



# DEFENCE AND DIPLOMACY

IN PURSUIT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

VOL. 8 NO. 4

ISSN 2347 - 3703

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019

## Special Issue: Terrorism

- An Assessment of China's White Paper on Vocational Education and Training to Counter Terrorism in Xinjiang  
*Bhavna Singh*
- How Real is the Threat of Terrorism in Xinjiang?  
*Ishka Yadav*
- Narcotics-Terrorism Nexus: Obstacle to Peace in Afghanistan  
*Yatharth Kachiar*
- Islamic State in Afghanistan: Presence and Expansion  
*Saurav Sarkar*
- ANDSF: Evaluating Counter-Terrorism Capabilities  
*Swati Sinha*
- Nuclear Terrorism: The Current Scenario  
*Sreoshi Sinha*
- Terrorism in Sri Lanka: An Indicator of Perils That Haunt South Asia  
*Pooja Singh*
- Rise of Terrorism in Africa and India's Role in Upholding Peace in the Region  
*Chayanika Deka*

# DEFENCE AND DIPLOMACY

---

IN PURSUIT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

VOL. 8 NO. 4 • JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019

**Special Issue: Terrorism**



## **CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES**

### **VISION**

To be an independent **centre of excellence on national security** contributing informed and considered research and analyses on relevant issues.

### **MISSION**

To encourage independent and informed research and analyses on issues of relevance to national security and to create a pool of domain experts to provide considered inputs to decision-makers. Also, to foster informed public debate and opinion on relevant issues and to engage with other think-tanks and stakeholders within India and abroad to provide an Indian perspective.

# CONTENTS

Editor's Note	v
1. An Assessment of China's White Paper on Vocational Education and Training to Counter Terrorism in Xinjiang <i>Bhavna Singh</i>	1
2. How Real is the Threat of Terrorism in Xinjiang? <i>Ishka Yadav</i>	11
3. Narcotics-Terrorism Nexus: Obstacle to Peace in Afghanistan <i>Yatharth Kachiar</i>	23
4. Islamic State in Afghanistan: Presence and Expansion <i>Saurav Sarkar</i>	39
5. ANDSF: Evaluating Counter-Terrorism Capabilities <i>Swati Sinha</i>	57
6. Nuclear Terrorism: The Current Scenario <i>Sreoshi Sinha</i>	69
7. Terrorism in Sri Lanka: An Indicator of Perils That Haunt South Asia <i>Pooja Singh</i>	79

8. Rise of Terrorism in Africa and India's Role in Upholding Peace in the Region 87  
*Chayanika Deka*

## ➤ EDITOR'S NOTE

This last quarter has been one of the most eventful in the history of independent India.

In a move that took many within the country – and outside – by surprise, the union home minister on, August 5, announced the government's proposal to revoke Article 370 and Article 35A of the Constitution of India which provided special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The resolution moved by the home minister stated, "The President, on the recommendation of Parliament, is pleased to declare as from 5th of August 2019, all clauses of the said Article 370 shall cease to be operative ...".

The announcement also stated that the state of J&K was being bifurcated into two union territories: Ladakh, as a union territory without a legislature, and the remaining part of the state as a union territory with a legislature. The Parliament passed the changes in the form of the "Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019" on August 6, 2019. Under Part XXI of the Constitution of India, which deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions", the state of J&K had been accorded special status under Article 370.

The move was taken as Article 370 was seen to be the root cause for terrorism in the Valley, besides being discriminatory against women and the weaker sections of society within the state of J&K. The Article also promoted divisive forces whose activities were inimical to the security and integrity of the nation.

This development by the Indian government (of removal of Article 370) evoked a strong response from across the border to our west. Of course, that was to be expected, especially from a nation whose army's very *raison d'être* is to keep the Kashmir bogey alive. All wars that Pakistan has fought with India (except 1971) have been over Kashmir; also, Pakistan does not miss any opportunity to take up the resolution of the Kashmir issue with the UN. Now, with the abrogation of Article 370 and the splitting up of the state

into two union territories – an action that is an internal matter of the Union of India – Pakistan suddenly finds itself on slippery ground for the first time since Independence. Pakistan is now faced with a Hobson's choice: either it accepts the action taken by the Union of India (abrogation of Article 370), or, by insisting on restoration of the 'pre-August 5 position' (which means restoring Article 370), accepts the fact that the state of J&K is indeed an integral part of India (as stated in Clause 1 (c) of Article 370). By insisting on restoring Article 370, Pakistan is unwittingly also placing China in a difficult position in view of China's annexation of the Aksai Chin region post the 1962 India-China War; a region which is part of the state of J&K, as contained in Article 370. Since the abrogation of Article 370 is an internal matter of India, by insisting on its restoration, Pakistan has reneged on the spirit of the Simla Agreement of 1972 which *inter alia* sought "non-interference in each other's internal affairs".

It will be recalled that once India showed its unwillingness to be a part of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative on the grounds that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) violated India's sovereignty, China was looking for a way to placate India. Accordingly, it had recently conveyed to India the terms contained in Article 6 of the agreement it had signed with Pakistan in 1963 (after Pakistan had illegally ceded the Shaksgam Valley to China) that clearly mentions that when India and Pakistan settle the Kashmir dispute, "*the sovereign authority concerned would reopen negotiations with the government of the People's Republic of China, on the boundary as described in Article 2 of the present agreement, so as to sign a formal Boundary Treaty to replace the present agreement.*" China's proclivity to take a 'long-term view' of matters that could jeopardise its national interests in the future, appears to be vindicated when one sees the ongoing developments post the abrogation of Article 370.

On August 9, Pakistan formally suspended its trade relations with India and banned export/import of goods to/from India. This move is sure to hurt Pakistan more, especially at a time when its economy is in trouble. Pakistan recently sought a bail-out from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth \$6 billion; besides the amount – more than \$30 billion – it has already received from China for the CPEC development works. Payback for these loans is likely

to impact its economy adversely, with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimated to grow by 3.9 percent in 2019 and 3.2 percent in 2020 (as per estimates provided by the Asian Development Bank). Further, with low sources of revenue and high non-development expenditure, its economy is certainly headed south in the years ahead.

While delivering his speech at the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), in a vitriolic attack on the Indian prime minister for the lockdown in Kashmir since August 5, 2019, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan warned of a 'bloodbath' once restrictions are lifted. He presented a picture of the people of Kashmir clashing with the large number of security forces present in the Valley. He attempted to raise passions among the 1.8 billion Muslims around the world (who, he believed, were listening in) by saying that he feared for the fate of Muslims in India. Building up the rhetoric, he cautioned the UNGA that Pakistan would fight for the safety of Muslims in Kashmir – a fight he knew he could not win. He warned that "*when a nuclear-armed country fights to the end, it will have consequences far beyond its borders*". The clearly articulated threat by the Pakistani prime minister was meant to set the cat among the pigeons (the international community at the UNGA) to try and frighten them about the horrors of a nuclear war that could spread 'beyond its borders'.

Pakistani journalists, now living in exile in foreign countries, have commented adversely about the dubious record of successive Pakistani leaders' persecution of minorities in Pakistan – who include Muslims (Shias, Pashtuns, Balochis and Ahmadis), besides Sindhis, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. Despite this, the fact that the Pakistani leader was only rabble-rousing and inciting the Muslim community (largely Sunni) worldwide for a *jihad* against India at a platform like the UNGA, was an act that should have been condemned in the strongest terms by the president of the UNGA. Unfortunately, that did not happen; it was left to Vidisha Maitra, the first secretary of India's Ministry of External Affairs, to exercise India's right of reply to Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech. Sharply criticising the Pakistani prime minister, she said, "*A script that fosters divisiveness at the UN, attempts to sharpen differences and stir up hatred, are (sic) simply put – 'hate speech'.*"

Now it will depend on the sagacity of the national leadership in India to ensure development of the union territories of J&K and Ladakh in a time-bound manner, with the full participation of the local residents. This will enable early assimilation of the people into the national fold, which, in turn, will help in ensuring the prosperity of the region.

This volume of *Defence and Diplomacy* is in sync with the concept of 'theme-based' journals that the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) attempts to publish periodically. With *terrorism* being the theme for this volume, we have received contributions that span the developments in India's neighbourhood and attempt to assess the impact that terrorism in a particular region would have on India's security.

A late event that occurred only in the last fortnight of the quarter and has, therefore, not found mention among the various articles subscribed for this issue – although it has had the most significant impact for militaries of the world – was the September 14 attack on the Saudi Aramco oilfields at Abqaiq (the world's largest oil production facility) and Khurais in Saudi Arabia. It is now believed that the output of oil production was cut in half as a result of the strikes: almost 5.7 million barrels of oil per day. This resulted in a 15 percent spike in world oil prices, which was soon brought under control by the US releasing oil from its strategic reserve.

The Houthi rebels from Yemen claimed responsibility for the attacks, although the US and Saudi Arabian governments suspect Iran to be responsible for the attacks that were carried out with pinpoint accuracy, using up to 17 drones (Qasef-1 loitering munitions) and eight cruise missiles (Ya-Ali or Quds-1). It is believed that the Houthis are using this variety of low-cost, low flying, low speed drones for neutralising the Air Defence (AD) radars of the sophisticated MIM 104 Patriot-3 Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) system (supplied to the Saudis by the US) in what that can be considered a classic Suppression/Destruction of Enemy Air Defence (SEAD/DEAD) mission. Once a radar gap is created in one of the most advanced integrated air defence command and control systems in the world – the 'Peace Shield' of the Saudis – the Houthis then use their low-technology weapons to attack high value targets in Saudi



Arabia. This *modus operandi* appears to be working successfully for the Houthis as they have carried out attacks regularly against Saudi civil airfields as well as against oil facilities, using drones and ballistic missiles.

This asymmetric warfare by a low-technology group of armed rebels seems to be keeping one of the most powerful militaries in the region – in possession of some of the world's most sophisticated weapons – on its toes and seems to have changed the paradigm of future conflict. **Technologies to counter the threat from drones and cruise missiles would need to be addressed by nations urgently across the globe.**

Afghanistan is an area that also needs careful examination, not merely for the attempted US-Taliban Afghanistan peace talks, but for the clear signs of the beginning of yet another 'Greater Great Game' that is likely to ensue in the future in the region. With the hosting of a Taliban delegation in Moscow in November 2018 – much against the wishes of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani – it appears that Russia is positioning itself for greater 'diplomatic presence' in Afghanistan in future, particularly if the Taliban assume power. That, however, has been stalled for the time being, with the cancellation of the Afghan peace talks by President Trump on September 7, 2019. Russia doesn't seem too concerned about alienating the Afghan government; it seems to be content playing the waiting game and seems to be hedging its bets on the resurrection of the Taliban.

The main cause for concern for Russia is the increasing presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Afghanistan – and also in some regions of Pakistan – under the *nom de guerre* 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Khorasan Province', or ISIS-K/IS-K/IS-KP. With its first suicide attack in Jalalabad on April 18, 2015, that killed 33 people and left more than 100 wounded, the IS-K has been increasing the range and magnitude of its activities in Afghanistan ever since. The suicide bomber attack on August 17, 2019, during a wedding in Kabul, is the latest attack claimed by the IS-K. The detonation of the vest worn by the suicide bomber left 63 dead and more than 180 wounded. Trust between the mainstream Taliban and other militant/*jihadi* groups in Afghanistan appears to have been the main casualty of the attempted peace talks by the Taliban with the US. These groups

fear that the Taliban would hound them out of Afghanistan with US support; the suspicions persist despite the failure of the talks. There is, thus, a greater defection from among the ranks of the Taliban, as well as from other groups, to the IS-K. This is not a good portent for the security of the region and indicates a long and bloody fight for supremacy/preeminence between the Taliban and IS-K in the days ahead.

Political developments in Afghanistan – with presidential elections under way – need to be watched carefully as the outcome of the elections would be crucial for the stability of the region. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) would need to be infused with greater firepower and capability to take on the challenge from the Taliban and the IS-K. Meanwhile, the political situation in Afghanistan continues to be ‘work in progress’, with the major stakeholders – Iran, Pakistan, the US, and now Russia – watching the outcome of the presidential elections closely.

