TEHREEK-E-TALIBAN PAKISTAN: A SECURITY THREAT TO PAKISTAN

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Abstract:

Pakistan, an important country in South Asia due to its nuclear power status, second-largest Muslim population, and geo-strategic location, is currently experiencing a turbulent period in its history as a result of the Pakistani Taliban's ongoing terrorism activities. This research will investigate the circumstances that contributed to the establishment and spread of the Taliban in Pakistan, arguing that they pose a substantial threat to the country's national security. Pakistani Taliban emerged as a result of the emergence of Islamist ideology following the Afghan Jihad and changing socio-cultural dynamics within the Pak-Afghan border region. Apart from religion, other factors have also played a role in this development. Despite the presence of significant moderates within Pakistani society, the Taliban's expansion can be attributed to the country's socio-political situation being intelligently manipulated and exploited, as well as the presence of some extra-regional forces. The increase in terrorist acts perpetrated by the Taliban has had a direct impact on the political, military, diplomatic, economic, and social security spheres, in addition to producing major challenges to human security. As a result, the country's national security environment has been severely harmed. Despite the government's political resolve, a decade-long security campaign, and a high price paid in various domains, the security situation still leaves much to be desired. Though the study will include a historical account of the problem, particularly after 1979, the primary focus will be on the current operational scenario of tuberculosis, its influence, ideology, and modes of operation, as well as how it has affected Pakistan's National Security.

Keywords: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Extremism, War on terror, Pak-Afghan border, Sharia

Introduction

Despite the fact that Pakistan and its surrounding region have been in political and social turmoil since 1947 as a result of various internal and external forces, the current wave of religiously motivated violence began after Soviet Russia invaded Afghanistan in 1979. During this time, Pakistan was used as a launchpad for Jihadist ideology against the Soviets, with foreign fighters from all over the world receiving weapons from the CIA and financial support from Saudi Arabia and the United States. Madrassas sprouted up all over Pakistan during that time period. Pakistan, the US's frontline ally in the fight against communism at the time, is still reeling from the political turmoil that began three decades ago with its own seeds. After 9/11, the US and its allies launched a massive campaign against a notional enemy rather than a rational foe, escalating the tumultuous security situation that had existed since 1979. Pakistan matched its policies with the US plan in order to solve numerous security issues and became a frontline ally. Pakistan appears to have reversed its previous policy toward extremist forces, which were previously viewed as strategic assets. (Khan, 2005)

This policy shift resulted in an increase in terrorist activities, particularly after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a well-known political leader, in 2007, as well as new threats to the state's vital security domains. Extremist tendencies that were previously confined to tribal areas and a few sporadic incidents elsewhere have now engulfed the entire country as a result of 9/11. Terrorist attacks on strategic targets, such as military installations, economic potential, and political leadership, as well as unprecedented civilian killings in urban areas, have harmed security dynamics. These incidents not only jeopardize the government's and security apparatus' capability and resolve but also cast doubt on the country's viability as a nation-state. Despite the country's massive losses in various fields, the international community continues to view its struggle with suspicion.

After a decade of the War on Terror, there is a visible shift in international and coalition perceptions of how to end this fictitious war on a positive note. Pakistan, on the other hand, which has paid the highest price, wants to consolidate its political/diplomatic goals by eradicating this threat from its soil. Furthermore, Pakistan has been forced to take the threat seriously due to significant losses in critical National Security domains. There are fears that Pakistan will become a failed state" as a result of unprecedented terrorist attacks and the spread of tuberculosis, which could turn the world's sixth most populous country into a quagmire of political violence and terrorism. The viability of this nuclear-armed country raises the stakes even higher, and various reports of nuclear proliferation and the possibility of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of Taliban are top international concerns. (Fair, 2009). However, it is clear that Pakistan is pursuing a military-dominated strategy, with the former opting for it and the latter being forced into it. Only a holistic approach to the problem will reveal Pakistan's National Security and the factors that directly or indirectly threaten it. It must be understood that regional/international security cannot be achieved

without taking into account Pakistan's political, economic, social, and cultural sensitivities.

Taliban
The Arabic word' student' has a literary meaning and is used in other languages such as Persian and Pashtu. The word was first used in the political realm in 1994. The phrase used in this project refers to Madrassa students who are interested in politics. They were mostly Pashtuns from the Pakistan-Afghan border who belonged to the Sunni-Deobandi sect of Islam. Their movement is thought to have started in Kandahar, Afghanistan's southern region. Due to internal instability, corruption, a lack of a fair judicial system, and internal warfare among several warlords, the Taliban movement was initially embraced by the majority of the Afghan public; the political and social turbulence in Afghanistan from 1989 to 1994 emphasizes that period. After Russia's withdrawal, the Taliban arose to fill the political vacuum (Rashid, 2000) left by the abrupt disappearance of the US and its allies who had backed and guided the Afghan resistance. By 1996, the Taliban had taken control of 90% of Afghanistan and declared it a theocratic state. They had a restricted and narrow view of Islam19 because they were religious missionaries with no formal education or statecraft experience, and they intended to impose it over Afghanistan.

