Resurgence of Terrorist Groups in Pakistan under the Rule of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban in Afghanistan: A Case Study (TTP)

Morteza Sheikh Darreh Ney[iD]

Master of International Relations, Mazandaran University, morteza.sheikh1993@gmail.com

Hosein Moein Abadi Bidgoli[iD]

Associate Professor of Political Science, Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, moeini@uk.ac.ir

Abstract

Objective: Over the past two decades, South Asia, especially Pakistan, has witnessed a significant increase in terrorism and religious extremism. The roots of sectarian extremism in Pakistan can be traced back to the late 1970s, giving rise to groups like the "Pakistan Taliban" or "Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan." The combination of internal ideological foundations and international and regional issues has facilitated the rise of Pakistani Talibanism. This study aims to address the central question: How has the Islamic Emirate of the Afghan Taliban contributed to the resurgence of extremist militants within the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan?

Method: This research adopts an analytical-explanatory approach, leveraging the principles of diffusion theory.

Results: The findings suggest that under Taliban rule, Afghanistan serves as a "strategic depth" for the militants of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Conclusion: The study concludes that when the Pakistani government conducts operations against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan militants, these individuals often flee to Afghanistan, where they receive safe haven from the Taliban.

Keywords: Terrorism, Pakistani Taliban (TTP), Afghan Taliban.

Article Type: Research

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the global community has confronted the troubling phenomenon of terrorism, which has posed serious security risks, particularly in South Asia. This region has increasingly highlighted terrorism as a significant security concern, becoming a persistent feature within its political and security landscape (SATP, 2023). The rise of terrorism and extremism has threatened the stability of several countries in the region, with Pakistan experiencing one of the highest rates of terrorist incidents, averaging over 132 attacks annually (Younas & Sandler, 2017: 491). The surge of violence from Islamic and sectarian groups in Pakistan began in the early 1990s, following the conclusion of the Soviet-Afghan war (Haqqani, 2023). However, the dynamics shifted dramatically after the September 11, 2001 attacks, which empowered various terrorist organizations. Pakistan aligned itself with the American strategy against the Taliban in Afghanistan, positioning itself as a frontline state in the global war on terror. During this period, numerous Afghan militants fled into Pakistan's federal regions and North Waziristan, where they initiated a range of terrorist activities, making Pakistan a critical hub for their operations (Asif et al., 2021: 1-2).

In response to international pressure, particularly from the United States, the Pakistani government banned several militant groups on January 13, 2002, and more on November 16, 2003. However, many of these groups quickly reemerged under different names and pretended to operate as charities, which facilitated their reintegration into society (Rana, 2018: 3). Although the Pakistani government ultimately dismantled the havens for these groups within its borders, the violent backlash led to a unification of Pakistani jihadists, who officially allied with Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. This collaboration resulted in the formation of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007. Upon its establishment, the TTP proclaimed its allegiance to the Afghan Taliban, asserting that its leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, served as their spiritual guide. The TTP declared its support for the Afghan Taliban's struggle against the United States and its allies, aiming to implement a Sharia system in Pakistan and liberate the country from what they referred to as "American peddlers" (AbdulSayed, 2021: 2).

Over time, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) evolved into a centralized anti-government militant movement, becoming the largest organization fighting against the Pakistani government. Although military actions by Pakistan led to a decline in TTP from 2014 to 2018, the group experienced a resurgence following the Doha talks—a peace agreement between the US government and the Afghan Taliban—in February 2020, coinciding with the rise of the Taliban. By July 2020, TTP had gained in strength by merging with numerous militant groups opposed to the Pakistani government. This collaboration contributed to a significant increase in violence perpetrated by TTP, which escalated further with the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Kabul in August 2021.

The resurgence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan has posed a new challenge for the already struggling nation of Pakistan, especially after the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the Taliban. This research aims to address

a crucial question: how has the Islamic Emirate of the Afghan Taliban contributed to the revival of extremist militants within Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan? The answer to this question is found in the current dynamics in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, which serves as a "strategic depth" for TTP militants. Consequently, when Pakistan initiates operations against TTP militants, they often seek refuge in Afghanistan, where the Afghan Taliban offer them safe havens. This article examines the influence of the Afghan Taliban on the Pakistani Taliban. To investigate this relationship, diffusion theory was employed, and the topic was explored using a descriptive explanatory method. The structure of this article includes a research background, theoretical framework, a history of terrorism in Pakistan, an overview of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan group, the relationship between TTP and the Afghan Taliban, the Afghan Taliban's influence and objectives concerning TTP, the renewal of TTP, and finally, a summary and conclusion.

