

## Challenges Posed by Terrorism to Pakistan's National Security

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| Keywords   | Abstract   |
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| Security Threat, Economic, Political Stability, Pakistan, United States. | <i>The only country that has been really affected by terrorism is Pakistan, which joined the US as a front-line ally in the war on terror. After conducting nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistan was placed under international isolation. It entered the war to overcome these restrictions and gain military and economic support. Considering the immediate and long-term effects, Pakistan's decision to join the war on terrorism was its worst miscalculation. As a result of these actions, terrorism was imported to Pakistan. To combat this terrorism, Pakistan's armed forces engaged in numerous battles within its own borders, which led to institutional instability and sparked socioeconomic problems that have persisted to afflict the country. The emergence of extremism and terrorism in the country worries the United States greatly. Pakistan needs to prioritize its own interests, pay close attention to its most challenging security issues, and make sure that no other country takes advantage of the current scenario for geopolitical gain more than it does.</i> |

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is currently facing severe challenges due to a surge in terrorist attacks, posing a significant threat to the nation's stability and internal security (Sandler, 2008). Notable political changes have been observed in Pakistan since the 1980s, influenced by various factors such as the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the 1973 coup led by Muhammad Daud in Afghanistan. These events, coupled with Pakistan's domestic political issues, created a geopolitical environment that disrupted the country's political landscape. Muhammad Daud, upon assuming power in Afghanistan in 1973, declared that the Pashtun region of Pakistan belonged to Afghanistan (Rashid, 2008), leading to Islamabad supporting the Islamist opposition against the Afghan government. This internal political unrest eventually contributed to a communist takeover in Afghanistan in 1978. The Soviet invasion in 1974, a result of covert conflicts within the communist bloc and the growing Islamist revolution, had a significant adverse impact on Pakistan. During this time, internal political debates were rife in Pakistan, and events like General Zia Ul Haq's insurrection in 1977 and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's uprising in 1979 left the military isolated (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992). To maintain his grip on power, General Zia implemented an Islamization strategy, endorsing Islamic militias, promoting religious education, and enacting laws like the Zakat laws (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992). All of these actions aided Zia in gaining the support of the majority of religious groups. Religion in the nation became more rigid as a result of this Islamization agenda (Ahmad, 2008).

The Afghan conflict was perceived to be a contributing factor to terrorism in Pakistan during this decade. At that time, it was thought that military intelligence services from Afghanistan and Russia (KGB) were responsible for terrorism (Wright, 2007). Meanwhile, the Khomeini-inspired turmoil in Iran deepened; exposing rifts between Iran's transcendently Shiite government and the Sunni Gulf governments. This partisan-based struggle for territorial dominance also involved a proxy terrorist conflict that took place on the frontiers of Pakistan. Zia's Islamizing policies and Afghan jihad endeavors were financially supported by Saudi Arabia, which was led by a passionate Sunni government. The Shiite minority in Pakistan, however, became concerned when Sunni-oriented Islamic policies were put into place. Iran thus backed the Shiite community to increase its power. Few of the most lethal clashes between Sunni and Shiite factions have ever occurred as a result of the ensuing party strife. Ethnic strife has its roots in the period before independence, but it significantly increased during the Afghan Jihad and became a significant component of terrorism in the 1990s. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the severity of these terrorist acts had decreased. A sudden increase in terrorism took place shortly after the 9/11 incident, which involved the U.S. launching an attack on Afghanistan with the support of Pakistan (Saeed et al., 2014).

### **Research Objective**

To identify the causes of the grave threat of terrorism to Pakistan's national security.

### **Research Question**

What are the causes of the grave threat of terrorism to Pakistan's national security?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research in question employs a qualitative methodology and an interpretative philosophical approach. Qualitative research offers various methods to study social phenomena, and in this particular study, a literature research method was utilized. The term "non-contact method" describes this literature research approach, which distinguishes it from other qualitative methods by relying on existing studies and their findings to gain an understanding of a phenomenon (Khan et al., 2021). A narrative approach was employed to draw conclusions based on a comprehensive review of the available literature. The researcher conducted a systematic review of relevant papers, focusing on those relevant to the topic, and organized them under different categories based on the various aspects of the threat of terrorism to Pakistan's national security. Following the literature review, the article provides a summary of the main research findings. The study concludes with a discussion of the findings and a concluding statement.

### **RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW**

As per Walter Laqueur, terrorism is characterized by the unlawful use of force to inflict harm on innocent individuals with the intention of achieving a political aim and objective (Laqueur, 2013). By the definition of Brian Jenkins, terrorism is the use of force for political purposes (Malik & Zhilong, 2019). It is commonly understood to relate to the use of violence against people in general by non-state actors pursuing political goals. Terrorism is defined as the

use of force against individuals or groups for political purposes as well as the destruction of both non-human and human property (Khan et al., 2013).

**Root Causes of Terrorism:** The objective and motivation of terrorists must be understood in order to identify the root causes of terrorism. According to one school of thought, the main causes of terrorism are lack of education, poverty, and foreign occupation of territory. While identifying the main root cause of terrorism remains a challenge, poverty plays a role in numerous forms of societal effects, of which terrorism is only one (Bjørge, 2005). According to Colin Powell, the core causes of terrorism are poverty, ignorance, and deeply unhappy populations who are unable to see any hope for the future (Powell, 2002). While the US Senate Resolution identified international terrorism as having its roots in children's education. Children are more likely to attend school when food is distributed there, and if the school is radical, the students are coerced into attending terrorist training camps (Congressional Record, 2004). According to South Korea's president and recipient of the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize, Kim Dae-Jung, poverty is the root cause of most acts of terrorism (Jai, 2001).

