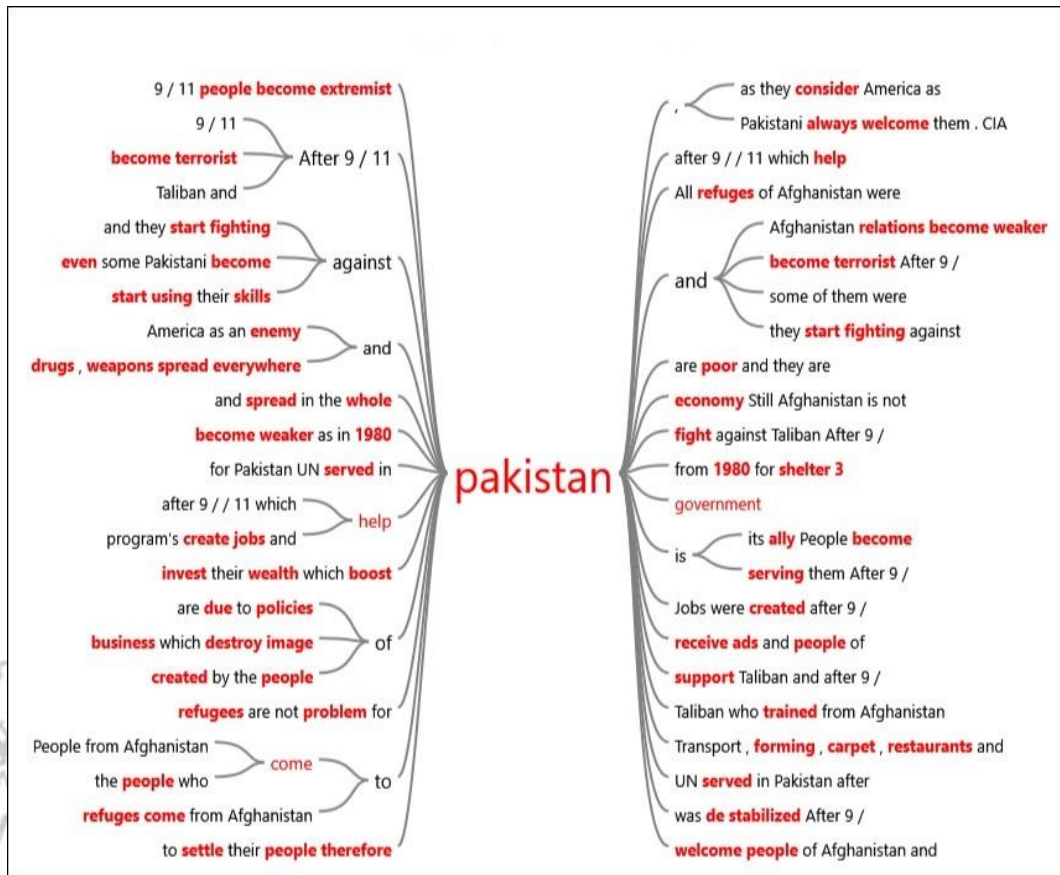


Figure No 1

**Q1: What is the major cause of terrorism in Pakistan?**

Looking to the root of this problem when the Soviet Union attacked Afghanistan in 1979 Pakistan provided complete support to Afghanistan to fight them. With the consent of US, Pakistan trained Taliban to help Afghanistan win the war and finally with the help of Pakistan Taliban defeated the Soviet Union. Likewise, in 2011 when 9/11 happened and the US announced to attack Afghanistan, the people and the government of Afghanistan were expecting from Pakistan that neighbors will help us again to fight this war. But due to US pressure Pakistan gave airbases and became ally of the US in the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. As Afghanistan is a neighbor of Pakistan and both are Muslim countries with many similarities in culture and ideology, the people of both sides were not happy with this decision of Pakistan government, and tension increased on both sides. Pakistan shares a 2400 km long border with Afghanistan. Soon after the US attack on Afghanistan, people of Afghanistan move towards Pakistan for their survival considering Pakistan as a safe haven. During this war, more than 3 million refugees came to Pakistan in the form of refugees. Taking advantage of the situation along with refugees terrorists also enter Pakistan in the form of refugees. As refugees in Pakistan were not bound in the camps and they were free to move everywhere, some of them started businesses and settled in Pakistan. Likewise, the terrorists spread in the whole of Pakistan and soon they started anti-state activities in Pakistan to take revenge because they considered Pakistan as an enemy by providing air bases to the US army. This way not only the Taliban of Afghanistan turned against Pakistan but some people of Pakistan also joined them as they thought that the US is an enemy of Muslims, killing people in Afghanistan. As Pakistan becomes an ally of the US, so fighting against Pakistan and its army is like fighting against the US, as both are in coalition.