2-Literature Review

The rise of terrorist groups in the South Asian region, particularly in Pakistan following the events of September 2001, has drawn the attention of both politicians and researchers in political fields.

Various scholarly works, including books, analytical articles, and scientific reports, have been produced by institutions and publications focusing on this issue and its related developments, with each author examining the topic from different perspectives. In his book, "Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan: Origin, Evolution and Signs of the Future," Bhoria (2021) argues that radical Islamist terrorism is a significant threat plaguing Pakistan today. The book seeks to address key questions: What role have history and politics played in fueling religious sentiments in the region? Why has Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan persisted despite extensive efforts by the Pakistan Army to eradicate it? What are the future prospects for such movements? Bhoria explores the factors contributing to the growth and formation of Tehreek-e-Taliban as a militant organization, including its ideological orientation, worldview, goals, and its connections with other militant groups both within and outside Pakistan. In the article "Politics and Terrorism: A Case Study of Pakistan," Mohammad Ahsan and Mohammad Shahryar Khan (2019) discuss how Pakistan has experienced two primary political systems: dictatorship and democracy. They note that in authoritarian regimes, political culture tends to diminish, and decisions are made without the involvement of elected representatives. Conversely, under democratic regimes, political activities and culture are more robust. This research aims to explore the relationship between official policy and terrorism in Pakistan.

Jadoun (2021) argues in the article "Evolution and Potential Revival of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan" that the Tehreek-e-Taliban has been one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in Pakistan since its establishment in 2007. He contends that military efforts by the Pakistani government significantly diminished the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Taliban's ability to carry out attacks until 2016. However, recent incidents, including the deadly attack in Quetta on April

21, 2021, indicate that the group is attempting to rebuild its operational capacity. The report outlines the rise and fall of the Tehreek-e-Taliban and examines options for the Pakistani government, with the support of the United States, to prevent its resurgence. Salma Malik (2023), in the article "Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan: Dialogue or Military Action?" published by the Institute of Peace and Conflict, asserts that the Pakistani government has opted for dialogue over decisive military action to counter the rebels. The government has formed several committees to facilitate these discussions. Interestingly, this approach of dialogue and negotiation, intended as a trust-building and reconciliation measure, has not deterred the Taliban; instead, it has led to an increase in their attacks, including recent assaults on a cinema in Peshawar and direct attacks against security forces.

The literature review indicates that independent and coherent research on this topic is lacking. Most existing studies focus on terrorism, its origins, and the growth of terrorist groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. The current research analyzes and explains the group's relationship with the Afghan Taliban and the factors contributing to its revival in light of developments within the Afghan Taliban, using the theoretical framework of "Diffusion."

3-Theoretical Framework

In discussing the influence of the Afghan Taliban on the formation and revival of the Pakistani Taliban, it is important to consider how Afghan Taliban ideology reflects on other Islamist groups in various countries. This includes factors such as geographical proximity, socio-cultural homogeneity and diversity, and the nature of the ideological influence. To explore these effects, we have chosen to apply the theory of "diffusion."

Originally developed by a Swedish geographer, diffusion theory has been embraced by multiple disciplines, including political science and international relations, due to its effective descriptive and analytical capabilities for human phenomena. Its cultural focus provides valuable insights into the cultural and ideological influences of the Afghan Taliban on other Islamist groups.

Diffusion theory comprises three types: hierarchical, displacement, and contagion.

1. Displacement Diffusion

This involves the physical transfer of individuals or groups who carry thoughts and cultural values from one location to another. Historically, this method facilitated cultural transmission during the colonial era, although its relevance has diminished in the context of globalization.

2. Hierarchical Diffusion

In this form, phenomena spread through a structured sequence of categories and classes. Ideas transfer from one "important person" to another or from one significant urban center to another. This type of displacement typically flows from large cities to rural areas and from more influential regions to less significant ones.

3. Contagious Diffusion

Contagious diffusion refers to the widespread dissemination of ideas without regard for hierarchy, occurring through direct contact. In this case, geographical proximity plays a crucial role; regions closer to the source of diffusion tend to be more significantly affected by the ideas being spread (Barzegar, 2011:37-38).