Pakistan's Tehrik-e-Taliban:
The TTP is the umbrella group that acts as a unified front for Sunni (Deobandi) in the Afghanistan Pakistan border region. Under the direction of South Waziristan native Baitullah Mehsud, a number of militant factions formally united in December 2007 to strike Pakistani targets and U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. This group, began in the Pak-Afghan border region in 2007, when various terrorist groups came together under the guidance of Baitullah Mehsud. (Abbas, 2009).

Despite the fact that TTP is a descendant of the Afghan Taliban, the organization is not affiliated with them. TTP began its operation against Pakistan and its national interests in FATA and other parts of the country, in contrast to the Afghan Taliban, which was fighting against foreign occupation by US/NATO forces. TTP terrorist activities increased as a result of Pakistani army operations in South Waziristan and an alliance with the US in the War on Terror. Their emergence is ascribed to a lack of governance tools as a result of the assassination of many tribal elders, as well as the US drone policy of tracking down terrorists in FATA. (Fair, 2009).

Talibanization
Following the Russian retreat and the increase of Afghan Taliban this phenomenon was witnessed. It is the dissemination of Taliban ideology that is founded on the draconian application of religious laws without regard for current social and cultural dynamics. Taliban ideology is not always fully religious, but rather a combination of historical religious practices and a few cultural traditions, particularly in the tribal region of the Pak-Afghan border, although it is mostly influenced by the Wahabi version of Islam. It's the spread of religious/extremist ideologies among various zealots. It is sometimes defined by the rigorous embrace of a specific brand of religion that rejects any

modernization prospects and is considered anti-Islamic. Talibanization is considered by adherents to this philosophy to be the purest form of religion. It is a blend of their ideological and political objectives in the context of Pakistani Taliban.

Extremism

Extremism is a forerunner to terrorism, a mindset or perspective that encompasses political, social, and religious characteristics. Anyone can be extremist in their beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions if they are believed to be the sole correct and honorable ones without explanation. Extremism can lead to terrorism when a person not only believes in the extremist ideology, but also attempts to impose it on others via the use of force or fear. (Martin, 2009). The vast majority of terrorists adhere to extremist ideologies and employ them as tools of fear and propaganda. (Garrison, 2003). Extremists have a distinct feeling of mission, purpose, and righteousness that differs significantly from ordinary people's ideas. During Afghan Jihad, Taliban ideology rests on the politicization of religion which started as early as 1980s. Pakistan provided all assistance to the religious 'Mujahedeen's,' focusing on religion and ethnicity to unite various groups on a common agenda, with US support, finances, and arms. The US and Pakistan were able to accomplish a difficult task of uniting various tribes and factions due to the dominance of Pashtun culture and socio-ethnic ties that had existed for centuries on both sides of the Durand Line. (Qazi, 2002). These tribes had a long history of internal strife and animosity, despite sharing similar sociocultural values. The large Pashtun populations on both sides of the border were a formidable force to be used against the invaders. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan turned her two border provinces, Baluchistan and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, into refugee camps and sanctuaries for religious zealots. These approximately three million refugees" rekindled ethnic sentiments among the roughly 40 million Pashtun population on both sides of the border, in addition to significantly disrupting the region's demographic profile. (Colley, 2002).

Post-Afghan Jihad

After the Soviet forces (Russians) left Afghanistan in February 1989, a civil war broke out among various Mujahedeen parties and warlords, resulting in countrywide fighting and widespread lawlessness. A vacuum was created due to the lack of any suitable political/ governance mechanism, which was filled by these religious missionaries. (Wang Lian, 2010).

These Taliban patients were religious students from Madrassas located all along the Pak-Afghan border, particularly in KPK refugee camps," the number of whom increased dramatically during the Afghan Jihad. These 800 religious students evolved as a formidable force in Afghanistan's political landscape because to the active assistance of the Pakistan and religious groups, primarily Pashtuns." They used an ultraconservative religious approach to address political and social issues in the war-torn country because of their limited vision. Their religious teaching was a combination of ethnic, cultural, and religious ideas in general.