The challenges to leadership around the globe are getting knottier by the day. While the West Asian region is certainly in the eye of the storm presently – with chances of conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia and/or the US growing as each day passes – the South Asian region too has had its share of dastardly attacks in the recent months. The Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka on April 21, 2019 (that killed more than 250 people), were carried out by a local group, the National Thowheeth Jamath (NTJ), that drew its inspiration from, and owed allegiance to, the ISIS. This is a stark reminder for the leadership in India that the threat is closer than one might imagine – the enemy (*a la* the terrorist) is at the gates! It is time to gear up.

Happy reading

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. S. J.', with a small mark below it.

# AN ASSESSMENT OF CHINA'S WHITE PAPER ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO COUNTER TERRORISM IN XINJIANG

**BHAVNA SINGH**

In August 2019, the Chinese government released a White Paper titled “Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang” describing its efforts at countering terrorism in Xinjiang (the second in a row after March) and reiterating its commitment to the Plan of Action (PoA) introduced by the UN to prevent violent extremism. Sticking to the PoA which states that to counter extremism there is a need to broaden responses, engage earlier, address the drivers of violent extremism, and introduce preventive measures, China set up several vocational education and training centres in its prefectures and counties. These centres have been aimed to deliver a curriculum that includes standard spoken and written Chinese, understanding of the law, vocational skills and de-radicalisation.<sup>1</sup> The paper showcases how tailored language programmes are being provided to trainees to remedy their lack of proficiency in spoken and written Chinese.

---

Ms **Bhavna Singh** is an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

1. White Paper on Vocational Education and Training in Xinjiang, State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, August 2019, Part III.

The Chinese authorities believe that such programmes have been necessitated by the deep inroads that religious extremism has made in Xinjiang where pan-Turkish and pan-Islamist forces have attempted to create a theocratic state of "East Turkistan". Both the physical presence of the camps and the official rhetoric surrounding them signal a shift towards a more enduring strategy for Xinjiang. While limited means of employment and limited sources of information are blamed for the increase in extremism, the state is also grappling with the rise of the concept of the holy war amongst the minorities in Xinjiang. It is no wonder then that China has been quick to construct a large-scale detention network, involving immense bureaucratic effort and massive financial investment for this heavily securitised part of China.

However, this was not the case only a few years ago. In the early 1990s and until 2001, most scholars on China often framed terrorism or extremism as a constituent element of a raft of 'non-traditional' security challenges that were perceived to be affecting China's peripheries.<sup>2</sup> It was just one amongst the 'three forces', along with separatism and extremism that collectively imposed a threat to the country's national security and social stability. Then how did the terrorist threat grow to such a level that China is today trying to curtail it through both military means and de-radicalisation in order to protect its vulnerable population? The evolution of the terrorist threat and China's counter-insurgency manoeuvres comprise the subject of examination in this paper. Post 9/11, such issues have informed the development of China's 'new security diplomacy' and are currently shaping the international projection of its stand on the global war on terrorism. The following sections take a detailed look at China's projection of intent and efforts as far as counter-terrorism is concerned.

#### **LAW-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING: WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

Besides the famous resolution on "ruling the country according to law", China created an array of legislative instruments to

---

2. Jeffery Reeves, "Ideas and Influence: Scholarship as a Harbinger of Counterterrorism Institutions, Policies and Laws in the People's Republic of China", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, May 28, 2016, p. 833.

address the problem of terrorism, starting with the introduction of the “Counter-Terrorism Decision” (CTD) in 2011, to its successor, the Counter-Terrorism Law (CTL) in 2015. It aimed, for the first time, to define terrorism, establish a national counter-terrorism body, maintain a terrorist watch list, and create a procedure for freezing terrorist assets; it has undergone several changes since then, with the latest version being in effect from January 1, 2016.<sup>3</sup> The CTL comprises 97 articles in ten chapters, covering the following major aspects: terrorism, its designation, prevention, intelligence, investigation, emergency responses, international cooperation, safeguards and legal liabilities entailing a combination of administrative, judicial and military means with an aim to create synergy among various state organs.<sup>4</sup> Some legal experts raised concerns over the over-criminalisation of terrorism-related activities as that would contradict the basic principle of “law must not punish thoughts”, but the Chinese state went ahead with reforming the Criminal Procedure Laws that endorsed even controversial provisions like “secret detention” and “secret investigation” (Articles 73 and 83) as early as 2012. These are in addition to the frequent use of “strike hard” (in Chinese, *yanda*) anti-crime campaigns.

The current White Paper clearly reflects the ideas and principles of counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation that are espoused by China in line with the spirit of the requirements of the international community. Besides the regular National Security Law and Counter-Terrorism Law, Xinjiang has enacted two local regulations: Measures of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on Implementing the Counter-Terrorism Law of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the Regulations of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on De-radicalisation. These laws make provision for three categories of trainees:

- People who were incited, coerced or induced into participating in terrorist activities or people who participated in circumstances that were not serious enough to constitute a crime.

---

3. Zunyou Zhou, “Fighting Terrorism According to Law: China’s Legal Efforts Against Terrorism”, in Michael Clarke ed., *Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in China, Domestic and Foreign Policy Dimensions* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 2018), pp. 75-97.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

- People who participated in such activities but did not cause actual harm, or who acknowledged their offences and were contrite about their past actions and, hence, could be exempted from punishment.
- People who have served their sentences and are still capable of inflicting damage to the society and, hence, have been ordered by the people's courts to receive education at the centres.

In accordance with Articles 29 and 30 of the Counter-Terrorism Law, people in the first and third categories have been provided assistance and education while some from the second category have been punished, as confession, repentance and willingness to receive training are set as the preconditions for such people. The public security organs and procuratorial organs are involved at various levels throughout the procedure.<sup>5</sup> The training centres employ qualified teachers, using textbooks compiled especially for trainees to rapidly improve their ability to use standard spoken and written Chinese, acquire vocational skills (including garment making, food processing, e-commerce, auto-maintenance and repair, interior design, etc.) and are able to communicate with other ethnic groups, along with getting instruction in legal courses by judges, procurators and lawyers. The trainees develop a better understanding of their civil rights and obligations, along with a national conscience that they need to act according to the laws. This is especially helpful since re-education through the labour system had been abolished in 2013.

Practical training is conducted in classes rather than through employment in factories or enterprises, or obligatory labour; which also comprises a part of their de-radicalisation procedure. The facilities are well equipped, with central heating in winter, air conditioners and bathrooms, and also provided with 24-hour medical

---

5. China claims that most of its practices are in line with the basic principles defined in international conventions and initiatives. China has joined a number of international counter-terrorism conventions, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, and has thereby contributed to the full implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It has also initiated similar conventions under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) framework.

facilities. However, there has been sharp criticism internationally on the manner of construction of these facilities: several satellite images that have been gathered have revealed that the construction reflects the pattern of prison construction.

China has, in fact, given much thought to de-radicalisation which was reflected in the materialisation of the official policy document entitled “Several Guiding Opinions on Further Suppressing Illegal Religious Activities and Combating the Infiltration of Religious Extremism in Accordance with Law” in 2013, followed by the Islamic Religion Management Document in 2014. These provisions have been further elaborated in the White Paper released in March this year: “The Fight against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang”, which along, with the CTL, have identified three kinds of de-radicalisation:

- Custodial de-radicalisation.
- Post-imprisonment de-radicalisation.
- Social de-radicalisation.

The Xinjiang Implementing Rules on the Counter Terrorism Law (IRCTL) has designated a competent body and specifies tasks for post-imprisonment de-radicalisation. In justifying this move, Chinese scholar Liu Hanying argues that there is a dynamic balance between the use of state power and the protection of human rights and that generally, a risk assessment is done before the terrorist inmates are released. The government has, however, refrained from revealing the sources of terrorist financing or the financial expenditure that the government itself has increased in building the re-education facilities so far.

The scale, however, is extremely large. In a documentary titled *Xinjiang: The Story China Wants the World to Forget*, broadcast by *The Listening Post*, it was asserted that 1 to 1.5 million Uyghurs are being detained in these concentration camps since 2017 (other estimates put it at 8,00,000 to 3 million Uyghurs). Nick Holdstock has presented the case that there were around 180 facilities throughout Xinjiang by early 2015 and could be even more by 2019.<sup>6</sup> They are attempting

---

6. Nick Holdstock, *China's Forgotten People, Xinjiang, Terror and the Chinese State* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, I.B. Taurus, 2015 & 2019).

to transform the thought processes of millions of Uyghurs under a new regime of surveillance which was attested by Shohrat Zakir, the Xinjiang governor, who stated that the camps are aimed at “getting rid of the environment and soil that breeds terrorism and religious extremism”. His statement again created a flurry of controversies as it reflected China’s hypocritical approach to terrorism as it had vetoed a proposal to declare Hafiz Saeed an international terrorist around the same time.<sup>7</sup> Though China had initially denied the presence of such facilities and castigated the Western reports as misleading, the current White Paper reflects an attempt to justify its actions as counter-measures to the spread of radical extremism, terrorism and ethnic separatism, and a move towards a more softer and voluntary form of detention. Nury Turkel, an ethnic Uyghur fighting for the Uyghurs’ rights from Washington D.C., argues that such an elaborate framework of detention facilities underlies an institutional Islamophobia built on the narrative of extremism and cultural alienation. It also exhibits China’s central government’s zero tolerance approach to political dissent.

### **RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND HOLY WAR**

China has explicitly stated that it undertakes responsibility for the fundamental goal of removing the “malignant tumour of terrorism and extremism” that threatens the lives and security of its people. The central government believes that since the local people in Xinjiang have limited means of communication and employment, they are vulnerable to religious extremism. In its war against terrorism, the Xinjiang government aims to support the national goal and limit the spread of distorting religious doctrines and canons. On the other hand, the extremists deny the concepts and achievements of modern secular civilisation and incite followers to “engage in holy war and die for their beliefs in order to enter heaven” and do not hesitate from injuring and killing those they describe as “pagans” and “renegades”.

Through this paper, the government has tried to assuage the fears of the international community by stating that its de-radicalisation efforts

---

7. “Shohrat Zakir on Fighting Terrorism in Xinjiang Uygur Region”, *Diplomatic Square*, October 17, 2018, <http://www.diplomaticsquare.com/shohrat-zakir-on-fighting-terrorism-in-xinjiang-uygur-region/>. Accessed on September 8, 2019.



are leading to the spread of a healthy atmosphere, while evil influences are decreasing. This is an attempt to ease the international pressure on China for its treatment of the Uyghurs by leveraging the global anxiety over Islamic terrorism and also to mobilise public support by using a discourse that categorises any call for autonomy as terrorism through a policy of bandwagoning.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Adrien Morin has asserted that the Chinese have employed a risky strategy in demonising the Uyghurs and their move towards a more fundamentalist policy on Islam.<sup>9</sup> Earlier, the mosques and *madrassas* had provided a complex system of worship, education and law that dominated the region before it came under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, and continued to have substantial influence over several decades. It was only around the beginning of the 1990s that the demand for a separate state was brought up under the rubric of *jihad* against the non-believers. Over the years, the degree of organisation of the rebels has only increased, along with the depth of their anti-Chinese feelings, leading to the Islamisation of the independence struggle.<sup>10</sup> The regulation of all religious activities has increased of late under the State Administration for Religious Affairs which includes *inter alia* a crackdown on illegal *madrassas* and regulating what the ethnic minorities wear and read. New restrictions have limited the sale of religious literature and banned several books including *Uyghurlar* by Turghun Almas. The central government remains wary of the fact that the combination of Eastern Turkestan nationalism and political Islam may destabilise the apparatus of the state. In spite of improvement in the economy, the ethnic and political tensions remain unresolved. Contrary perspectives blame village and county authorities for incidents and local disputes in Xinjiang's inner regions.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND APPROACHES TO DE-RADICALISATION

The White Paper makes a general mention of other countries' approach to de-radicalisation but does not go into the details of

- 
8. Sarmad Ishfaq, "The Sinicization and Suppression of China's Muslim Uyghurs", *Foreign Policy*, November 23, 2018.
  9. Adrien Morin, "Is China's Counterterrorism Policy in Xinjiang Working?", *The Diplomat*, February 23, 2017.
  10. Michael Dillon, *Contemporary China- An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 176-182.

the hows and whys. A major aspect that seems to be missing from the paper is China's international cooperation on issues related to terrorism. Of much significance is its international cooperation on the extradition of Chinese nationals suspected of terrorism and repatriation of illegal migrants from other countries, which need to be taken into account while deliberating on these issues. Besides the major framework provided by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three, and Required Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) SCO, China had signed extradition treaties with 39 countries by 2015 (excluding the US, Germany, Canada and Turkey which have been reluctant due to China's active use of the death penalty).<sup>11</sup> For instance, when, in October 2013, the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) claimed responsibility for an attack in Beijing and declared that the Uyghurs were ready to take up arms to fight the Chinese state, the PRC arrested three Uyghurs and executed them for allegedly masterminding the attack on behalf of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).<sup>12</sup> This resulted in the extradition of several suspected Uyghurs from Central Asia; however, not from Turkey. China has also tried to curtail the threat from Islam-based terrorism to its economic growth and national territory and its core bilateral relationships in West Asia as several Uyghurs were found to have fled to Turkey and then to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, using fake Turkish passports or claims of Turkish citizenship. At the same time, Beijing is sharply constraining the role of civil society by silencing authoritative voices or activists who challenge the government policy, invoking a national security outlay on extradition issues.<sup>13</sup> For instance, it has asked most foreign countries to deny visas to, and visits by, leaders like Rebiya Kadeer (World Uyghur Congress).