Given this framework, it can be concluded that the geographical closeness of Afghanistan to Pakistan creates an environment conducive to the emergence and evolution of Taliban ideological and political thought. Pakistan's importance to the Taliban's religious ideology is underscored by historical ties, traditional affinities, significant socio-cultural similarities, shared religious identity, and strategic partnerships (Rahat Iqbal, 2020).

In the 1970s, following Pakistan's various foreign conflicts and wars with India and Bangladesh, the emergence of Islamist militant groups led to the official acceptance of Islam in the country (Murphy, 2015: 4-83). In Afghanistan, the Taliban, which was active in opposing the central government and Soviet forces, received political and military support from several countries, including the United States, Western Europe, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and nations around the Persian Gulf (Adkin & Yousaf, 2008: 159).

In 1979, Saudi Arabia funded and established Wahhabi Islamic schools in Pakistan. Many members of the Taliban, as well as Afghan refugees from the northwestern border regions, attended these schools, where they were taught the Taliban's Islamic Jihad and Salafi ideology. The proliferation of this ideology contributed to the rise of extremism among Muslims in Pakistan (Murphy, 2015: 84-5). Following the 2001 terrorist attacks and Pakistan's cooperation with the United States in combating the Taliban in Afghanistan, numerous Islamic radical groups, motivated by a desire to confront the U.S. and support their Muslim brethren (the Afghan Taliban), shifted their political and operational bases against the Pakistani central government. This bolstered their justification for supporting America in its fight against the Afghan Taliban (Hashmi, 2009: 1). Influenced by the jihadist ideology of the Afghan Taliban, a new generation of groups emerged in Pakistan, adopting local names reminiscent of the Taliban. One notable group was the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which officially formed in 2007 after aligning with the Afghan Taliban and declared that it viewed Mullah Muhammad Omar, the then-leader of the Afghan Taliban, as its spiritual guide (Sayed, 2021: 2). After the Taliban regained power in the summer of 2021, the TTP experienced a resurgence, reviving its activities after a period of dormancy between 2014 and late 2018. This revival can be seen as a movement among Islamic groups, particularly the TTP, within Pakistan.

4-History of Terrorism in Pakistan

The history of terrorism in Pakistan intertwines politics and political actors motivated by both religious and non-religious factors. Political activists with religious motives can have both sectarian and non-sectarian characteristics (Ahsan & Shehryar Khan, 2019:14). As communal violence escalated due to external conflicts between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, as well as the war between Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), the influence of

various internal Muslim sects blended with local beliefs created significant challenges for the country. In an effort to foster a sense of national identity, politicians in Islamabad increasingly invoked Islam. This raised debates about whether Pakistan should be a homeland for Muslims or an Islamic state. Leaders from various sectors defended Islam until 1973, when it was officially declared the state religion (Murphy, 2015:4-83).

Past military governments sought legitimacy and parliamentary success through the support of masses and religious parties (Hashmi, 2009:1). For instance, Zia-ul-Haq's military regime promoted the strict interpretations of Islam from certain sects, using it to unite and strengthen Pakistan while also legitimizing its authority. In 1979, Zia-ul-Haq welcomed funding from Saudi Wahhabis to establish madrasas (Islamic schools) as a countermeasure to Iran's Shiite revolution. These Wahhabi madrasas in Pakistan propagated Salafi ideology and radical extremism, while the Taliban and Afghan refugees from the northwestern border regions further disseminated Salafi thought within these institutions and across the country.

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Pakistan, fearing a U.S.-India alliance, agreed to assist the United States in its invasion of Afghanistan (Murphy, 2015:5-84). Radical Islamic parties and groups capitalized on this situation to bolster their political bases, promoting agendas that opposed the West and supported the Taliban. The weak Pakistani governments struggled to confront these groups, fearing retaliation and the potential backlash from religious parties. This led to a policy of appeasement, which ultimately empowered these factions within the country's political landscape (Hashmi, 2009:1). Consequently, various terrorist organizations emerged, with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) becoming one of the most significant and powerful. Since 2001, Pakistan has suffered numerous casualties, including military personnel, politicians, social activists, and civilians, including women and children, due to the activities of these groups.

5- Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is the largest militant organization operating in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, which includes the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (Yusufzai 2009:1). It is a subset of the broader Pakistani Taliban, encompassing most but not all of the Taliban groups in the country. The TTP lacks a unified structure, consisting primarily of Islamist and Pashtun elements from the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). While the majority of its members are Pashtun, the organization is ethnically diverse, including groups such as Arabs, Uzbeks, Afghans, Chechens, and the Punjabi Taliban. The Mehsud faction forms the core of the TTP, primarily focusing on internal jihad against the Pakistani government, while the Punjabi Taliban is more concerned with sectarian jihad in Kashmir. After the American intervention in Afghanistan, the TTP sent some of its radical forces to support the Taliban (San Martin & Chanakyapuri, 2022:146-8).

Following the Pakistani government's military operation against extremists at Lal Masjid (Red Mosque), the TTP declared war on the Pakistani government. On December 14, 2007, a council of 40 senior TTP leaders from across Pakistan convened to form an organization aimed at consolidating their power. This council appointed Baitullah Mehsud as its leader, with Maulana Hafiz Gul Bahadur as deputy leader and Maulana Faqir Muhammad in third place in the leadership hierarchy (Abbas, 2008:2).

The Pakistani government officially banned the TTP on August 25, 2008, freezing all of its accounts and assets, prohibiting media coverage, and offering bounties for the capture or death of prominent TTP leaders. In late December 2008 and early January 2009, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar met with three key commanders of the TTP— Baitullah Mehsud, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, and Maulvi Nazir. They encouraged these leaders to resolve their differences and limit their activities in Pakistan in order to assist the Afghan Taliban counter the anticipated increase in US-led coalition forces (San Martin & Chanakyapuri, 2022:148). Baitullah Mehsud was killed by US forces in 2009 (EFSAS, 2017), and after his death, his successor, Hakimullah Mehsud, was also killed on November 1, 2013. Following these losses, the TTP, once Pakistan's largest and most feared militant coalition, was significantly weakened (Boone, 2022). After the deaths of these three leaders in US drone strikes, the Shura appointed Maulana Fazlullah as the new leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in 2014 (San Martin & Chanakyapuri, 2022:148).

Since 2014, Pakistan's internal divisions and counter-terrorism operations have significantly weakened the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In February 2017, the military launched "Operation Radd ul-Fasaad" to eliminate the remaining threats of terrorism in the country (Shah, 2017). These efforts considerably hampered the TTP's ability to plan and execute attacks on various soft and hard targets. Following this confrontation, the new leader of the TTP, Maulana Fazlullah, focused on reuniting his factions and members, advocating for jihad, and promoting the implementation of Sharia law across Pakistan. A week after Fazlullah's death in June 2018, the group introduced Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud from the Mehsud tribe as its new leader (San Martin & Chanakyapuri, 2022, p. 149). Under this new leadership, the TTP continued its attacks in Pakistan. After the Afghan Taliban took control of Kabul in August 2021, there has been an increase in the TTP's activities and assaults against the central government. The group is currently experiencing stability and a distinct organizational structure, indicating a revival after years of ineffective leadership.

6- Relations between Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Afghan Taliban

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) initially claimed to be a branch of the Afghan Taliban. In their statements, the group announced that Mullah Muhammad Omar, the then leader of the Taliban, was their spiritual leader and expressed support for the Afghan Taliban's struggle against the United States and its allies. Although TTP characterized its campaign as a defensive war against the

military operations of Pakistan, the group aspired to emulate the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and establish a system based on Islamic Sharia in Pakistan.

Following the strategy implemented by the Afghan Taliban before September 11, 2001, TTP established a Sharia military presence in northwest Pakistan. This approach successfully attracted members from Pakistani Islamist groups in the Malakand, Bajaur, and Orakzai districts, thereby expanding TTP's political base. TTP's efforts resonated with many Islamists who had long sought to achieve the Islamization of Pakistan through non-violent, religio-political means (Sayed, 2021:2-3). Since its inception, TTP has maintained ties with the Afghan Taliban, making it fair to describe the two groups as ideological twins. They have trained together; TTP has provided foot soldiers to the Afghan Taliban, while the Afghan Taliban has offered logistical support to TTP. Following the Pakistan Army's offensive against TTP in 2014, many TTP fighters fled to Afghanistan. When the Taliban seized control of Kabul, they released hundreds of TTP prisoners, including senior leaders such as Faqir Mohammad. TTP leaders hailed the Taliban's victory in August 2021 as a historic and blessed triumph for the "whole Islamic nation," reaffirming their loyalty (Afzal, 2022:4). Later that year, Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, head of TTP, stated that the group could only succeed by following the example set by the Afghan Taliban (Sayed, 2021:4). The Taliban in Afghanistan and the Taliban in Pakistan have maintained deep ties for a long time. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan views the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban as a significant victory for their jihadi agenda. Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, the Amir of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, publicly reaffirmed his group's allegiance to Haibatullah Akhundzada, the Amir of the Taliban, and pledged unconditional support to the Afghan Taliban. Conversely, the Afghan Taliban regard supporting Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan as both a religious and national duty, rooted in ideological beliefs and tribal connections (Sayed & Hamming, 2023:2). Overall, the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan has bolstered the morale of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan militants, emboldening the group considerably. With the close cooperation between the two factions, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan now faces less fear of operations from the Pakistani government. This relationship has granted the group an unprecedented level of "strategic depth" in their history.