Pashtun dominance in Taliban provided them with legitimacy and support from Pashtun tribes on

both sides of the border. Furthermore, the United States' lack of interest in Afghanistan following Russia's defeat left the field open for regional countries to gain political, diplomatic, and security advantages. Iran and Pakistan, as direct neighbors, took opposing approaches to the situation. Due to a violent sectarian rivalry, the former viewed the Taliban rise with distrust and attempted to weaken their political clout by backing their adversary, the Northern Alliance.

The latter, on the other hand, aimed to address her security fears about India as well as the political considerations of a large Pashtun community in KPK. Because these religious forces promoted a sectarian agenda in those countries, a few Arab countries also provided diplomatic and financial support to them. Pakistan initially supported the Gulbudin Hekmatyar's Islamic Party, but after seeing Taliban's significant gains, they switched their support. Furthermore, Pakistan wished to achieve strategic depth against her neighbor India by establishing a friendly Afghan regime in order to avoid the nightmare of two-front war.

Post-9/11 and the War on Terrorism
This was the most important period in the evolution of Pakistani tuberculosis. The War on Terror apart from uniting various Afghan factions also upped the violence level over the border in Pakistan against the foreign invasion of US and NATO. The Pashtun dominance inside Taliban ranks hastened the process. The external invasion even eclipsed the internal tribal rifts/ political divisions among various entities in FATA. After the commencement of the War on Terror, due to identical ethnicity and prior Afghan jihad ties, substantial numbers of comrades and followers of Taliban appeared in the border region, but they were not thoroughbred Taliban. Their assistance was more passive in nature, consisting of administration and providing asylum to Afghan fighters leaving the country. However, with the War on Terror, and particularly Pakistan's engagement in that conflict, that passive support rose quickly. TTP's outline contours started to emerge around that period. (Abbas, 2008). Pakistan's army was busy in 2002-2004 looking for suspected Al-Qaida operatives and foreign fighters who were purportedly finding refuge in FATA. The army's engagement in FATA was unparalleled since Pakistan's inception. During this time, many militant groups, including those sectarian groups prohibited in the country's heartland, began to network with one another. Despite their close ethno-religious ties, TPP never truly united with Afghan Taliban, preferring instead to remain a separate organization. Afghan Taliban even encouraged them to back them rather than fight the Government of Pakistan, and this issue has caused internal divisions within TTP's leadership.

Creation of TTP
Under the umbrella organization of TP, which has 14 separate Taliban groups, a Shura (Governing body) comprising 40 senior Pakistani Taliban leaders was founded in December 2007. Baitullah Mehsood, a militant commander in the South Waziristan Agency, was named as its leader. It also had representation from other FATA agencies as well as a few districts in KPK. TTP's political goal was to construct a doctrinal Islamic state, first in Waziristan, as the 'Islamic Emirates of Waziristan' formed from a few sources, and then increase their power across the country.

The following were the goals of the TTP, when it was founded:

a) Implement Sharia law, band together against NATO forces in Afghanistan, and engage in "defensive jihad against the Pakistan army."
b) If military operations in Swat and North Waziristan Agency continue, take strong action.
c) Demand that all military checkpoints in FATA be removed.
d) Demand that Imam Abdul Aziz of the Lai Masjid (Red Mosque) be released.
e) Reject any future peace agreements with the Government of Pakistan. (Abbas, 2008).

Contributing Factors of Significant Importance
Other developments within and around the country, in addition to altering political and socio-cultural dynamics in FATA and the Pak-Afghan border region, played a critical role in the emergence of TTP. The US forces in Afghanistan put immense pressure on Taliban and Pakistani army operations in FATA, resulting in the unification of diverse religious factions and extremist groups in order to present a united front to the government of Pakistan and the US forces in Afghanistan. (Hilali, 2009). Other regional changes also aided in the formation of this new organization based on old ideologies.

Due to socio-ethnic ties and ancient Afghan Jihad connections, the US War on Terror in Afghanistan and the destruction of the TB government pushed them to seek refuge in FATA's safe havens. Meanwhile, Pakistan's strategic U-turn on its prior Taliban's policy enraged these religious extremists, encouraging them to band together and give a united front against Government of Pakistan, a key US partner. Furthermore, these zealots saw the Government of Pakistan's Counter Terrorism activities as being in violation of Pashtun tradition, cultural sensitivity, and religious commitments. Following President Musharraf's decision to ban all militant organizations and the government's retaliation, these militant groups sought refuge in FATA, where they were welcomed by Pakistani Taliban due to shared grievances with the Government of Pakistan. Furthermore, existing criminal gangs and drug mafia in the area joined the Pakistani Taliban, either by adopting their ideology or forming alliances with them.