---

11. See "China Signs Extradition Treaties with 39 Nations", *China Daily* March 20, 2015, [http://chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-03/20/content\\_19865295.htm](http://chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-03/20/content_19865295.htm) Accessed on September 7, 2019.

12. Some speculation regarding the self-immolatory nature of these practices prevailed and how these were a symbol of protest rather than terrorism.

13. Elizabeth Economy, *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State* (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 184.

## CONCLUSION

The White Paper claims that no terrorist incident has occurred in Xinjiang for nearly three years now. China has allowed nearly 1,000 people, including several diplomatic envoys and UN officials to visit Xinjiang since December 2018. It has also managed to get some favourable coverage from the foreign media on its de-radicalisation efforts, for instance, in the Egyptian media, a commentary titled "China uses Training and Re-education to deal with Extremism" (*Al-Ahram Al-Masa*) has highlighted that the measures taken by the Chinese government provide a useful model for other countries that aim to de-radicalise the extremist groups in their societies.

Similar reports have appeared in Saudi Arabia's *Al Riyadh* and Turkey's *DHA*. In another article in the *Straits Times* of Singapore, Ravi Vellore has mentioned that these training centres "had the air of a boarding school" and that China's counter-terrorism efforts were impressive. Overall, the Chinese government has maintained its stand that it puts prevention first while taking firm action on terrorism and extremism, and addresses both the symptoms and causes. It also draws on the valuable experiences of other countries that are striving to prevent terrorism and rehabilitate the affected citizens. Nevertheless, many Western journalists believe that China downplays the threat of terrorism in its efforts to showcase that everything is under control.

The paper, however, fails to give a complete picture of the government's position on terrorism and de-radicalisation, providing only enough information to project state propaganda to the international audience. There is a conspicuous absence of any information relating to the role of the Uyghurs in cross-border movement into Southeast Asia which has been an issue of concern for countries like Thailand after the 2016 attack at the Erawan Shrine in Bangkok. Uyghur terrorists collaborating with human trafficking networks in Southeast Asia is emerging as a serious concern for the Southeast Asian countries. While the White Paper in March had some details on the working and number of terrorist activities, it did not reflect on the growing ties of the Uyghur with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Jihad Union in Central Asia. Arguments on training and financial support to these groups are also less

developed. Though the Chinese authorities have criticised the efforts of the international community to undermine their de-radicalisation strategy in terms of blasphemy or underestimation, it would be prudent to state that the de-radicalisation efforts in Xinjiang still have a long way to go. As it is, China has always applied the carrot and stick policy to find solutions for disturbances in this region. This approach will be amplified now that it is a core part of the Belt and Road Initiative/One Belt One Road (BRI/OBOR). China considers the Xinjiang problem as a part of its internal affairs and is unlikely to allow any international body to interfere in its minority issues.

# HOW REAL IS THE THREAT OF TERRORISM IN XINJIANG?

ISHKA YADAV

## INTRODUCTION

There was a time when there was no sign of terrorism in Xinjiang, not because there was no socio-political aggression in the province but because the identification was missing from the Chinese state's creation of the situation. When the violence occurred in Baren township in 1990, China's state media portrayed the incidents as a "counter-revolutionary rebellion." When disturbances arose in Ghulja in 1997, the Chinese government described them as a "practice of beating, smashing, and looting" in the name of separatism.<sup>1</sup> State narratives changed after the 9/11 attacks in New York when terrorism became the paramount security concern in Chinese terror stories about Xinjiang. This included the reflective transformation of the past brutal episodes. Official information issued in 2002 reiterated that the Baren and Ghulja events were the work of terrorist organisations. As language is essential to the formation of norms, China's political leadership, as well as its media, created a hype about

---

Ms. **Ishka Yadav** is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

1. Pablo A. Rodríguez-Merino, "Old 'Counter-Revolution', New 'Terrorism': Historicizing the Framing of Violence in Xinjiang by the Chinese State," *Central Asian Survey*, July 20, 2018, pp. 27-45. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02634937.2018.1496066>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

the threat of terrorism in Xinjiang to justify that the “Global War on Terror” (GWOt) was not limited to countries like the United States, or restricted to Iraq and Afghanistan – the actual areas of conflict. From Chechnya to the Philippines, the discourse on GWOt has been interpreted by governments to authorise their own responses.

Drawing on theoretical insights from securitisation theory, the article aims to highlight the politics of threat identification and show how the statements given by the Chinese government have created the securitisation process. To understand the threat of terrorism in Xinjiang, a framework, mixed with theoretical and empirical analyses has been applied, with questions such as: Who are the main securitising actors and whose interest do they represent: the government’s (which agency)? What are the objectives for securitising the problem? What is the reaction of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to the state’s securitisation process? The article also shows that the language of counter-terrorism has been changed by the Chinese government in the case of Xinjiang to enable the suspension of the fundamental human rights of the Uyghur community to fight terrorism.

### **TERRORISM IN XINJIANG: ISSUE AREA**

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), positioned in northwest China, bordering eight countries – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia – has been an amalgam of different ethnic groups and various religions and cultures. To trace the historical descent of the recent Uyghur dilemma, it is crucial to begin the analysis of the issue of demography in XUAR. The Uyghur community is a Muslim Turkic-speaking group spread throughout Central Asia. In Xinjiang, the Uyghurs constitute 44 percent of the population, followed by the Han Chinese.<sup>2</sup> The significance of Xinjiang to China has been portrayed by the State Council White Papers in 2003, 2009, 2015 and 2016, which highlight the determination of the Chinese government to enforce its sovereignty and bring the Chinese narrative of history in XUAR, although the descriptions throw very little light on the

2. Andrew Mumford, “Theory-Testing Uyghur Terrorism in China”, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 12, no. 5, October 2018, pp. 18-26. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26515428.pdf?ab\\_segments=0%252Fdefault-2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A506af8332123df0de10c98b579b8feae](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26515428.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fdefault-2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A506af8332123df0de10c98b579b8feae). Accessed on August 11, 2019.

spread of Islam in XUAR.<sup>3</sup> Islam came to the region around 751 AD when the forces of the Chinese Tang Dynasty were conquered by the Arab armies in the Ferghana Valley (the border of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). Religious attachment and tribal influence in Xinjiang remained consistent for a few hundred years, with no control by the sovereign Chinese authorities.<sup>4</sup>

There had been a history of acts of political aggression by the ethnic Uyghurs before the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911 but as information is limited, it is unclear whether the violence was planned or in response to the persecution by the Chinese authorities. The Uyghurs carried out several attacks in Beijing in October 2013, in Kunming in March 2014, and violent acts outside China, for instance, in Bangkok in August 2015.<sup>5</sup> Before delving into these attacks, there is a need to understand the narratives of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and GWOt post 9/11. The stories of the Uyghur terror threats are mostly built on allegations by China against a sole Uyghur establishment known as ETIM, also identified as the Turkish Islamic Party (TIP). Little is known about the ETIM, and few scholars examining the Uyghur political movements had heard about the ETIM before 2001. While there have been frequent occurrences of inter-ethnic unrest in XUAR over the last two decades, just a handful of these incidents match the preconceived and essential acts of aggression which one generally links with global terrorist organisations.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, a strong narrative has been created around the ETIM, indicating that it is an organised and threatening group, attempting to carry out terror attacks with the backing of international terrorist organisations. The first recognition of the ETIM came up in the year 2000 when a Russian newspaper reported that “Osama bin

---

3. Michael Dillon, *Xinjiang—China’s Muslim Far Northwest* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 10.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

5. Martin Purbrick, “Maintaining A Unitary State: Counter- Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism Xinjiang and China”, *Asian Affairs*, 48:2, May 31, 2017, pp. 236-256. file:///F:/TERRORISM%20DISCOURSE/purbrick2017.pdf. Accessed on August 13, 2019.

6. Sean Roberts, “Imaginary Terrorism? The Global War on Terror and the Narrative of the Uyghur Terrorist Threat”, Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (IERES), March 2012. file:///F:/TERRORISM%20DISCOURSE/Roberts\_WorkingPaper\_March2012.pdf. Accessed on August 15, 2019.

Laden had pledged funds to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and ETIM during a 1999 meeting in Afghanistan".<sup>7</sup> Correspondingly, there was a public mention about the ETIM in an official Chinese document in November 2001 titled "Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by 'Eastern Turkistan' Organizations and their Ties with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban".<sup>8</sup> Shortly thereafter, another comprehensive "White Paper" was released in January 2002, stating "East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity".<sup>9</sup> Given the timing of these two official documents, it appears that China has attempted to link its political struggle with the Uyghurs to the United States' GWoT.<sup>10</sup> Whether or not this was the intention, eight months after the release of the "White Paper", both the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the US Treasury Department categorised the ETIM as a terrorist organisation in September 2002, a period of heightened US-Chinese cooperation on counter-terrorism in the wake of 9/11.<sup>11</sup> Ignoring persistent doubts expressed by regional experts, this explanation has influenced the security and policy dimensions in the US and brought dark consequences for the Uyghur community, both inside and outside China.

Coming back to Uyghur-related terror attacks, in 2013, two people were killed and 38 injured when a car hit a pedestrian path in Tiananmen, Beijing. A video recording was also released wherein Abdullah Mansour, the self-professed leader of the TIP, stated that the attack was a "*jihadist operation*".<sup>12</sup> However, because of the non-

7. Beina Xu, Holly Fletcher, and Jayshree Bajoria, "The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)", Council on Foreign Relations, September 4, 2014. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/east-turkestan-islamic-movement-etim>. Accessed on August 15, 2019.
8. "Terrorist Activities Perpetrated by 'Eastern Turkistan' Organizations and their Ties with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban", November 29, 2001, Website of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. <http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/fk/t28937.htm>. Accessed on August 17, 2019.
9. "East Turkistan Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away with Impunity", *CHINA.ORG. CN*, January 21, 2002. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Jan/25582.htm>. Accessed on August 18, 2019.
10. Michael Clarke, "China's 'War on Terror' in Xinjiang: Human Security and the Causes of Violent Uighur Separatism", *Regional Outlook*, Griffith Asia Institute, 2007, pp. 112- 28.
11. Executive Order 13224, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, US Department of State, September 23, 2001. <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/>. Accessed on August 19, 2019.
12. "Islamist Group Calls Tiananmen Attack 'Jihadist Operation': Monitoring Service", *South China Morning Post*, November 21, 2013. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1364374/jihadist-group-speaks-out-tiananmen-square-car-attack>. Accessed on August 19, 2019.



transparent nature of the Chinese judicial administration, proof against the convicted Uyghurs was too complicated to investigate. A primary but impactful type of terror attack was repeated in March 2014 when the Kunming railway station was targeted by ten attackers carrying knives, killing 29 people and injuring 130.<sup>13</sup> The Chinese claimed that the “East Turkistan Force’s flags” were found, which were linked to the ETIM. The attack led to enhancement of security at railway stations by the Chinese authorities who accepted the need for greater surveillance.<sup>14</sup> A few days after the Kunming attack, the US State Department termed it an “act of terrorism”, but initially it was described as “an act of violence”.<sup>15</sup> Unquestionably, there is a need for valid indication by government officials and the media for association with terrorist attacks. The attack in Bangkok in 2015 saw the use of a pipe bomb and the Thai police reported that the attack was connected to Uyghur militants. In retaliation, the Thai government deported 100 Uyghurs to China and arrested two suspects, allegedly from Xinjiang.<sup>16</sup> It is not clear if the Bangkok attack was carried out by Uyghurs fighting against the Chinese government or Uyghur people-traffickers making a political affirmation, but it was undoubtedly an act of terrorism.