7- What is the impact and goals of the Afghan Taliban on TTP?

Tehreek-e-Taliban has historical and ideological ties to the Afghan Taliban, rooted in Deobandi Islam, a subset of the Sunni Hanafi School (Pease-Hess, 2021:63). This connection has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of Tehreek-e-Taliban compared to the Afghan Taliban. A pivotal moment in the transfer of Islamic (Salafi) and Jihadi ideas from the Afghan Taliban (former Mujahideen) to the Pakistani Taliban occurred through religious schools, some of which were established by various Arab Sunni governments, including Saudi Arabia (Murphy, 2015:5-84).

Despite this, religious authorities in Pakistan have historically supported the Afghan Taliban's jihad against the central Afghan government. These authorities legitimized and issued fatwas to endorse Islamic extremist groups in Pakistan,

including Tehreek-e-Taliban (Kamel, 2023:2). The collaboration of Islamic groups in Pakistan, particularly Tehreek-e-Taliban, in supporting the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan is well-known. Following this victory and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, the Taliban emerged as a significant political force in Pakistan in recognition of this extensive cooperation (Afzal, 2022:2).

By transferring Jihadi ideas and operational support to Tehreek-e-Taliban and forming the Islamic State, the Afghan Taliban has effectively created opportunities for the recruitment and rejuvenation of forces within Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. The Pakistani government has frequently accused the Taliban government of facilitating terrorist operations carried out by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan with the support of the Islamic Emirate on Afghan soil.

The primary goals of the Islamic Emirate in promoting its ideology and supporting Tehreek-e-Taliban in Pakistan are:

7-1-Strengthening strategic relations

The Taliban government believes that fostering cooperation and engagement with various Islamic groups in Pakistan, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban, is essential for strengthening relations on key strategic issues. This conclusion is based on an assessment of Pakistan's political developments and the mutual needs of these groups (Afzal, 2022:4).

7-2-Legalizing the presence of jihadist groups in Afghanistan

There is documented evidence of several regional jihadist groups operating in Afghanistan under the rule of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban. Initially, the Taliban government denied the existence of these groups, but their denial was ultimately unsuccessful, leading them to acknowledge the presence of such factions, including members of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Furthermore, the Islamic Emirate aims to maintain unity among its ranks by legitimizing the accommodation and movement of its former allies. In reality, Taliban fighters and mid-level leaders do not accept the inadequate hosting of these groups, considering them as old comrades.

7-3- Changing the population context in the regions of Afghanistan

The political developments in Afghanistan over the past century are deeply intertwined with the country's social fabric. Rural uprisings have historically either resulted in the overthrow of governments or hindered their ability to assert absolute control in various regions. For instance, the provinces of Panjshir, Takhar, and Faryab in northern Afghanistan continue to pose a potential threat to the Taliban government due to their unique social contexts and history of resistance against the Taliban. It appears that the Taliban perceives a significant threat to its survival from the northern and southwestern provinces, which are characterized by a largely homogeneous and distinct ethnic and social structure (Kamel, 2023:4-4).

8-Revival of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Although the Pakistani military's actions, US drone strikes, and civil unrest led to a decline in the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) between 2014 and 2018, the group has made significant efforts to recover following the February 2020 peace deal between the Afghan Taliban and the US government.

The Taliban's takeover and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan have resulted in several key developments that have contributed to the re-emergence of the TTP.