Due to NATO losses in Afghanistan and frequent cross-border movement by Afghan Taliban, the Pakistan was forced to take tough measures against fleeing Taliban and Al Qaida operatives allegedly hiding in FATA. The Pakistan army's operations, as well as changing dynamics within FATA, eroded centuries-old tribal governance tools, which aided the Taliban's rise. Mullahs' unprecedented political status over the last two decades has shattered the tribal region's socio-political dynamics. Furthermore, the Taliban's assassination of nearly 200 tribal elders (Maliks) altered the socio-cultural and political dynamics of FATA, essentially moving the political base away from tribal elders and government representatives and toward the politically ambitious and uneducated Mullah. This shift in political dynamics gave religious zealots who banded together under the TTP flag a tremendous amount of power.

Initially, the TTP was a reactionary movement in FATA against the Pakistan's Counter Terrorism

campaign, restricting local operations, but it later evolved into a resistance movement in other parts of KPK and the rest of the country to impose political pressure. This expansion was made feasible by the collaboration of various sectarian and militant groups from around the country, who saw the tribal areas as safe havens. Pakistani Taliban went on a terrorism spree against the army, intelligence agencies, and government personnel after this operation, which led in the deaths of numerous religious students. This episode also resulted in the merging of numerous tribal militias in FATA under the banner of TTP, as well as the relocation of a number of militant groups previously affiliated with the Lashkar e Tayyaba and Jaish e Muhammad.

Impact of Religio-Political Dynamics on TTP
Though Pakistan was founded on the basis of religion and as a distinct nation for Muslims, Muhammad All Jinnah, the country's founder, wished to construct a welfare democratic state based on the Islamic concept of equality, social justice, and welfare. However, religious forces swiftly got entrenched in the country's politics as a result of his early death and the ensuing government leadership's incompetence. Despite this, until 1979, there were no notable religious or extreme tendencies. Extremist tendencies arose inside Pakistani culture after the Afghan Jihad and cleverly created religious feelings. However, it was limited to sporadic sectarian violence by a few extremist groups, such as the LeJ and Sipah e Muhammad Pakistan. Furthermore, prior to 9/11, these militant groups had never committed any terrorist acts within the country.

Pakistan has never been able to maintain stable political institutions since independence, resulting in a lack of mature political and democratic institutions. Similarly, there have been clear rural-urban divides, with notable differences in basic infrastructure, particularly in the areas of education and economic possibilities. As a result, the gap between the less educated populace and the country's governmental institutions has widened. Religious extremism resurfaced after the War on Terror, despite being a byproduct of the Afghan Jihad, due to religious affinity, socio-cultural linkages throughout the Pushtun population, and inadequate economic chances, particularly in FATA. (International Crisis Group 2004).

TTP successfully exploited the prevailing socio-cultural undercurrents in FATA and other KPK border districts. The US allies misinterpretation of WOT as a war against Islam, as well as the Pakistan's direct involvement, fueled religious sentiments in FATA and the neighboring areas. Some incidences in FATA also played a part in the development of TTP. First, the presence of foreign fighters from several Arab countries altered not only the demographic but also the socio-cultural makeup of the area, resulting in the growth of political Islam, which had hitherto been a remote phenomenon. Second, the religious figures' influence weakened the old political hierarchy. Furthermore, a few initiatives taken by the Pakistan to promote political governance have had the opposite effect, for example, when adult franchise was introduced in FATA in 1996, there were no mainstream political parties there and they were not allowed to participate in political activities. This vacuum attracted religious politicians, who successfully seized on the backing of Madrassas and religious clerics, eroding tribal elders' customary position and granting the Mullahs political

standing. Taliban's role was further legitimized by successive army operations, peace treaties, and power-sharing formulae, at least in Waziristan.

Two further events contributed significantly to the TIP's strengthening. The relocation of three million people as internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of Pakistani army operations in FATA and other parts of KPK, as well as US drone attacks, both fueled the TTP movement. These events wreaked havoc on the region's social structure. Furthermore, the TTP emerged as a viable alternative due to the lack of an effective political administration and legal system in FATA and rural KPK.

Religion and Other Factors
Taliban is usually thought to be a religiously driven militia. However, to attribute the movement's sole cause to religious motive is a mistake. They certainly use religion to accomplish their agenda, but other considerations played a role as well. This section will shed light on the elements that aided them in gaining a stronger foothold in Pakistani society. Grasp these allows for a better understanding of the importance of non-religious processes, which are often overlooked. Despite other aspects of the Pakistani Taliban spread into Pakistani society, religious ideology is seen as the driving motivation. The failure of secular state institutions to address social issues also had a role in this. Furthermore, Pakistani Taliban and their supporters oppose the role of the Pakistani government and army in the War on Terror, viewing them as US proxies advancing the Western agenda against Islam. Due to collateral damage as a result of US drone attacks and Pakistan army operations, psychological factors prompted the UP to resort to terrorism. The revenge phenomena, which is firmly embedded in the tribal mindset, also played a key part.