### **CHINA’S PROCESS OF SECURITISATION: COUNTER-TERRORISM TACTICS**

The issue with the Chinese government in the politics of threat identification of all the terror attacks is that every problem about terrorism is in relation to militant Islam and the fierce protests connected to economic, social, and ethnic discontent. In 2015, at the 60th anniversary of the establishment of XUAR, Yu Zhengshen,

- 
13. “Experts Sent to Treat Kunming Terror Attack Victims”, *Xinhua*, March 3, 2014. Available on [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-03/03/c\\_133154340.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-03/03/c_133154340.htm). Accessed on August 21, 2019.
  14. “Officials Check Security at Railway Stations”, *China Daily*, May 7, 2014. [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/07/content\\_17491729.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/07/content_17491729.htm). Accessed on August 21, 2019.
  15. “US Says Kunming Attack is ‘Act of Terrorism’”, BBC, March 4, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-26414018>. Accessed on August 22, 2019.
  16. “Thailand Blames Uighur Militants for Bombing at Bangkok Shrine”, *New York Times*, September 15, 2015. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/16/world/asia/thailand-suspects-ughurs-in-bomb-attack-at-bangkok-shrine.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/16/world/asia/thailand-suspects-ughurs-in-bomb-attack-at-bangkok-shrine.html?_r=0). Accessed on August 24, 2019.

chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Consultative Committee, stated in his speech:

The three forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism, especially violent terrorism, are the biggest danger to Xinjiang, and the common enemy of people of all groups. We must take a firm fist to strike proactively, and resolutely crack down on violent terrorist activities according to the law, and unwaveringly fight against the three forces.<sup>17</sup>

Yu's speech was similar to other statements made by Chinese officials. For instance, Ashat Kerimbay, chairman of the XUAR Regional Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said:

The 'three forces' of extremism, separatism and terrorism both at home and abroad could not represent any ethnic group in China. Instead, they are the public enemy of all ethnic groups in the country because they are unwilling to see the reunification and development of China. We will have a vehement and long-term struggle against the 'three forces', it's life or death.<sup>18</sup>

There seems to be a universal language by the Chinese government officials which is applied to domestic problems of terrorism, separatism, and extremism, for the unity of the country, which could be hampered due to these "three evil forces". These speeches also portray the Communist Party's ideology rather than a counter-terror strategy. China articulated its "three evil forces" phrase before the 9/11 attacks, but the constant focus on fighting the GWOI gave China a new arena for its security and political strategy in Xinjiang. As part of his efforts to boost the "Chinese Dream," Xi

---

17. "China Marks 60th Anniversary of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," *CGTN Watch Live America*, October 1, 2015. <https://america.cgtn.com/2015/10/01/china-marks-60th-anniversary-of-xinjiang-uygur-autonomous-region>. Accessed on August 23, 2019.

18. "Ethnic Unity Most Important for Regional Development: Xinjiang Top Political Advisor", *Xinhua*, July 21, 2009. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/21/content\\_11746401.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-07/21/content_11746401.htm). Accessed on August 24, 2019.

Jinping urged to “actively guide people of all ethnic groups to enhance their sense of identification with our great country, and to help them further to identify with the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, and the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Losang Gyaltzen, the president of the Tibet Autonomous Region People’s Congress Standing Committee, presented Xi’s case more clearly by declaring that ethnic communities will have nothing but “bright prospects for the future if they bind their destiny to the entire Chinese nation.” Chinese officials, thus, expect that the “Chinese Dream” can be fulfilled only if all the people cooperate with the nation’s rejuvenation process.<sup>19</sup>

The counter-measures which the Chinese government has put in place must be evaluated on both the doctrinal and operational fronts. With reference to the former, the regional government has stimulated the implementation of a people’s war (*renmin zhanzheng*) against terrorism, to protect people from terrorism. This counter-measure has been repeatedly advocated by the current Communist Party Secretary of XUAR Chen Quanguo who was transferred to Xinjiang in 2016. One of the specialised methods adopted by him was the “grid-style social management” (*wangge hua*) where communities are separated into geometric zones, and the duty for social peace is assigned to the Party officials. This securitisation process draws strength from technological developments: a surveillance web using facial recognition, collecting citizens’ biometric data, tracking private vehicles, and spyware in the smartphones of the Uyghurs.<sup>20</sup> The Chinese Party campaign has gone further in tackling terrorism. The most profound counter-terrorism measure aims at changing the minds of the local population in Xinjiang. With the establishment of re-education camps in 2014, the regional government of Xinjiang has demanded that Uyghur asylum seekers in Ürümqi city return to their homeland to acquire new identity cards. Consequently, a group of local officials involved in *fanghuiju* (a strategy to ‘visit people, benefit the people, and gather the hearts of the people’)

---

19. Michael Clarke, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in China: Domestic and Foreign Policy Dimension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 41-42.

20. Adrian Zenz, James Leibold, “Chen Quanguo: The Strongman Behind Beijing’s Securitization Strategy in Tibet and Xinjiang,” *China Brief*, vol 17, issue 12, Jamestown Foundation, September 21, 2017. <https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/>. Accessed on August 25, 2019.

was assigned to southern rural homes in 2015 to report on 'extremist' practices, including a range of Islamist traditions such as fasting during Ramadan, long beards, owning Qurans, as well as behaviour not single-mindedly supportive of the Chinese government.<sup>21</sup> The effort developed into the 'Becoming Relatives' programme that includes Chinese officials carrying out homestays in the homes of Uyghurs; explained as "mapping the province's ideological territory family by family". This programme forms the primary core of the objective, declared at a national counter-terrorism work meeting in April 2017, to "*actively mobilize the masses to participate in the battle against terrorism*".<sup>22</sup> Since the declaration of the 'Regulations on De-extremification' in March 2017, an official Chinese Communist Party (CCP) audio recording conveyed to the Uyghurs in 2017 highlights the idea of Islam as pathology:

Members of the public who have been chosen for the re-education have been infected by an ideological illness. They have been infected with religious extremism and violent terrorist ideology, and, therefore, they must seek treatment from a hospital as an inpatient... The religious extremist ideology is a type of poisonous medicine, which confuses the mind of the people.<sup>23</sup>

At an operational level, Beijing came up with two measures. Firstly, with the installation of the Beidou Chinese satellite navigation system since February 2017, all vehicle owners had to abide by these new systems. The other counter-measure set at the beginning of March 2017 was the application of military transportation focussed on ground-air operations guaranteeing flexibility. One such example was the introduction of high-speed surveillance helicopters to immediately reach the affected area, specifically in mountainous

---

21. "Eradicating Ideological Viruses: China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang's Muslims", Human Rights Watch Report, September 9, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs>. Accessed on August 26, 2019.

22. Clarke, n. 19, pp. 39-73.

23. Sigal Samuel, "China is Treating Islam like a Mental Illness", *The Atlantic*, August 28, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/08/china-pathologizing-uyghur-muslims-mental-illness/568525/>. Accessed on August 26, 2019.

regions where access by road would take considerable time. China's adoption of a "bottom-up" system also includes the deployment of the Xinjiang People's Construction Corps (XPCC) called *bingtuan*, i.e. the paramilitary crews accountable for bringing progress in the region.<sup>24</sup>

### CHINA'S COUNTER-TERRORISM AS STATE TERRORISM

The Chinese counter-terrorism policies practised in Xinjiang may be said to represent state terrorism. The descent of the term 'terror' had its origin in the state violence inflicted on people. This combined with the fact that states have exercised terrorism far more broadly than non-state actors over the past two eras, makes the respective silence on state terror in the terrorism discourse rather complex.<sup>25</sup> While state terrorism can have different objectives, in most instances, it aims to terrorise people to ensure the state's consistent political authority in the long run.<sup>26</sup> The relevance to Chinese state violence in Xinjiang is terrorism executed by countries in the name of the GWoT. Here, state counter-terrorism tactics become terrorism when they fail to differentiate between the guilty and the innocent, are highly unfair, and focus on threatening or coercing a large population or a specific community into an agreement.<sup>27</sup> The actions of the Chinese government require interrogation: to what extent do mass disappearance and captivity in Xinjiang comprise a type of state violence identified as state terror? In answering this question, two points need to be highlighted: first, political violence is the most legitimate and successful option in resolving conflict for the state and non-state actors. Second, limiting our interpretation of terrorism to non-state actors helps to conceal and suppress the voices and ideas of

---

24. Sergio Miracola, "Terrorism and Counterterrorism in China: The Case of Xinjiang," Istituto Per Gli Studi Di Politica Internazionale, December 11, 2018. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/terrorism-and-counterterrorism-china-case-xinjiang-21732>. Accessed on August 27, 2019.

25. Richard Jackson, "The Ghosts of State Terror: Knowledge, Politics and Terrorism Studies," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1 (3), pp. 377-392, March 18, 2009. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17539150802515046>. Accessed on August 28, 2019.

26. Ruth Blakeley, "State Violence as State Terrorism", in M. Breen-Smyth, ed., *Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence* (London: Ashgate, Kent Academic Repository January, 2012), pp. 63-78.

27. Jackson, n. 25, p. 384.

those who live in a state of daily terror from the despotic violence of their governments, which makes state terrorism possible. To evaluate how far China's present counter-terrorism measures in Xinjiang represent state terrorism, the following securitisation process can be analysed.

### **HAVE THERE BEEN CONSCIOUS ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE UYGHURS?**

The rate and scale of state aggression saw a rise in the post-2001 era of counter-terrorism integrated into the paramilitary action against the Ürümchi turmoil in 2009, the immense crackdown following the incident, and the discrimination against the Uyghurs since 2014. In the situation of mass confinement since 2017, China has believed to have performed intensional physical and psychological violence against citizens not legally convicted of the crime.<sup>28</sup>

### **ARE THE ACTS INFLICTED BY ACTORS ON THE PART OF, OR IN SYNCHRONY WITH, THE STATE?**

While it may be challenging to prove that acts of state violence are carried out at the command of the Centre, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is aware of the programme, its frequency, and the impact of securitisation and mass imprisonment. For instance, the CCP was responsible for transferring Chen Quanguo to Xinjiang in August 2016, knowing that he was the planner of grid-style measures in Tibet from 2011 to 2015, and would enforce the same in Xinjiang. At the level of internal communication, China's Minister of Justice Zhang Jun, in May 2018, insisted that the authorities in Xinjiang expand the idea of "transformation through education" in an "all-out effort" to combat extremism and separatism.<sup>29</sup> At the regional level, state agents have obstructed foreigners' witnessing

---

28. Steve Chao, "Exposed: China's Surveillance of Muslim Uighurs", Al Jazeera, February 1, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/asia/2019/01/exposed-china-surveillance-muslim-uighurs-190130011449217.html>. Accessed on August 27, 2019.

29. Gerry Shih, "China's Mass Indoctrination Camps Evoke Cultural Revolution", *Associated Press*, May 18, 2018. <https://apnews.com/6e151296fb194f85ba69a8babd972e4b>. Accessed on August 28, 2019.

of the re-education camps. BBC journalists are believed to have been thoroughly investigated by the police in Xinjiang when documenting the camps. Police officers built roadblocks, shutting off all accessible routes, claiming that the road was blocked for “military training”.<sup>30</sup>

### **DO NGOs DISAGREE WITH THE STATE?**

Chinese Human Right Defenders (CHRD) made a joint submission in July 2018 to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) to assess China’s implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which China is a signatory since 1981. The NGOs have raised concerns over what they believe is laxity by the Chinese government to enforce Articles Four and Five of the agreement, which forbid the exploitation of minority groups. The United Nations submission includes reports of hundreds and thousands of Uyghurs who have been detained in ‘re-education camps’ without legal arrest. They are reportedly denied formal judicial proceedings – along with the right to a fair trial – and are repeatedly arrested under terrorism charges. CHRD and the Equal Rights Initiative also stated that those accused in terrorism-related cases in Xinjiang are almost always from ethnic groups, and they are prohibited from pleading “not guilty”. They also said that the rulings are decided *a priori* by government officials, not judges, and lawyers who will be banished from cases if they raise objections about the violation of their clients’ rights. The group said: “Some families said that they had not learned the fate of their loved ones who were taken away to re-education camps until after the detainees had been transferred to prison. Even then, many still had not been told the full details on criminal charges or prison sentences, and prosecution and sentencing had often been carried out in secret.”<sup>31</sup>

---

30. John Sudworth, “China’s Hidden Camps: What’s Happened to the Vanished Uighurs of Xinjiang?”, BBC News, October 24, 2018. [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China\\_hidden\\_camps](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps). Accessed on August 28, 2019.