8-1-Reducing the influence of al-Qaeda

After the U.S. attack on al-Qaeda hideouts in Afghanistan, the organization's leaders and activists migrated to Pakistan. Al-Qaeda militants crossed the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, seeking refuge in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Pakistani intelligence agencies quickly tracked and arrested these militants in urban centers, prompting them to seek safety in the more remote regions of Waziristan. In Waziristan, relentless U.S. drone strikes have resulted in the deaths of some members and the displacement of others (N. Elahi, 2019: 4). In May 2011, U.S. Special Forces killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan; he was succeeded by Ayman al-Zawahiri. Zawahiri was subsequently killed in a U.S. airstrike in Kabul, Afghanistan, in July 2022. To date, his successor has not been identified. As a result of these measures, al-Qaeda has been significantly weakened and currently lacks operational capabilities in Pakistan (Kronstadt, 2022: 1).

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was largely a creation of al-Qaeda (Chandran, 2023: 7). Al-Qaeda exerted a profound influence on the political dynamics of the TTP. For instance, bin Laden compelled the TTP leaders to revise their anti-Shia agenda, limiting their campaign primarily to the West and the Pakistani government. Although al-Qaeda played a crucial role in the rise and expansion of the TTP, the latter began to distance itself from al-Qaeda as the latter's power and public support waned. Simultaneously, as al-Qaeda's influence in Afghanistan diminished, the Afghan Taliban's power and influence grew, becoming a strong political and organizational model for the TTP (Sayed, 2021: 4).

8-2- Mergers

The return of Wali Mehsud as the leader of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) encouraged many disaffected tribes, including members of Makhlis Yar's faction aligned with Hakimullah Mehsud, to rejoin the organization. Additionally, the Amjad Farooqi group of the Punjabi Taliban, which had close ties to Al-Qaeda, and the Usman Saifullah group, a branch of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ), also returned to the TTP. According to Pakistani analyst Amir Rana, by mid-December 2020, around 11 splinter groups had rejoined the TTP, resulting in an increase in attacks on security forces in South and North Waziristan, as well as in the Bajaur and Mohmand regions (Abbas, 2021: 44-45). This integration into the TTP began in July 2020, following the Doha Peace Accords between the United

States and the Afghan Taliban on February 29, 2020. By 2022, 12 groups had joined the TTP, with an additional 8 groups joining in early 2023.

Two primary factors facilitated the integration of these groups into the TTP after the Taliban took control: 1. The cessation of active jihadist insurgency in Afghanistan, along with reforms instituted under Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud's leadership. Many Pakistani militants, who had previously participated in the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan but had not fought in Pakistan, chose to join the TTP after the Taliban transitioned from an insurgent group to the ruling authority. These reforms, spearheaded by Mehsud, inspired anti-government militants in Pakistan to trust and align with the TTP in pursuit of a Taliban-inspired victory in their own country. 2. The withdrawal of the United States and its allies from Afghanistan diminished the rationale for Pakistani militias to remain there, as they could no longer conduct military activities and faced challenges in integrating into Afghanistan's new political landscape (Syed & Hemming, 2023: 3). Following the weakening of the TTP in 2014, several groups had splintered off, but these recent mergers have strengthened the TTP and significantly bolstered its manpower.

8-3- Centralized and systematic structure

The third key development characterizing the revival of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is its centralized and systematic structure. Historically, the TTP operated with a tribal organizational system that featured limited control at the top; however, it has now adopted a centralized structure akin to that of the Afghan Taliban. In the previous model, local leaders wielded significant power and relied on central command for orders, making it challenging to replace influential commanders. This lack of cohesion contributed to the internal chaos and infighting that ultimately led to the disintegration of the TTP in 2014 (Sayed & Hamming, 2021:2).

Following the example of the Afghan Taliban regime, the TTP has established a parallel government system to extend its influence into new areas. The creation of these new governorates outside TTP's traditional support zones, occurring after the rise of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban, indicates that the TTP has grown bolder in its governmental and organizational framework after ending the ceasefire with the Pakistani government in November 2022 (Carter et al., 2023:5).

The TTP first announced this new structure in 2022, revealing a full cabinet as part of its self-proclaimed government. By directly challenging the sovereignty of Pakistan, the TTP introduced new appointments across various ministries, including defense, justice, intelligence, political affairs, economic affairs, education, fatwa-issuing authority, and the construction department (International News, 2023). Each ministry has both a minister and a deputy. Notably, the Ministry of Defense has emerged as the largest organizational unit within the TTP. In February 2022, the group announced new regional appointments for its leaders, with the number of appointed officials increasing from 34 in 2022 to 139 in 2023. The group also established seven ministries, an intelligence agency, a three-tier court system, and an "Islamic" jurisprudence institute.