Counter-Strategy in Pakistan
Despite the participation of a significant section of the army and other LEAs, the TTP expansion pattern indicates an upward tendency during 2008-2009, which can be attributable to a variety of factors. Despite the fact that a democratic political administration was established after General Pervaiz Musharaf's long authoritarian regime, the mainstream political parties, the PPP and the PML (N), were unable to achieve a clear majority. This forced the reigning party, the PPP, to establish a coalition government, with religious and ethno-nationalist groups like the JUI, ANP, and MQM receiving a fair percentage of the vote. As a result, the government was compelled to examine all partners and tiny parties' political ambitions, and some of them were not open on the question of dealing firmly with the Taliban. At the same time, the Pakistan faced a dilemma as a result of US financial aid due to War on Terror and constant calls to 'do more.' Despite evident efforts to gain political support, the Pakistan's efforts to reach a national consensus were hampered by negative impressions of the War on Terror and an increase in terrorism occurrences. TTP cleverly exploited social, political, and new government system based on equality and social justice. They have an emotional religious attachment because 97 percent of the country's population is Muslim. (Khan, 2005).
In a 2007 public opinion poll, more people supported Taliban and religious organizations than

President Musharraf and the US-led War on Terror. However, as the number of terrorist attacks increased after 2009, their popularity dwindled. Due to a lack of political development and governance challenges in FATA and a few districts of KPK, this emotional appeal was more appealing, particularly around 2007-2008. Furthermore, the TTP took a number of initiatives, including eradicating local criminals, establishing a parallel court system that provides quick justice, and offering financial help to civilians affected by military operations. (Rana, 2009).

During that time, all of these actions increased political support for the TTP in rural areas. The TNSM, which arose in Swat as a local branch of TTP led by Fuzlullah, marked a turning point in TIP's expansion when the Pakistan agreed to their demands, despite considerable opposition from the moderate masses and foreign players. The Government of Pakistan justified the move by claiming that it was an attempt to politically isolate TIP and damage their cause. The accord, however, could not survive long because to TTP's expansionist tactics into other regions, and the political parties eventually took a united stand against them. Internal pressure from the people, exacerbated by the media's role, as well as regional and international criticism, played a significant influence in this policy shift.

Due to an increase in terrorist actions in FATA and KPK, as well as other urban areas, the Government on Pakistan's efforts to support War on Terror have been disrupted. Despite Pakistan's significant help to the elimination of foreign militants and AQ operatives, the TTP's recent surge has forced the Pakistan to focus solely on TTP, pushing matters like Afghan Taliban and foreign insurgents to the background. As a result, the TTP has grown to become the largest militant organization not just in FATA but also in most of KPK's settled areas, just three years after its founding. (Yousufzai, 2009). The increase in terrorist activities depicted on the map, particularly from 2008 control/influence, occurred prior to Pakistan army operations in Swat, Shangla, Buner, Dir, Bajaur, Malakand, and South Waziristan. Taliban control in these locations was eradicated after the Counter Terrorism surgeries. IDPs have returned, and things are looking up. The TTP successfully exploited public anti-US feelings, but it lost popular support after its expansionist plans, indiscriminate terrorism, and involvement in gross breaches of basic human rights. Due to its own flaws, it received harsh criticism across the country "; Government of Pakistan tactics and media role, and it eventually devolved into a terrorist organization rather than a movement.

The Dynamics of Ideological Expansion from Tribal to Settled Areas
TTP used tribal and rural people's religious emotions against US-led War on Terror and Government of Pakistan operations in FATA and tribal areas. The effects of widespread population displacement caused by army operations not only supplied a propaganda theme, but also resulted in the expansion of the army's cadres in various metropolitan areas dressed as IDPs. Half of the population of FATA has temporarily migrated to other regions of the nation due to insecurity. (Nawaz, 2009). The increase in terrorist activity in Pakistan's metropolitan regions has raised security concerns across the country. Due to massive human and material losses, this resulted in widespread discontent among the urban masses. The relocation of civilians and the TTP's

expanding actions in inhabited areas have also contributed to the group's lack of popular support. However, a few political groups, particularly those with religious backgrounds, have begun to raise concerns about Pakistan's membership in the War on Terror as being detrimental. Despite their internal divisions, the government's assault on various sectarian and militant organizations provided them with a reason to form an alliance against the Pakistan. As a result of the ever-increasing terrorist attacks perpetrated by these extreme groups and their adherents already existing in urban areas, such as the three million Pushtun who dwell in Karachi alone, severe security difficulties have arisen. This expansion is evidenced by the recent deterioration of Karachi's law and order situation.