31. Jennifer Creery, “NGOs Note ‘Staggering’ Rise in Arrests as China Cracks Down on Minorities in Muslim Region”, *Hong Kong Free Press*, July 25, 2018. <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2018/07/25/ngos-note-staggering-rise-arrests-china-cracks-minorities-muslim-region/>. Accessed on August 30, 2019.

## CONCLUSION

Those senior officials involved with Strike Hard Campaign need to be cautioned of their style of functioning and resist from violating human rights of Uyghurs on face trial before the International Court of Justice. On an international level, 22 countries have signed a letter directed to the president of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urging China to stop its detention programme. A group of 37 nations submitted a similar letter in defence of China's laws. It's not quite clear how each country signed, as every nation has its own logic for approving human rights abuses. For many, China's economic weight is a fundamental concern when it comes to criticising Beijing openly. For some other countries, whose human rights violations at home have also come under persistent criticism abroad, supporting China becomes a roundabout way of protecting themselves.<sup>32</sup> Since the discourse on terrorism in Xinjiang has neglected expressing the cause of violence, the threat from the state is much higher than the danger from the Uyghur community. In dealing with the target community, the Chinese government appears to have failed in its moral responsibility: the Uyghurs are deprived of freedom from fear and freedom from want,<sup>33</sup> as they are exploited physically and psychologically, with the state itself committing human rights abuses instead of providing good governance, encouraging development, and respect for human dignity.

---

32. Catherine Putz, "Which Countries Are For or Against China's Xinjiang Policies?", *The Diplomat*, July 15, 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/which-countries-are-for-or-against-chinas-xinjiang-policies/>. Accessed on August 29, 2019.

33 In the book, *An Introduction to Non-Traditional Security Studies: A Transnational Approach*, by Melly Cabrello Anthony, freedom from want falls under human security and the state is supposed to provide its citizens with basic material needs, encourage development, and protect them from human rights abuses.



# NARCOTICS-TERRORISM NEXUS: OBSTACLE TO PEACE IN AFGHANISTAN

**YATHARTH KACHIAR**

## **INTRODUCTION**

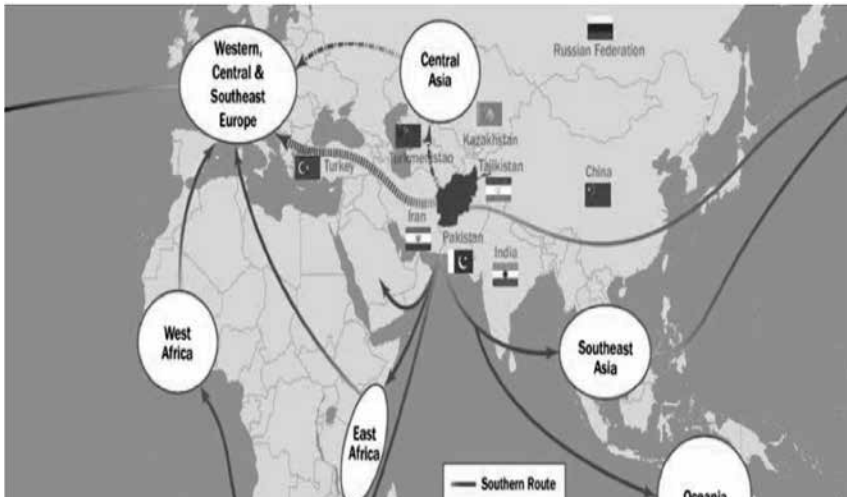
In Afghanistan, the international consensus on finding a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the Afghan conundrum might result in a peace deal with the Taliban in the future. The negotiations in Doha between the US and the Taliban aimed at achieving a comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan, intra-Afghan dialogue, and, most importantly, the guarantee from the Taliban that Afghanistan will not be a safe haven for terrorist groups. However, bringing sustainable peace and security in Afghanistan and the surrounding region is not possible without addressing the narcotics menace in the country, since money from the illegal drug trade is the root cause of corruption in the country, as well as one of the major sources of funding for the insurgents. This article argues that a sustainable peace deal with the Taliban is not possible without addressing Afghanistan's booming opium trade since the terrorism issue and corruption in the country cannot be delinked from the narcotics trade, which is an important factor behind its sustenance.

---

Dr. **Yatharth Kachiar** is a Research Associate at the Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi.

At present, Afghanistan is the top-most producer of heroin, cultivating approximately 90 percent of the world's opium production.<sup>1</sup> Various reports suggest that the illicit drug trade in Afghanistan is one of the most potent global dangers, threatening "health, governance and security at national, regional and international levels".<sup>2</sup> According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Illicit Afghan opiates are trafficked to almost every continent in the world, with the exception of South America, and are trafficked along three broad routes: the Balkan route, the northern route and the southern route."<sup>3</sup> This indicates how the drug trade which ensues from Afghanistan impacts the stability and security of not just regional countries but has grave consequences worldwide.

**Fig 1: Major Drug Trafficking Routes from Afghanistan**



Source: "Quarterly Report", Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), July 2019.<sup>4</sup>

1. Mariya Y. Omelicheva and Lawrence Markowitz, "Does Drug Trafficking Impact Terrorism? Afghan Opioids and Terrorist Violence in Central Asia", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 2018, p. 2.
2. "Afghan Opiate Trade Project", UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/aotp.html>. Accessed on September 10, 2019.
3. Ibid.
4. "Quarterly Report", SIGAR, July 2019, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2019-07-30qr.pdf>, p. 170. Accessed on September 10, 2019.

The article is divided into four sections. The first section will briefly discuss the linkage among instability, terrorism and the opium trade in Afghanistan and how it has grown over the years. The second section will talk about the growing narcotics menace in the country in the post-2001 era and how the US and the Afghan government have tried to tackle it. This section will also deliberate on the reasons for the failure of the counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan and its consequences. The final section will summarise the findings of the article.

### **OPIUM TRADE AND TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN**

Afghanistan's association with the drug economy boomed in the 1980s after the Soviet invasion of the country. During this period, Afghanistan got enmeshed in power politics and once again became the playground for 'the Great Game' between the major powers. The US, with the help of its allies, specifically Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, started funnelling money and arms to the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in order to support the war against the Soviet occupation. Apart from the funding which came from the US and its allies, the revenues from the drug trade also helped the Mujahideen in continuing their resistance against the USSR. During this period of Afghan resistance against the Soviet Union, the Western world, led by the US, tuned a blind eye towards the growing opium production in the country. The ban on opium cultivation in the neighbouring Iran and Pakistan further pushed the "Western drug cartels and 'scientists' to establish heroin processing facilities in the tribal belt of Pashtun areas in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> As an analyst points out, "This was also the same period during which the opium production and trade shifted from the 'Golden Triangle' (Thailand-Burma-Laos) to the 'Golden Crescent' (Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran), with the CIA playing a central role in this shift, as it backed anti-communist regimes and warlords in South and Central Asia."<sup>6</sup>

Opium cultivation spread quickly in Afghanistan largely because of the destruction wrought by the Soviet occupation

- 
5. Peter Dale Scott, "Obama and Afghanistan: America's Drug Corrupted War", *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2011, p. 121.
  6. Salman Hussain, "Looking for Tribals Without Politics, Warlords Without History: The Drug Economy, Development, and Political Power in Afghanistan", *Identities*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2012, p. 252.

which decimated the economy, regular agriculture production, and trade network in the country, thereby pushing many farmers towards opium cultivation to sustain their livelihoods.<sup>7</sup> Further, the war also depopulated the country, especially in the rural areas wherefrom several people either fled the country, were killed, or became internal refugees. This, in turn, severely impacted the total food production of the country, and by 1988, Afghanistan was importing approximately 500,000 metric tonnes of wheat annually from the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the expansion of opium cultivation was so swift that by the end of the decade, it occupied the top slot in Afghanistan's export basket. As Fig 2 indicates, by 1989, Afghanistan was producing approximately 1,200 tonnes of opium and, therefore, contributing 35 percent to the world's total opium production.<sup>9</sup>

The internal instability and the external push in the form of availability of major markets established the economic feasibility of opium production in the country. What is interesting is that within the next decade, by 1999, Afghanistan's share in the production of the world's illicit opium soared from 35 percent to 79 percent.<sup>10</sup> With the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, Afghanistan lost its geo-strategic importance for its Western allies. The civil war, which erupted in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal, resulted in severe atrocities and human rights abuses. Throughout this period, apart from the funding which came from the regional countries for various factions fighting in the war, it was the drug trade which sustained the civil war. However, the complete neglect of Afghanistan by the Western world during this period meant that the international community had turned a blind eye to the rising narcotics trade in the region.

---

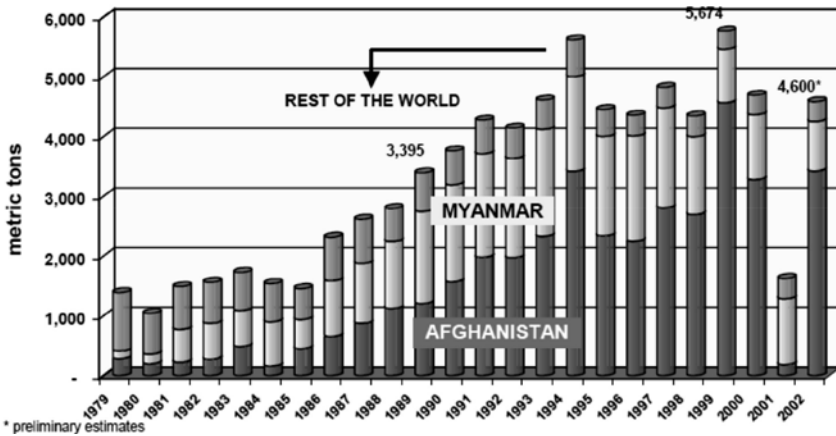
7. Christopher J Coyne, Abigail R. Hall Blanco, et al., "The War on Drugs in Afghanistan: Another Failed Experiment with Interdiction", *The Independent Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2016, p. 98.

8. "Global Illicit Drug Trends 2001: Afghanistan", UNODC, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/report\\_2001-06-26\\_1/analysis\\_afghanistan.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/report_2001-06-26_1/analysis_afghanistan.pdf), p. 32. Accessed on September 5, 2019.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

10. "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem", 2003, UNODC, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg\\_opium\\_economy\\_www.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/afg_opium_economy_www.pdf), p. 31. Accessed on September 5, 2019.