In this new structure, the leadership council serves as the highest authority, appointing ministers in consultation with the emir. Only one member of the leadership council can hold a ministerial position. The council also appoints various governors, again in consultation with the emir and deputy governors, based on recommendations from the Ministry of Defense and reports from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Taliban Accountability Commission (Syed & Hemming, 2023:4-5).

A range of developments, including mergers, the establishment of a regular structure, and an increase in attacks, have provided the TTP with a renewed opportunity to intensify anti-government jihadi violence in Pakistan and pursue the establishment of an Islamic Emirate similar to that of the Afghan Taliban.

9-Conclusion

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan emerged as a by-product of intra-Jihad policies dating back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, when the Taliban group, originally composed of Mujahideen, spread their Islamic and Jihadist ideas. Members of the Taliban who migrated to Pakistan transmitted these ideas within the country's schools and social circles. However, after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the formation and integration of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan accelerated. The group claims that their armed struggle aims to establish an Islamic political system in Pakistan based on their interpretation of Islamic Sharia—a goal they argue was the primary purpose behind the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

After the events of 2001, during the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States and its allies, many Pakistani jihadists who had previously fought on behalf of the Pakistani government in Afghanistan and in Indian Kashmir became disillusioned with the government's support for the global coalition against terrorism. This dissatisfaction led to growing opposition from these Islamic groups toward the Pakistani government. In this context, domestic extremist groups, including members of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), began sheltering Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and other allies fleeing the conflict in Afghanistan. Ultimately, the Pakistani government succumbed to Western pressure and targeted the safe havens of these groups. However, this violent response caused members of these factions to officially align with Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, culminating in the formation of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan in 2007. In response to the establishment of the TTP, some in Islamabad believed that if the Afghan Taliban, perceived as a friendly organization, returned to power, it would restrict the activities of anti-government groups like the TTP. Contrary to these expectations, the Afghan Taliban's return to power in 2021 only strengthened various domestic terrorist groups in Pakistan, especially the TTP. Following the Taliban takeover and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, hundreds of TTP prisoners, including senior leaders such as Maulvi Faqir Mohammad, were released from prisons in Kabul. Since the Afghan Taliban ascended to power, the TTP has publicly reaffirmed its commitment and loyalty to the group. The leadership of the TTP has emphasized that the Afghan

Taliban serves as a suitable model, arguing that perseverance in the fight against the Pakistani government can yield victories similar to those achieved by the Taliban in Afghanistan. After the Taliban regained control, the TTP significantly escalated its military attacks against the Pakistani government, claiming responsibility for numerous assaults in the initial months following the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban has historically aligned itself with the Jihadi model, demonstrating over recent years that both groups, despite their ideological similarities, have collaborated in opposition to the republican system. Initially, the Pakistani Taliban provided support and refuge to the Afghan Taliban; however, the roles have now reversed, with the Afghan Taliban hosting members of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. It appears that the Afghan Taliban intends to use this sheltering as a strategic move to apply political pressure on Islamabad in the short term. However, this policy could have significant long-term consequences, potentially leading to a crisis with the Pakistani government due to the Taliban's ideology that advocates for the establishment of an Islamic government in Pakistan.

In response to ongoing concerns, the Pakistani government has frequently requested that the Taliban refrain from providing refuge to the Pakistani Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban, in turn, asserts that no foreign jihadist group has a place in Afghanistan and that they do not pose a threat to other nations.

References

Abdul,S. (2021). "The Evolution and Future of Tehrik- e-Taliban Pakistan",Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 21, 2021 https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/12/21/evolution-

Asif ,M;Riaz,M; Hayyat ,R. (2021). " Impacts Of Terrorism On Pakistan's Overeignty And Development", Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(7). 1567-214

Adkin, M; Yousaf, M. (2008)."Afghanistan: The Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower", Hardcover – November 25, 2008

Ahsan,M; Shehryar Khan,M. (2019). "POLITICS AND TERRORISM: CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN", International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies, Vol.5, No.4, pp.1-45

Abbas, H. (2008). "A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan" ,CTC Sentinel, vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 1-4 //www.belfercenter.org/publication/profile-tehrik-i-taliban-pakistan