Since the TTP leadership portrays them as a legitimate political entity fighting for the Pushtun cause and religious doctrine, they have wisely focused on the religious feelings of rural masses, particularly in the two border provinces of KPK and Baluchistan. Similarly, religious and communist groups used the issue of US resistance to weaken the current political system, implicitly endorsing TTP doctrine.

TTP's Political Situation Exploitation

Her credibility was further eroded by the Pakistan's Counter Terrorism strategy shifting pattern in the US and Western media. Various peace treaties with the TTP between 2004 and 2008, as well as approval of the TNSM (Tehreek Nifaz e Shariat e Muhammadi) demand for the installation of Sharia Law, gave the TTP political room in FATA and Swat. The execution of tribal elders and the TTP leadership's political ambitions resulted in the demolition of tribal governance structures, giving them political status. These developments fueled the TTP's desire to expand their political base across the country.

The administration is dealing with major National Security difficulties as a result of the current terrorism epidemic that has engulfed the entire country. Aside from political enemies, even some of the government's allies are beginning to have doubts about the government's capacity to contain this threat. The issue is highlighted by JUI's recent withdrawal of support, a previous ally. They back up this assertion by pointing to the rise in terrorist attacks in Pakistan after 2002. Even civil society groups and the media have differing viewpoints on the subject. The recent diplomatic conflict between the US and the Government of Pakistan is being actively used not only by religious hardliners, but also by civil society, which has become wary of the government's policies, especially in light of claims of the US allegedly destabilizing Pakistan.

The concept of National Security has changed as a result of the remote possibility of inter-state conflict following the end of the Cold War. Internal dynamics of any state are now playing a larger role in determining NS concerns. However, Pakistan's National Security milieu is influenced by regional geography and a long history of hostile relations with India and a volatile Afghanistan. While defining the changing paradigm of NS, this chapter will focus on some of Pakistan's most important security domains in the context of the emerging TTP threat.

Historically, the term has been used to describe military defence against foreign threats. The concept of NS, however, has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. Due to a shift in pattern from the last decade of the twentieth century, where 90% of armed conflicts took place within states rather than between them, the threat of foreign attack, which was formerly regarded the most serious threat to National Security., has been reduced to a lower priority. This tendency has altered people's perceptions of National Security and military's role. Though military security remains a critical component of National Security, a number of other aspects, including as political, diplomatic, economic, social, and human security, have emerged as major influences on National Security. The escalating terrorism perpetrated by TTP, not just in FATA/KPK, but also in other areas, particularly metropolitan areas, is directly affecting important security domains. Apart from significant losses, this trend has put the country's political institutions/leadership in jeopardy, slowed economic progress, increased diplomatic isolation, and damaged the country's social structure. Apart from inflicting a tremendous toll on human lives and slowing growth, this phenomenon has also raised questions about the state's survival. (Fair, 2009).

The Social Security System
Despite massive involvement of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in Counter Terrorism operations and significant manpower losses due to terrorism incidents, the international community views the Pakistan's efforts with suspicion. The government's sincerity and efforts to augment the War on Terrorism have been questioned in light of the recent terrorism trend. Pakistan has been diplomatically isolated as a result of reports in the international media. The post-Osama Bin Laden scenario emphasizes Pakistan's dangerous diplomatic isolation, with the TTP threatening to avenge the death by intensifying their attacks against Pakistan. Terrorist attacks have been increased, and Taliban's influence has been spread from FATA to urban areas causing social security concerns. These extremist viewpoints have harmed the nation's social fabric and sparked ethnic and religious divisions. These feelings, which began in border provinces, have now spread to urban areas as well.