Fig 2: Global Illicit Opium Production, 1979-2002



Source: "The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem", UNODC.<sup>11</sup>

The spurt in opium production after the Soviet withdrawal was largely because of the fact that all earlier legal and social restrictions on the cultivation of opium had been entirely demolished due to the weakening of governance in the country. Moreover, opium production had also become a reliable source of income for the different warring factions in Afghanistan. Lastly, in the rural areas as well, opium poppy cultivation had devised a system of production and infrastructure and, thus, proved to be a sustainable source of livelihood.<sup>12</sup> As an analyst explains, "By 1989, those involved in the cultivation, harvesting and production of opium, including both peasants and land labourers, had been involved in it for at least a decade. They had developed and expanded knowhow and technical expertise and were using established markets, infrastructure and trading systems."<sup>13</sup> Also, in the midst of the civil war, opium cultivation in Afghanistan provided a feasible alternative to the farmers since the crop, despite being labour-intensive is "durable and commanded a higher price on average".<sup>14</sup>

11. Ibid., p. 31.

12. n. 8.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

As the civil war in Afghanistan raged on, and the Taliban gained power in Kabul, the foreign funding, support and patronage of various warring factions narrowed which, in turn, forced these factions to rely more on other sources of income such as the opium trade. Further, in order to gain the allegiance of the local warlords, the so-called puritanical armed group, the Taliban, also permitted them to maintain the illicit opium production and arms trading. With the help of the narcotics trade, these local warlords were also able to carve out “quasi-autonomous territories under their jurisdiction and economic control”.<sup>15</sup> As an analyst observes, “Under the Taliban rule, poppy cultivation remained at high levels and reached another peak in 1999. The Taliban and Northern Alliance derived substantial funds from the narco-economy for the perpetuation and sustenance of their respective rule.”<sup>16</sup> There are reports which indicate that in the early years of gaining power; the Taliban gained \$30 million per year by levying taxes on opium produce which eventually rose to \$75-\$100 million per year by the late 1990s.<sup>17</sup>

**Fig 3: Global Opium Production 1994-2000**

Counter	Production 1994-2000 in Tonnes	Percentage of World Production
Afghanistan	21,337	62.7
Myanmar	9,968	29.2
Laos	950	2.8
Columbia	754	2.2
Mexico	337	0.9
Thailand	36	0.1
Pakistan	331	1.0
Others	382	1.1
World	34,052	100.0

Source: Hermann Kreutzmann (2007), “Afghanistan and the Opium World Market: Poppy Production and Trade”.<sup>18</sup>

15. Hermann Kreutzmann, “Afghanistan and the Opium World Market: Poppy Production and Trade”, *Iranian Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2007, p. 612.

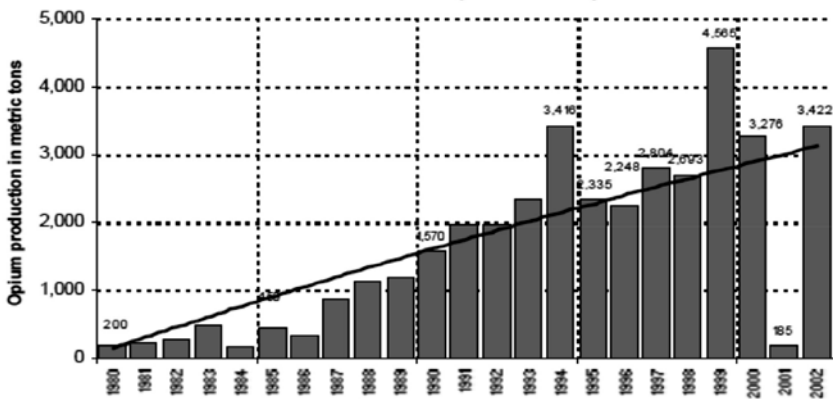
16. *Ibid.*, p. 612.

17. Coyne, et al., n. 7, p. 98.

18. Kreutzmann, n. 15, p. 608.

As Fig 3 indicates, after the Taliban’s coming to power, Afghanistan overtook the Golden Triangle countries, which include Burma, Laos, and Thailand, in the production of opium.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the Golden Triangle countries were the leading producers of opium in the 1970s and 1980s. The reason for this change can be attributed to a number of factors, including the increased pressure from China and the international community on the Golden Triangle countries to undertake eradication, the instability in Afghanistan, as well as the more hospitable climate of southern Afghanistan where the “poppies yield an average of four times more opium than the soil of upland Southeast Asia”.<sup>20</sup> As evident from Fig 4, the highest level of cultivation was seen during the Taliban rule in the year 1999 when Afghanistan alone produced 4,581 tonnes of raw opium which amounted to 79 percent of the total global opium production.

**Fig 4: Opium Production in Afghanistan in Different Phases (1980-2002)**



Source: “The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem”, UNODC.<sup>21</sup>

The harsh policies of the Taliban, especially against women, as well as religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, enhanced the isolation of the Taliban regime in the international community.

19. Ibid., p. 608.

20. Thomas Fuller, “Notorious Golden Triangle Loses Sway in the Opium Trade”, *The New York Times*, September 11, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/11/world/asia/11iht-golden.1.7461246.html>. Accessed on September 10, 2019.

21. UNODC, n. 10, p. 6.

Unlike earlier, when Afghanistan was simply characterised as a 'failed state' and was completely neglected, the Western discourse started portraying Afghanistan as a country which needed Western help and intervention. During this period, the Western narrative portrayed Afghanistan as a state ruled by a group of religious hardliners, where citizens, especially women, were incessantly persecuted and thereby needed to be saved.<sup>22</sup> In October 1999, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Afghanistan due to gross violation of human rights, support to terrorist groups, and increased opium production under the Taliban regime. A month before the sanctions, in September 1999, the Taliban regime issued a decree ordering the poppy farmers in Afghanistan to reduce their cultivation area by one-third, largely to avoid the forthcoming sanctions. The decree was able to reduce the poppy cultivation only by 10 percent. However, the overall opium production fell by 28 percent in 2000 due to a severe drought in many parts of the country.<sup>23</sup> A year later, in July 2001, the Taliban imposed a complete ban on the cultivation of opium in areas under their control. The ban was in response to the increased international pressure and the threat of even harsher UN sanctions which would have ruined Afghanistan's already stressed economy. According to the UNODC report in 2003, "The opium ban decreed by the Taliban in July 2000 led to the massive declines of between 90% and 100% of cultivation in the provinces controlled by them in 2001. Cultivation in Helmand ceased entirely and cultivation in Nangarhar fell by 99%".<sup>24</sup> However, the opium production revived again in 2002 after the Taliban regime was overthrown by the US in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

### **POST-2001: THE US WAR ON DRUGS IN AFGHANISTAN**

In 2001, the Taliban regime was overthrown by the US and its North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies in Operation Enduring Freedom. The opium ban decreed by the Taliban ended with the fall of the regime. Another ban on opium cultivation was put in place

---

22. Abu-Lughod L., "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Others.", *American Anthropologist*, vol. 104, no. 3, 2002, pp. 783-790.

23. "Annual Opium Poppy Survey", 2000, United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/report\\_2000-12-31\\_1.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/publications/report_2000-12-31_1.pdf). Accessed on September 10, 2019.

24. UNODC, n. 10.



by the interim government headed by Hamid Karzai. Here, what is important is that in the beginning, the US and the coalition forces did not make it a priority to eradicate the narcotics trade and production from Afghanistan. Instead, as an analyst puts it, "The US government sought to use the opium producers' interests to its advantage. Specifically, the coalition forces attempted to establish military alliances with the regional warlords to help defeat the Taliban. In return for their allegiance, the US government in effect agreed to turn a blind eye to opium trafficking."<sup>25</sup> By keeping itself away from the counter-narcotics operations in the early years, the US government had hoped that while it focussed on counter-terrorism operations, the interim government headed by Hamid Karzai would tackle the issue of drugs in Afghanistan. This strategy was largely unsuccessful and the ban placed on opium production by the Karzai government failed to produce any result. According to the UNODC report, the area under opium cultivation expanded from 74,000 hectares in 2002 to 80,000 hectares in 2003, a total increase of 8 percent.<sup>26</sup>

In the next three years, the opium harvest in Afghanistan boomed drastically which pushed the US to get directly involved in the eradication efforts and follow a zero-tolerance approach towards narcotics. The counter-narcotics policy prepared by the US for Afghanistan in 2003 aimed at reducing opium cultivation to 70 percent by 2008, and total eradication by 2013 through "combining physical eradication of poppy fields and the interdiction of trafficked drugs."<sup>27</sup> However, the increasing production of opium in the country once again pushed the US to revise its earlier policy. As Fig 5 indicates, in the year 2004, Afghanistan's opium production rose to 131,000 hectares, garnering widespread attention and raising concerns that the opium economy in Afghanistan was helping to fuel the insurgency.<sup>28</sup>

In 2005, the US government came up with a "five-pillar counter-narcotics strategy" to eradicate opium production from Afghanistan. The strategy aimed at reducing poppy cultivation, firstly, by

---

25. Coyne, et al., n. 7, p. 99.

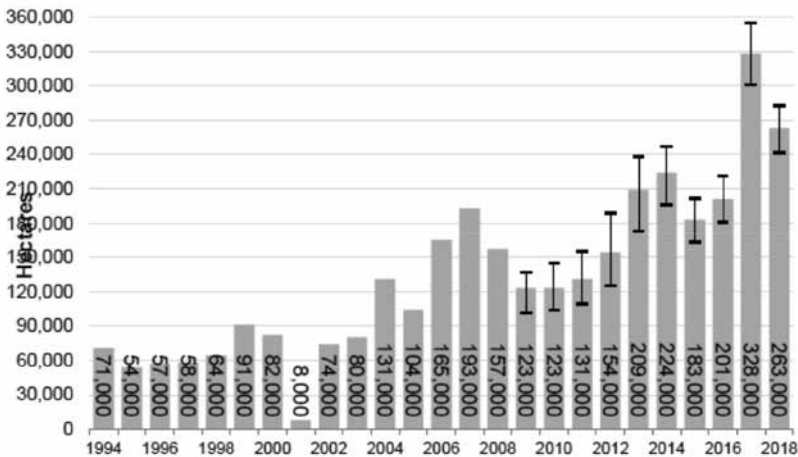
26. "Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2003", UNODC, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2003.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_2003.pdf). Accessed on August 10, 2019.

27. Coyne, et al., n. 7, p. 100.

28. "Counter-Narcotics: Lessons from the US Experience in Afghanistan", SIGAR, June 2018, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf#page=56>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

providing alternative sources of livelihood for poppy farmers and rewarding the villages that performed well in counter-narcotics efforts; secondly, eradicating the poppy crop with the help of special poppy eradication forces; third, enhancing the capabilities of the counter-narcotics forces in the country; fourth, strengthening the legal aspect of counter-narcotics efforts by prioritising the investigation and adjudication of drug trafficking cases; and, lastly, raising public awareness on this issue.<sup>29</sup> At this juncture, the US funnelled vast amount of resources in terms of personnel as well as finance in order to reduce opium production in Afghanistan.

**Fig 5: Afghanistan Total Poppy Cultivation Estimates, 1994-2018**



Source: SIGAR, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018.<sup>30</sup>

At this juncture, the US policy-makers aimed at aligning the counter-narcotic initiatives with counter-insurgency efforts, which, in turn, meant giving a larger role to the US military in all the opium eradication policies. As an analyst has noted, “From 2004 and 2005, the Department of Defense more than tripled the operating budget it dedicated to counter-narcotics, from \$72 million to \$225 million. Most

29. Curt Tarnoff, “Afghanistan: US Foreign Assistance”, CRS Report for Congress, August 12, 2010, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40699.pdf>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

30. “Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2018”, SIGAR, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2018\\_socioeconomic\\_report.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_opium_survey_2018_socioeconomic_report.pdf), p. 10. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

of these funds were used to support joint Afghan and American anti-drug efforts.”<sup>31</sup> Later, by 2008, the policy-makers in the US expanded their focus to curtail the links between the Taliban insurgency and drug trade. In this regard, a new unit called the Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC), led by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was created. The mission of the ATFC was “to identify and disrupt financial networks related to terrorism, the Taliban, narcotics trafficking, and corruption.”<sup>32</sup>

The area under opium production in Afghanistan fell from 131,000 hectares in 2004 to 104,000 hectares in 2005. However, it once again spiked in 2006 to a whopping 165,000 hectares, a total 60 percent increase over the previous year. Later, in 2008 and 2009, the area under opium cultivation once again fell to 157,000 hectares and 123,000 hectares respectively.<sup>33</sup> However, the US counter-narcotics initiatives cannot be completely credited with any of these declines in the cultivation area for opium. Instead, “the poor agricultural conditions – i.e. drought and disease – that prevailed during this period, were responsible for killing up to one-third of the poppy in the region.”<sup>34</sup> In 2009, the failure in these efforts led to the abandonment of a few of the earlier adopted strategies that included disbanding of the poppy eradication force and end of the aerial eradication policy. The only US-supported eradication effort which remained at this juncture was the “governor-led eradication”, an initiative which compensated provincial governors on the basis of the level of eradication in their provinces.<sup>35</sup> Through this scheme, the US policy-makers focussed on providing alternative livelihoods to Afghan farmers by promoting crop-replacement and economic assistance. However, this policy shift also failed to curtail the level of opium production in Afghanistan, largely because of the increasing farm-gate price for opium which rose to 300 percent. The area under opium cultivation increased from 123,000 hectares in 2011 to 209,000 hectares in 2013.<sup>36</sup>

---

31. Coyne, et al., n. 7, p. 101.

32. SIGAR, n. 28, p. 50.

33. Ibid.

34. Coyne, et al., n. 7, p. 102.

35. Tarnoff, n. 29.

36. “Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2014”, UNODC, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan-opium-survey-2014.pdf>. Accessed on August 14, 2019.