In the case of Pakistan, there are numerous terrorist organizations active, and there is extensive recruitment, so poverty is not the only factor to blame. However, the biggest causes of terrorism are authoritarianism, extremism, backwardness, poverty, and illiteracy. When the 9/11 tragedy is closely examined, it becomes clear that none of the above-mentioned variables played a role in the terrorist attacks. None of them were illiterate or poor. Even a few of them did not follow any religion. The existence of supportive infrastructure and sporadic state assistance were the main causes of these attacks (Rath, 2010). In light of this, it may also be said that terrorism is about the never-ending struggle for power, and that terrorist organizations and people use it to advance their own interests and goals. Terrorism is a tool used by some regimes in their foreign policy. Consequently, enabling societal infrastructure, state support, and terrorist organization management are the main causes of contemporary terrorism (Rath, 2012).

**The Terrorism War:** Afghanistan and Pakistan were left with little choice but to support the United States of America in its war against terrorism when the US announced it would go to war soon after the 9/11 attacks. The US exploited Pakistan as an ally to attack Afghanistan. After 9/11, relations between Pakistan and the US greatly improved. The US relaxed nuclear sanctions against Pakistan and gave Pakistan economic aid worth roughly US\$19 billion in the form of coalition support funds as well as other security-related and economic funds to aid the alliance in its fight against terrorism (Epstein & Kronstadt, 2013). These monetary contributions caused the Pakistani economy to grow significantly, but when extremism returned, the nation's financial situation once again worsened (Kerry & Hagel, 2009). Pakistan is currently experiencing a sizable number of security and economic issues as a result of the fight against terrorism and extremism.

**Impacts on Politics and Security:** Pakistan was experiencing political isolation on an international level before the 9/11 attacks. However, when Pakistan agreed to take part in the war on terror and was granted the status of major non-NATO ally, its political and economic constraints were removed. But as US drone strikes expanded into Pakistani territory, the people there became increasingly antagonistic toward the US; in fact, Pakistan, according to the same school of thought, became one of the nations with the strongest anti-American sentiment in the world (Hathaway, 2008). Relations between Pakistan and the US were negatively impacted by

these drone strikes. According to Wadhams et al. (2008), these acts undermined Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and extremism while also violating the state's sovereignty. The US-led war and Pakistan's alliance have a negative effect on security. The military carried out a number of operations across the nation to combat terrorism and extremism, posing serious security issues for the administration. Thousands of innocent lives were lost as a result of the dramatic increase in bomb assaults and suicide bombers. The nation became more militant as a result of its role in the war on terror (Bhutto et al., 2007). Musharraf's approach to Afghanistan drew strong condemnation. More terrorist attacks have occurred within the country, primarily focusing on military and governmental targets. Hundreds of security officers died as a result of these attacks.

In short, Pakistan paid a high price for joining the US alliance against terrorism. Between 85,000 and 125,000 military personnel were posted along the Afghan border, and the radical aggression cost the nation \$118.3 billion in direct and indirect losses between 2002 and 2016 (Bruno & Bajoria, 2008). Additionally, incidents tied to terrorism have severely hampered the development of the social sector and the economy. The Pakistani government is currently facing pressure from overseas despite all of its efforts to prevent terrorism. Pakistan's national security and reputation have suffered significantly as a result of drone attacks and the militarization of its borders.

**Impact on the Economy:** Soon after Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, the country was subject to international sanctions. However, when Pakistan allied itself with the United States in the war on terror, the sanctions were withdrawn, and the country began to receive substantial grants, gifts, and foreign loans. This helped to strengthen the nation's already weak economy. Additionally, it was successful in luring in foreign capital, and following 9/11, a record amount of investment was seen (Hadar, 2002). Additionally, a significant quantity of economic and security help from the US began to enter Pakistan. Pakistan received extra assistance from the US in a number of areas and projects, such as flood relief, tribal region reconstruction, and earthquake rehabilitation after the 2005 catastrophe. Pakistan became one of the main receivers of US funding in return for its support of US counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan (Hadar, 2002). However, due to specific guidelines and the worsening security situation, the majority of the aid was allocated to defense, and the general population did not benefit significantly. As a result, the government struggled to fund essential social services. Pakistan's economic growth slowed after entering the war on terror, despite the US providing significant assistance; this resulted in higher unemployment, inflation, and power shortages (Hashmi, 2007).

**Social and Cultural Effects:** When Pakistan first allied with the US, it suffered greatly and gained the hostility of both India and Russia. Pakistan's weak economy was severely disrupted, and extremism and terrorism surged as a result of the country's second alliance with the United States, which gave rise to millions of refugees. After joining the WOT, the country saw an increase in extremism and violence (Abbas, 2004). Drug use, access to small guns, and anti-US attitudes all rose in the society. Targeting of senior officials became more frequent as the state of internal security deteriorated. The number of suicide bombings rose, and several law enforcement officers and civilians were killed (Tellis, 2008). Insecurity and terror are spread across society by these bombings and suicide acts.

## CONCLUSION

The politics and destiny of Pakistan have been significantly impacted by the US war on terrorism. By agreeing to join the United States in the conflict, Pakistan on the one hand defeats the sanctions and ends its exile. Pakistan has succeeded in transforming from a failed and terrorist state to a front-line non-NATO partner. On the other hand, after 9/11, the country experienced a tremendous rise in terrorism and extremism. Because of the rise in terrorist attacks, the nation's infrastructure was harmed and its economy was destroyed. The general public is becoming more anti-American. The security of Pakistan's nuclear assets is currently a top priority for the United States. There are significant threats to Pakistan's national security. As a result, the government now has a responsibility to consider the national interest. Understanding the most difficult security challenges facing Pakistan requires greater caution.

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