Regional/International Security Consequences
Not only has the Taliban affected the country's national security, but the country's unique geographic location and the converging/diverging interests of regional/global powers have also had an impact on the broader security environment. The influence of regional players, owing to ME religious sentiments, the race to exploit Central Asian Republics (CARS) energy corridors, socio-cultural dynamics of South Asian countries, and the interests of world prominent economic powers, makes Pakistan an arena where different intra/extra regional forces compete for their respective gains. Pakistan has little room for moving in this complex political landscape. Pakistan's socio-ethnic variety, underdeveloped political institutions, and the prevalence of diverse ethno-sectarian undercurrents are all factors to consider "because of Iran and Afghanistan, she is vulnerable to external interference, which has been considerable in the past and is unlikely to go away anytime soon. The impact of these internal/external dynamics at various phases has had a

direct impact on national/regional politics and security paradigms. Because of the United States' participation in Afghanistan during both the Afghan Jihad and the War on Terror, national and regional security challenges have been internationalized. Due to the absence of political and democratic settings, the startling coincidence of military rule in Pakistan and the US overt support for these regimes has further contributed to escalating the regional and worldwide security dilemma.

Geographical

TTP is an umbrella organization that includes a number of militant groups with varying political and social agendas, the government's crackdown on them provided them with a common platform to fight the Government of Pakistan. In Pakistan's history, ethno-nationalist movements have always preferred decentralized governance, whereas religious forces have always preferred a strong centre. TTP poses a threat to regional security, as evidenced by Chinese suspicions about Taliban links with Muslims in Xinxiang province. Despite engagement of more than 130,000 soldiers of 45 nations, the growing influence of Taliban in Afghanistan shows a promising future for TTP and a worrisome situation for surrounding countries. TTP's growing influence in FATA and a few settled districts of KPK is causing concern in other parts of Pakistan. The most severe issue is their influence in federal capital and big cities like Karachi and Lahore.

Conclusion

This study argues that religious militancy fostered in Afghanistan and then left unchecked resulted in the creation of political Islam and religious extremism. For more than a decade, Pakistan has been left to manage the deteriorating political and security situation on its own, with no choice but to turn the rising security threat into a political opportunity. The religious extremists, on the other hand, were quicker to seize the opportunity to carry out their Islamist plans.

 Due to the country's numerous socio-cultural and religio-political circumstances, the Taliban ideology grew. However, religion did not play as large a role as is commonly assumed; rather, other equally important elements like as political, economic, social, and ideological motivations aided their expansion. The expansion plainly demonstrates the TTP's clever use of these elements, allowing them to expand their influence from tribal to settled areas despite the fact that a sizable populace opposes Islamic extremism. Apart from enlisting the help of other regional troops, TTP successfully exploited the country's internal dynamics to further their extremist cause. They were also aided in furthering their cause by the clever exploitation of current political disarray and the lack of a cohesive and unified strategy.

As a result, despite the country's substantial losses, TTP influence could not be fully curbed. The conflict has now progressed to the point where it is affecting critical National Security domains. Due to significant losses and exhaustion of vital resources on non-developmental fields, the devastating effects on the economy are dragging the fragile economy backwards, further limiting the state's options. Furthermore, the negative impact on a diverse ethno-cultural nation's social

domain and cultural harmony is a serious concern. Finally, the deterioration of law and order has resulted in a depleted state of human security, both in terms of human lives and the displacement of a significant population from FATA and surrounding areas. As a result of the combined effect of all of these critical security domains, the state's National Security milieu has been jeopardized. All of these factors necessitate an immediate re-evaluation of the situation in order to effectively address the state's National Security parameters. Despite these indicators, the existence of a vibrant media, an independent and active judiciary, and a large majority of peace-loving people are all signs of hope. Correct identification of causes and legitimate interests of various stakeholders will aid in the development of a long-term strategy to combat and reverse the terrorism wave. TTP evolution, it has been argued, was not an instantaneous occurrence, but rather occurred over a long period of time. Taliban effectively exploited the various political, social, religious, and cultural undercurrents that already existed in the society. Furthermore, the role of religion in relation to other dynamics demonstrates that TTP evaluation cannot be solely attributed to religious ideology.

Major Attacks

- **December 23, 2007:** The TTP conducted a suicide attack on a military convoy in Mingora.
- **December 27, 2007**: The Pakistani government alleges that the TTP was behind the assassination of the then-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto.
- **August 21, 2008:** The TTP conducted twin suicide bombings at Pakistan's largest weapons factory.
- **October 10, 2008:** The TTP conducted a suicide bombing at a meeting of over 500 Ali Zai tribal leaders who had gathered to discuss the formation of a militia to secure the region and oppose the Taliban.
- **March 30, 2009**: The TTP conducted an attack on a police training academy in Lahore. Baitullah Mehsud claimed that the attack was in retaliation for the Pakistani government's cooperation in continued U.S. drone strikes.
- **October 9, 2009:** A car bomb exploded in a market in Peshawar. Although the TTP did not officially claim responsibility for the attack, the Pakistani government suspected the bombing to be part of a TTP campaign in retaliation for the Pakistani military's offensive on the TTP's main base in South Waziristan.
- **January 1, 2010:** A TTP suicide bomber detonated a vehicle packed with explosives in the district of Lakki Marwat, where over 400 people had gathered to watch a volleyball match.
- **April 3, 2011:** Two TTP suicide bombers attacked a Sufi shrine in Dera Ghazi Khan, where thousands of devotees had gathered to celebrate.
- **May 13, 2011:** The TTP conduced a dual suicide bombing on a police cadet training center in Charsadda. A TTP spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, claimed that the attacks were carried out in revenge for the killing of Osama bin Laden.
- **October 9, 2012:** A TTP gunman stormed a school bus and attempted to assassinate a young advocate for female education, Malala Yousafzai.