The reduction of US troops from Afghanistan in 2014 created uncertainty regarding the future counter-narcotics efforts there. The lack of any policy initiative from the US and the disinterest shown by various donor agencies in the counter-narcotic efforts pushed the whole issue of the drug trade in Afghanistan to the background. The Afghan government also rarely emphasised the need to tackle the rising drug trade in the country. By 2016, largely because of the policy paralysis, weak security environment, and fragile political situation, opium cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 63 percent from 200,000 hectares in 2016 to 328,000 hectares in 2017.<sup>37</sup> In 2018, “the US State Department informed SIGAR that it was no longer developing a stand-alone US counter-narcotics strategy for Afghanistan that had previously been under review.”<sup>38</sup> In addition, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) also cancelled the “Good Performers’ Initiative” programme due to institutional capacity weaknesses. In addition, in January 2019, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics (MCN), which was the prime institution for developing and implementing counter-narcotics programmes nationally, was dissolved by the Afghan government and its duties were shifted to the Ministry of Interior.<sup>39</sup>

What is interesting to note about the US counter-narcotic efforts in Afghanistan which also impacted its policies is the complete lack of consensus in the policy circle about the linkage between the drug trade and the Taliban insurgency. According to the UN Security Council’s Taliban Monitoring Team, the profits which the Taliban gained from the drug trade did not amount to more than \$100 million in 2011-12, which was only a quarter of their estimated \$400 million income for that year.<sup>40</sup> This study was corroborated by another Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) finding which stated that the major funding for the Taliban came from illegal taxation

---

37. “Afghanistan Opium Survey, 2018”, UNODC, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_opium\\_survey\\_2018.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_opium_survey_2018.pdf). Accessed on August 15, 2019.

38. “High Risk List 2019: Afghanistan”, SIGAR, [https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/spotlight/2019\\_High-Risk\\_List.pdf](https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/spotlight/2019_High-Risk_List.pdf), p. 37. Accessed on August 15, 2019.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

40. SIGAR, n. 28, p. 35.

and contributions from Pakistan and Persian Gulf nations, rather than drugs. However, in 2016, Resolute Support Commander Gen John Nicholson said that the Taliban obtained 60 percent of their funding from the drug trade.<sup>41</sup>

Another reason for the failure of the counter-narcotic efforts of the US in Afghanistan despite spending approximately \$9.06 billion on the efforts was the way policy-makers in the American Administration approached the whole issue. From the beginning, the US policy supported and used the drug traffickers to strengthen its ground position in the country. The media reporting on this issue also blamed the Taliban entirely for the perpetuation of the drug economy in Afghanistan and, in the process, completely neglected the role played by corrupt officials in the Afghan government as well as in the West.<sup>42</sup> In reality, the drug industry in Afghanistan is a vicious cycle involving a wider range of participants who profit from the trade. As shown in Fig 6, the support given by the US and its NATO allies to the warlords involved in the drug trade in the early years allowed them to strengthen their position by further indulging in the narcotics trade. Further, these warlords used this newly gained economic strength to undermine the already fragile Afghan state. At the same time, corruption due to the narcotics trade also weakened the state.<sup>43</sup> William Byrd explains, "In return for payments, warlord militias helped provide the enabling environment (often including armed protection) for the opium economy to operate. The weak government was unable to provide genuine security or rule of law, and this created a good environment in which the opium economy could continue to thrive."<sup>44</sup> This, in a way, created a vicious cycle in which a huge opium economy and weak ineffective state perpetuated each other.

---

41. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

42. Peter Dale Scott, "Obama and Afghanistan: America's Drug Corrupted War", *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2011, p. 130.

43. William A. Byrd, "Responding to Afghanistan's Opium Economy Challenge: Lessons and Policy Implications from a Development Perspective", The World Bank, 2008, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/753541468197330634/pdf/wps4545.pdf>, pp. 13-14. Accessed on August 15, 2019.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

**Fig 6: The Vicious Cycle of the Afghan Drug Economy**

Source: William A. Byrd, "Responding to Afghanistan's Opium Economy Challenge", World Bank, 2008.<sup>45</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The illicit opium economy in Afghanistan curtails the efforts of the international community and the Afghan government across various sectors, including the social, economic, security, and governance. At the same time, it ensures funding to the drug-trafficking organisations and anti-government groups, weakens the government's legitimacy, feeds corruption, and undermines the state itself. The various counter-narcotic initiatives by the US and the Afghan government have failed to tackle this grave issue. The strategy of providing alternative livelihoods to the farmers, e.g. promoting crops like saffron has not been able to make any significant dent in the drug economy of the country. Since 1994, the highest level of opium cultivation in Afghanistan was reached in 2017, and the second-highest in the year 2018.

As the international community is increasingly looking for a diplomatic and peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict, the drug economy in Afghanistan remains a major threat for any sustainable peace agreement. The opium-producing areas in Afghanistan are not solely occupied by any one armed group. In such areas, multiple

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

armed groups are present, “some with members holding positions in the provincial and central governments, vying for control over revenues.”<sup>46</sup> The policy of the Taliban regarding opium cultivation is also not clear. The fragmented nature of the current Taliban movement also means that they will not be able to enforce another successful ban on opium the way they did in 2001. There are greater chances that the local farmers will resist any such ban from the Taliban.<sup>47</sup> However, if the peace deal fails to ensure the eradication of the opium economy in Afghanistan, it may once again perpetuate the same vicious cycle in which the armed groups, drug trafficking groups, corrupt officials will weaken the state in order to provide an enabling environment for the drug economy. This, in turn, will have an adverse impact on the security situation in the regional countries.

---

46. SIGAR, n. 4, p. 173.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

# ISLAMIC STATE IN AFGHANISTAN: PRESENCE AND EXPANSION

SAURAV SARKAR

The Afghan chapter of the transnational Sunni Islamist terrorist and insurgent organisation, the Islamic State (IS), generally referred to as 'Islamic State in Khorasan' (IS-K), continues to operate in the mountainous terrain of northeastern Afghanistan even after the fall of its 'Caliphate' in Iraq and Syria. Despite facing the full brunt of the United States, the Afghan security forces, and the Afghan Taliban, it still endures. *Khorasan* is a historical name for the region that consisted of what today comprise northeastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> The Islamic State's goal of establishing its Khorasan province (*wilayat*) is ambitious and has extended to include parts of Central Asia, and China as well.<sup>2</sup>

---

Mr. **Saurav Sarkar** is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

1. Adam Taylor, "The Strange Story Behind the 'Khorasan' Group's Name", *Washington Post*, September 25, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/25/the-strange-story-behind-the-khorasan-groups-name/>. Accessed on August 6, 2019.
2. John Hall, "The ISIS Map of the World: Militants Outline Chilling Five-Year Plan for Global Domination as they Declare Formation of Caliphate – and Change their name to the Islamic State", *Daily Mail*, June 30, 2014, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2674736/ISIS-militants-declare-formation-caliphate-Syria-Iraq-demand-Muslims-world-swear-allegiance.html>. Accessed on August 6, 2019.



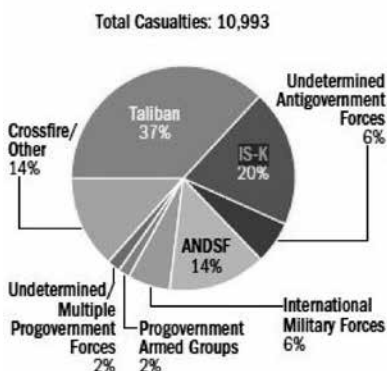
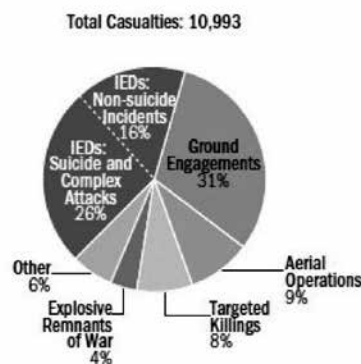
The IS-K reportedly has the highest percentage of foreign fighters among the group's affiliates. A July 2018 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) report mentions that "significant numbers [of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF)] have made their way to Afghanistan" from Syria and Iraq and that several foiled attacks in Europe originated from the IS-K.<sup>3</sup> There are about 8,000-10,000 FTFs in Afghanistan of whom 2,500-4,000 belong to the IS-K.<sup>4</sup>

Afghanistan in particular remains the Islamic State's "most threatening manifestation" outside Syria and Iraq.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Department of Defence (DoD) notes that the IS-K is a growing problem and is capable of carrying out overseas attacks while the Afghan government forces are finding it increasingly difficult to fight the IS-K. However, the U.S. intelligence community believes that the IS-K is a smaller threat than its parent organisation – the IS – and that it poses no threat to the West. Whatever be the case, the fact that the US military for the first time used its largest non-nuclear bomb in 2017, against the IS-K in Afghanistan, killing about 100 of its fighters and destroying \$8 million of its cash reserves, highlights the nature of the threat.<sup>6</sup>

The IS-K was responsible for 20 percent of all civilian casualties in 2018 (see Fig 1). Civilian casualties from attacks deliberately targeting civilians by the IS-K more than doubled from 843 in 2017 to 1,871 in 2018, mainly from suicide and other attacks, including deliberate

- 
3. United Nations Security Council (UNSC), S/2018/705 Twenty-second Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to Resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, July 27, 2018, p. 6.
  4. UNSC, S/2019/481 Tenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to Resolution 2255 (2015) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan, June 13, 2019, pp. 4, 17.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Antonio Giustozzi. *The Islamic State in Khorasan: Afghanistan, Pakistan and the New Central Asian Jihad* (UK: C. Hurst and Co., 2018), p. 96.

Fig 1: Civilian Casualties in Afghanistan in 2018

UNAMA: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN 2018  
BY RESPONSIBLE PARTYUNAMA: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN 2018  
BY INCIDENT TYPE

Source: UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Annual Report 2018, February 2, 2019, pp. 1-2, 4-5, 46.

sectarian-inspired attacks against Shias.<sup>7</sup> From 2014-18, the IS-K conducted 211 attacks in Afghanistan and killed 1,511 people. Compared to 2015, total deaths and injuries due to IS-K attacks in Afghanistan increased by over four times in 2016, and by over seven times in 2017. From 2014 to 2018 the IS-K was responsible for 56 percent of all suicide attacks in Kabul.<sup>8</sup>

### THE ISLAMIC STATE'S PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN: THE BEGINNING AND EXPANSION

According to *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Islamic Nation Will Pass*,<sup>9</sup> the regions where central power is non-existent or weak, like in Afghanistan, the conditions for "savage chaos" to usher in an Islamic state already prevail or

7. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan, Reconstruction Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress, April 30, 2019, <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2019-04-30qr.pdf>. Accessed on June 15, 2019.

8. Amira Jadoon, "Allied and Lethal: Islamic State Khorasan's Network and Organizational Capacity in Afghanistan and Pakistan", Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point, December, 2018, p. 3.

9. A manual by a *jihadist* identifying himself as Abu Bakr Naji, published on the internet in 2004. It was a playbook for the Islamists to enable the establishment of a new Islamic Caliphate.

shortly will.<sup>10</sup> The Islamic State wanted to establish a beachhead in Afghanistan, taking advantage of the turmoil amongst the regional *jihadi* groups. It figured that if it could recruit a sufficient number of fighters and secure enough funding, it could put into effect its tried and tested military and organisational skills, as it did in Iraq and Syria. It, thus, attempted to recruit veteran and skilled insurgents, thereby giving it a quasi-meritocratic appeal. The IS-K's territorial defeat was, therefore, only a tactical loss but its early and intermittent conflict with the Taliban puts its strategic goals at risk.

Khorasan has historical and religious implications as it is mentioned in a *hadith* of dubious authenticity which foretells a Muslim Army emerging from Khorasan and going on to conquer the Middle East, including Jerusalem.