Afzal, M. (2022). "Pakistans ambivalent approach toward a resurgent tehrike taliban pakistan", Brookings, February 11, 2022
https://www.brookings.edu/articles/pakistans-ambivalent-approach-toward-a-resurgent-tehrik-e-taliban-pakistan/

Abdul,S;Hamming,T. (2023). "The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan after the Taliban's Afghanistan Takeover", combating terrorism center (ctc), Volume 16, Issue 5
https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-tehrik-i-taliban-pakistan-after-the-talibans-afgha

Abdul,S;Hamming,T. (2021). "The Revival of the Pakistani Taliban", combating terrorism center (ctc), April/May 2021, Volume 14, Issue 4

https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-revival-of-the-pakistani-taliban/

Abbas, H. (2021). " Extremism and Terrorism Trends in Pakistan: Changing Dynamics and New Challenges", Combating terrorism center (ctc) February 2021, Volume 14, Issue 2

Barzegar, I. (2012). " The Theory of Spreading and Reflecting the Islamic Revolution", Law and Politics Bi-Quarterly, Year 5, Number 8, Tehran: Allameh Tabatabai University, pp. 64-86 (in Persia)

Boone, J. (2014). "Isis ascent in Syria and Iraq weakening Pakistani Taliban", The Guardian, 22 Oct. 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/22/

Curtis, L. (2013). "After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)",

The Heritage Foundaotin, November 17, 2013

https://www.heritage.org/testimony/after-the-withdrawal-the-way-forward-afghanistan-

Behuria, A. K. (2021). "Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan: Origin, Evolution and Future Portents", National & International Security (Books) Hardcover – September 22, 2021

Carter,B;Tyson,K; Karr, L; Mills,P. (2023). "Salafi-Jihadi", THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR (isw) , August 9, 2023 https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder

Chandran, S. (2023). "Talks with the Taliban: Endgame for the TTP", INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFL (IPCS), this content downloaded from https://about.jstor.org/terms

Haqqani,H. (2023). "The Deep Roots of Pakistan's Terrorism Crisis", March 3, 2023 https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/03

Hashmi Arshi,S. (2009). "Terrorism,Religious Radicalism and Violence Perspectives from Pakistan",institute of peace and conflct studies (IPCS), September 2009

Elahi,N. (2 019). "Terrorism in Pakistan The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Challenge to Security",Bloomsbury collections , https://www.bokklubben.no/enkeltSok.do?sok=terrorism&fasetter=&order=DESC&side=2&antall=36&nyside=3

International N. (2023). "Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan announces parallel govt; directly challenges Pak's sovereignty", Jan 01, 2023

Jadoon, A. (2021). "The Evolution and Potential Resurgence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan", (usip), may 2 0 2 1https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=Tehreek-e-Taliban-Pakistan-announces-parallel-govt%253B-Directly-challenges-Pak%2526%252339%25

Kronstadt, K. A. (2022) "Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan", (CRS) , VERSION 5, UPDATED https://crsreports.congress.gov

San, M.M;Chan,A. (2022). "A compendium summary of terrorist groups", Vivekananda International Foundation, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi/www.vifindia.org

Murphy, E. (2015). "The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism", New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2014..." Journal of Strategic Security 8, no 1, pp. 83-85

Shah, K.M.(2017). "Radd-ul-Fasaad: Assessing Pakistan's New Counterterrorism Operation", South Asian Voices, 31 Mar. 2017. https://southasianvoices.org/

Pease, J; Hess, J. (2021). "The Convergence of Subsects: Defining Where Deobandi and Salafi Subsects Intersect", Global Security and Intelligence Studies • Volume 6, Number 1 • spring / summer 2021

Rana, M. A. (2018). "Pakistan-based militant groups & Prospects of their integration: A Structural Analysis", Pak institute for pace studies (pips),12 MARCH 2018https://www.pakpips.com/article/3003

Rahat, I. (2020). "Historical and Religious Linkages between Pakistan and Afghanistan", Strategic foresight for asia, 6th June 2020 https://strafasia.com/historical-and-religious-linkages-between-pakistan-and-afghanistan /

Yusufzai, R. (2009). "A Who's Who of the Insurgency in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province: Part Two – FATA excluding North and South Waziristan", TerrorismMonitor , Volume VII u Issue 4 u March 3, 2009

Younas, J; Sandler, T. (2017). "Article Gender Imbalance and Terrorism in Developing Countries ", Journal of Conflict Resolution 2017, Vol. 61,N. 3, pp.483-510