- **July 26, 2013:** The TTP conducted two coordinated suicide attacks against a Shiite community at a market in the Kurram Agency.
- **September 22, 2013**: The TTP conducted a dual suicide bombing during a service at Christian church in Peshawar.
- **June 8, 2014**: Ten TTP-led militants conducted a five-hour long siege on the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi. The incident was a joint attack between the TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.
- **December 16, 2014**: At least 134 people were killed in the Peshawar school massacre, a terrorist incident that took place on December 16, 2014, when seven highly armed Taliban gunmen invaded an army-run primary and secondary school in Peshawar, Pakistan.
- **March 27, 2016:** The Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction of the TTP conducted a suicide bombing at a park in Lahore, where Christians had gathered to celebrate Easter.
- **August 8, 2016:** The TTP conducted a suicide bombing at the emergency ward of Quetta's Civil Hospital, where scores of people were gathered to mourn the death of Baluchistan Bar president, Bilal Anwar Kasi, in a shooting earlier that day.
- **June 4, 2018:** A TTP militant opened fire on a Pakistani Pashtun gathering led by activist Ali Wazir. The group had gathered for a PTM (Pashtun Protection Movement) rights rally.
- **July 21, 2019**: A TTP militant conducted a suicide bombing in a hospital in Dera Ismaill Khan. The TTP stated that this attack and one other than occurred in the region on the same day were in retaliation of the death of a TTP militant a month prior.
- **July 14, 2021:** A car filled with explosives drove into a bus carrying workers to a dam construction site in northern Pakistan, many of whom were Chinese workers. While the TTP denied responsibility for this attack, the Pakistani government announced their investigation proved the TTP's involvement in the suicide bombing.
- **December 11, 2021**: Two TTP militants shot a police officer who was guarding a polio vaccination team in Tank. This attack happened two days after the TTP ended a month-long ceasefire with the Pakistani government.

Number of TTP-Linked Attacks Per Year (2010–20)
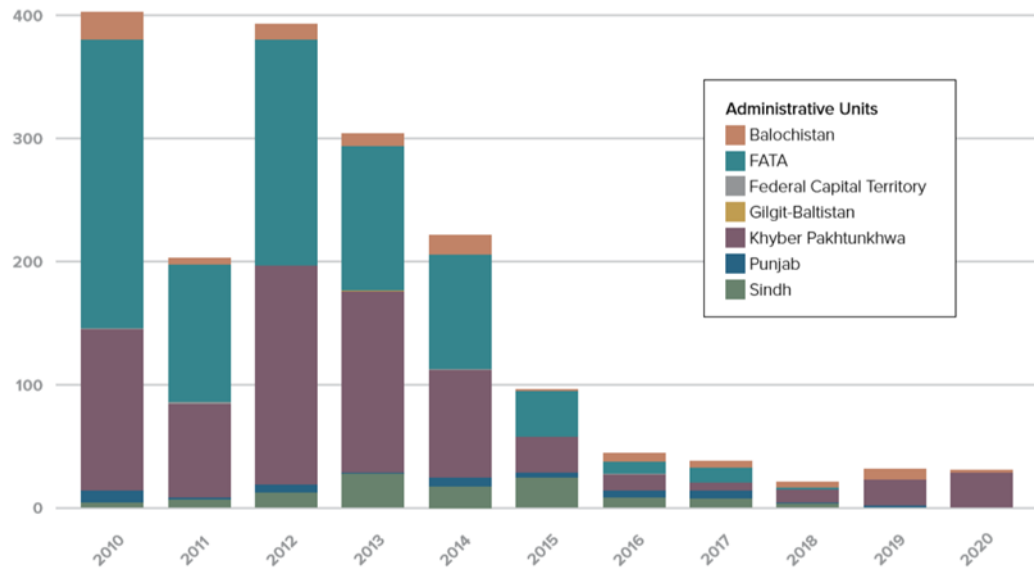
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