**Q2: What is the impact of the US presence on terrorism in Pakistan?**

Before 9/11 Pakistan was a peaceful country. But when the US attacked Afghanistan, terrorism spread in every corner of Pakistan. The content analysis of newspapers show that Pakistan is facing terrorist attacks on daily basis. The Dawn newspaper reported (22) terrorist events in December, The News (20), *Jang* news (28), and *Nawa-i-Waqt* reported total (27) events. While when the US announced to leave Afghanistan and engaged Taliban for a Dialogue, then terrorist attacks considerably decreased in Pakistan. In June 2019, dialogue starts among the Taliban, Afghanistan government, US and Pakistan. In June 2019 again researchers counted reported terrorist attacks in one month. In June 2019 the Dawn newspaper reported (9) terrorist events, The News (15), *Jung* news (9), and *Nawa-i-Waqt* reported total (17) events. It shows that there is an almost 50% decrease in terrorism related events. So it is clear that the US attack in Afghanistan is the major reason for terrorism in Pakistan. But still, there are multiple views on US presence and attack on Afghanistan. Some experts say that due to Afghanistan war terrorism, extremism, drugs, and weaponization increased in Pakistan. While other schools of thought say that due to fighting terrorism, Pakistan became prominent on the world map, received billions of funds in the form of aids, and also the refugees came along with their wealth, they started the businesses of transports, carpets, etc. which boosted the Pakistan economy.

**Q3: What is the future of Pakistan after the US withdraws from Afghanistan?**

This is the major concern of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and all other stake holding nations regarding the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. After 18 years of war following 9/11, still, the Taliban are powerful and they have control and public support in Afghanistan. It is expected that soon after the US withdraws Taliban will be in power, as people of Afghanistan know that during the Taliban government Afghanistan was peaceful and after the Taliban regime whole Afghanistan was on fire.

Secondly, there is a serious concern from the government of Pakistan. People of Afghanistan are not happy with Pakistan since it provided air bases to the US. Now after suffering a lot in this war and compromising law and order situation, economy, and stability for the US, what Pakistan will receive? It is assumed that Pakistan will also become stable, and peaceful, while the second school of thought says that now Afghanistan considers Pakistan as an enemy and they are tilted towards India, and in future India can use the soil of Afghanistan against Pakistan. What exactly will happen, we had to wait until the physical withdraw of the US from Afghanistan.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that just like the postulates of Security Dilemma Theory, in which actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which in turn lead to a decrease rather than an increase in the original state's security, Pakistan is also facing terrorism primarily due to on-going war on terror in Afghanistan in which Pakistan served as an ally to the US and the coalition. After 18 years of war, now since the peace talk began between US, Taliban & Pakistan, we can witness peace in Pakistan as the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan have significantly decreased.

Secondly, due to war, the Taliban scattered and now they have spread from Afghanistan to Pakistan and the whole region. Pakistan playing host to the Afghan refugees payed a huge price when Taliban started taking refuge in Pakistan in the disguise of war victims. The cultural, social and religious ties also affected the mind sets of young Pashtuns in turning them against Pakistan in the support of Taliban. The initiation of peace talks between US, Taliban and Pakistan helps in the diffusion of this narrative of Taliban taking arms against the Pakistan government. Therefore, these peace talks not only provide a promise for a peaceful Afghanistan but a peaceful Pakistan too.

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