Some time around 2012, Al-Qaeda decided to form Syrian contingents of Afghan, Pakistani and Central Asian *jihadi* groups with the intent that they to resume their regional *jihads* on their return after their combat exposure. Many of these fighters then started switching allegiance to the IS and its precursors even before it proclaimed its Caliphate. Recruiting fighters who would return to their native *jihadi* movements was just another way to spread the ideology. The Afghan and Pakistani commanders who led the Syrian contingents later got senior positions in the IS-K.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (the Islamic State's precursor), sent a special representative to Afghanistan to recruit fighters for its cause. The IS-K's growth throughout late 2014 and early 2015 was more due to a lack of resistance than to any local support. The Taliban was significantly less strong in Nangarhar than in southern Afghanistan. The Afghan government had almost no presence in most districts along the Spin Ghar mountain range, south and east of Jalalabad. Also, the local tribal authority in this region had almost broken down due to intra-tribal land disputes. Fighters of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Islam and other terrorist groups fled and settled in Nangarhar after the Pakistani military launched

---

10. Robert Manne. "The Mind of the Islamic State", *The Monthly*, June 2016, <https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2016/june/1464703200/robert-manne/mind-islamic-state>. Accessed on July 10, 2019.

11. Giustozzi, n. 6, p. 23.

Operation Zarb-e-Azb in 2014, a counter-terrorism operation, in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

Taliban Emir Mullah Mohammed Omar's death in 2013 (which was kept secret till 2015) led to a level of disunity amongst the Taliban and this led to cadres seeking a group with a stronger central authority like the IS. Also, with the Taliban seeking a political solution, many hardliners became disillusioned with the movement and switched allegiance to more radical factions. The IS-K further provided better financial incentives and work conditions. Taliban disunity also prevented it from mobilising all its resources against the IS-K.

TTP Emir Hakimullah Mehsud's death in 2016 led to fragmentation of the group and this provided an opportunity to the IS-K to attract recruits from it. Mehsud's successor, Mullah Fazlullah, was the first non-Mehsud to lead the TTP. This unlikely appointment caused initial friction which weakened the TTP, forcing many of its cadres to defect to the IS-K.<sup>12</sup>

The IS-K's first *wali* (governor) and former commander of the TTP, Orakzai Hafez Sayed Khan formed and led the first contingent to fight in Syria (initially as part of the Al Nusra). Khan and his associates formed the Tehrik-e-Khilafat Pakistan in July 2014 with the merger of eight anti-Fazlullah TTP groups led by their commanders.

By mid-2014, many Haqqani Network (HQN) and TTP cadres started joining the IS-K, sometimes without the consent of their parent groups. The Peshawar Shura of the Taliban was the first to declare allegiance to the IS. HQN fighters in the IS-K were under Azizullah Haqqani, head of the HQN's Fidayeen Commission till 2016. Six TTP commanders pledged *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) to the IS Caliph Abu Bakr al Baghdadi in October 2014. Abdul Rahim Muslimdost was the first Afghan to pledge allegiance to the IS and was the original leader of the Tehrik-e-Khilafat Khorasan, the first of the officially IS-recognised groups in Afghanistan.

The IS-K emerged in two separate locations in Afghanistan in 2014—eastern Nangarhar province (specifically Mamand valley in Achin district) and Kajaki district of southern Helmand province.

---

12. Zulfiqar Ali, "Dynamics of Militancy after Fazlullah's Surprise Pick", *Dawn*, November 9, 2013, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1055174>. Accessed on July 29, 2019.

Subsequently, the IS declared the establishment of the Wilayat Khorasan (IS-K) on January 26, 2015. The IS-K received a further boost when defecting members of the Ozbekistan Islamiy Harakati (IMU) joined the outfit and helped it establish a presence in northern Afghanistan.

### **IS-K's TERRITORIAL CONTROL**

The IS-K's territorial domination was the highest in spring 2015 (see Fig 2) when it controlled an estimated 511,777 people (1.9 percent of the population) and roughly 2,919 sq. km (less than 1 percent of the territory). Most of this territory was in the southwestern province of Farah and eastern province of Nangarhar, with small pockets in Helmand.<sup>13</sup> Taliban offensives and US military operations pushed the IS-K out of most of these provinces, except those in eastern Afghanistan, by 2018. This was similar to how the ISIL rapidly captured large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria from 2013-15 before gradually losing them to anti-IS forces.

To establish its presence, the IS-K started with two sets of concepts called the "strategic pivots" which were large areas used as command centres and logistics hubs (to enable large-scale attacks), and "ink spots" which were small strongholds (for supporting small underground cells) in defensible positions.<sup>14</sup> Some of the first strategic pivots were in Nangarhar, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Helmand and Zabul provinces (see Fig 2). At its height in 2015, according to the Afghan authorities, the IS-K had around 3,750-4,000 active fighters.<sup>15</sup>

The Afghan government forces had adopted a static and reactionary presence along arterial roads and around district centres. Whether this signalled a deliberate strategy or the absence of one, is not known, but it let the IS-K take root at the village level and establish a logistics route into Pakistan unhindered, facilitating cross-border movement of supplies and personnel. According to Gen John Campbell, former US Forces-Afghanistan commander, the IS-K's goal was to take Jalalabad,

---

13. Seth Jones, James Dobbins, et al., *Rolling Back the Islamic State* (RAND Corp., 2017), [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1900/RR1912/RAND\\_RR1912.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1900/RR1912/RAND_RR1912.pdf). Accessed on July 14, 2019.

14. Giustozzi, n. 6, pp. 50-53.

15. Casey Johnson, *The Rise and Stall of the Islamic State in Afghanistan* (US Institute of Peace Special Report, November 2016), p. 2.

the capital of Nangarhar, expand to Kunar province and eventually establish control over the whole of Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> This was evident by attacks against mostly “soft” targets such as security checkpoints, government installations and polling sites.

This was in line with the Islamic State’s “*blitzkrieg* strategy” seen in Iraq and Syria wherein the IS would mobilise concentrated forces to achieve local superiority in areas of weak governance/resistance. The strategy, it seemed, was to recruit outside the traditional areas of Taliban influence and gradually move northwards from eastern Afghanistan into Central Asia.

However, it should be noted that the IS-K’s tactical successes in Afghanistan have been against remotely deployed Afghan government forces and against local Taliban/tribal militias rather than regular Afghan government forces and hardened Taliban mobile units. US forces failed to carry out multi-frontal simultaneous attacks against the IS-K while the Afghan government forces could not consolidate the gains made in areas where the IS-K was displaced due to difficult terrain and marginal government presence. This gave the IS-K the space to regroup and counter-attack from elsewhere. For instance, the IS-K’s periods of high and low activity in Afghanistan and Pakistan alternate rather than overlap, suggesting coordination and cross-border movement of the IS-K terrorists.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the absence of a regional multilateral counter-terrorism strategy let the IS-K operate across borders without synchronised attempts to restrict it.

In 2017, the IS-K appears to have extended to Kunar province some time after the U.S. military dropped the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb on IS-K targets in Achin district of Nangarhar. A combination of terrain, support networks, and access to both Pakistan and northern Afghanistan made Kunar one of the areas where the IS-K regrouped outside of Nangarhar. After the MOAB air strike, the IS-K membership dropped to 2,000, according to the Afghan National Army chief.<sup>18</sup>

---

16. Michael Gordon, “ISIS Building ‘Little Nests’ in Afghanistan, U.S. Defense Secretary Warns”, *New York Times*, December 18, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/19/world/asia/afghanistan-ash-carter.html>. Accessed on July 18, 2019.

17. Jadoon, n. 8, p. v.

18. Gulabudin Ghubar, “Army Chief Rejects Russia’s Figures On Daesh Fighters”, *Tolo News*, December 25, 2017.

In the long term, the IS-K prepared to use Afghanistan as a safe haven for the senior IS leadership and in 2016, Kunar province was being considered for this very purpose. Kunar comprises mostly forests and mountains, thus, offering protection from US drone strikes and surveillance, and it is difficult for the security forces to hold high altitude outposts there.<sup>19</sup>

Southern Nangarhar, consisting of mountainous terrain, has remained the IS-K's command base, strategically located near Pakistan's Khyber and Orakzai Agencies through which it receives supplies via the Khyber Pass. Khyber Pass is known to be a hub for smuggling and is critical for accessing the weapons black markets. It hugs the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) logistics route into Afghanistan, and also links several other tribal agencies to each other, serving as a north-south route within the region.<sup>20</sup> Nangarhar is also known to have large deposits of talc, chromite, and marble, giving the IS-K some local sources of income. From Nangarhar, the IS-K could also have cut off the Taliban's logistics route into northern Afghanistan. Of all places in which the US military was operating worldwide in 2017-18, the highest number of combat-related deaths of US Service members were in Nangarhar, accounting for one-third of all U.S. casualties.<sup>21</sup>

As per the UN's latest assessment, the IS-K remains "concentrated in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, with no organised or open presence outside eastern Afghanistan".<sup>22</sup> Presently, according to the *Long War Journal*, the IS-K has a presence specifically in Chapa Dara (where it clashed with the Taliban in the summer of 2018 and is contested by the latter) and Wata Pur [where the IS-K has been

---

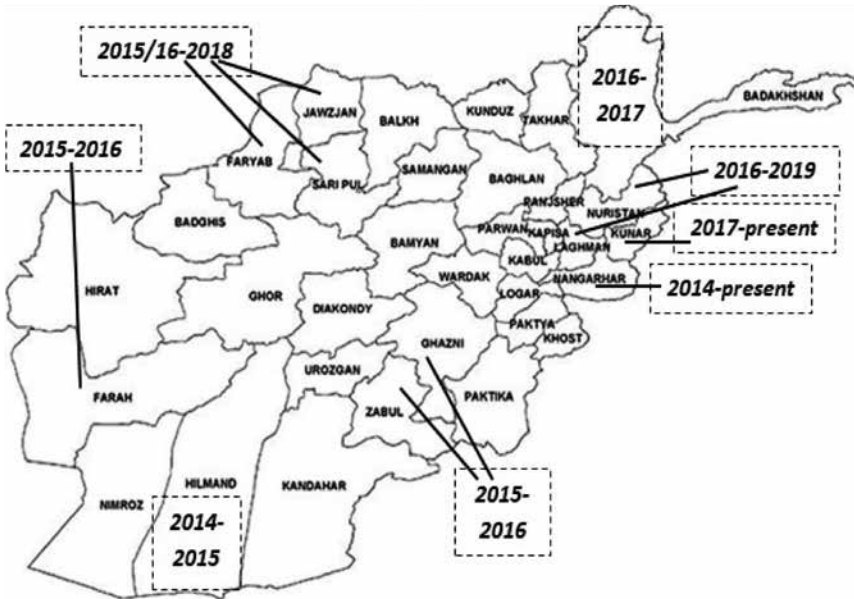
19. Bill Roggio, "Bin Laden Advised Relocation of Some Leaders to Afghanistan due to Drone Strikes in Waziristan", *FDD's Long War Journal (LWJ)*, May 3, 2012, [https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/05/bin\\_laden\\_orders\\_rel.php](https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/05/bin_laden_orders_rel.php). Accessed on July 17, 2019.

20. Zahir Sherazi. "Nine Killed as Military Operation Launched in Khyber", *Dawn*, October 17, 2014, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1138575>. Accessed on July 31, 2019.

21. Chad Garland, "Nangarhar is the Deadliest Afghan Province for US Forces in the Past Year", *Stars and Stripes*, January 8, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/nangarhar-is-the-deadliest-afghan-province-for-us-forces-in-the-past-year-1.505390>. Accessed on July 21, 2019.

22. UNSC, S/2019/570 Twenty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to Resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, July 15, 2019, p. 15.

Fig 2: IS-K Presence in Afghanistan 2014-Present



Source: Google Images (provinces and years/dates denoting IS-K presence marked by the author).

targeted by US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and is contested by the Taliban] districts of Kunar, and La Por, Bati Kot, Khogayani and Shirzad districts of Nangarhar, all of which are contested by the Taliban.<sup>23</sup> However, the IS-K is believed to have cells across Afghanistan and maintains the ability to carry out attacks in urban centres like Kabul (see Figs 2 and 3).

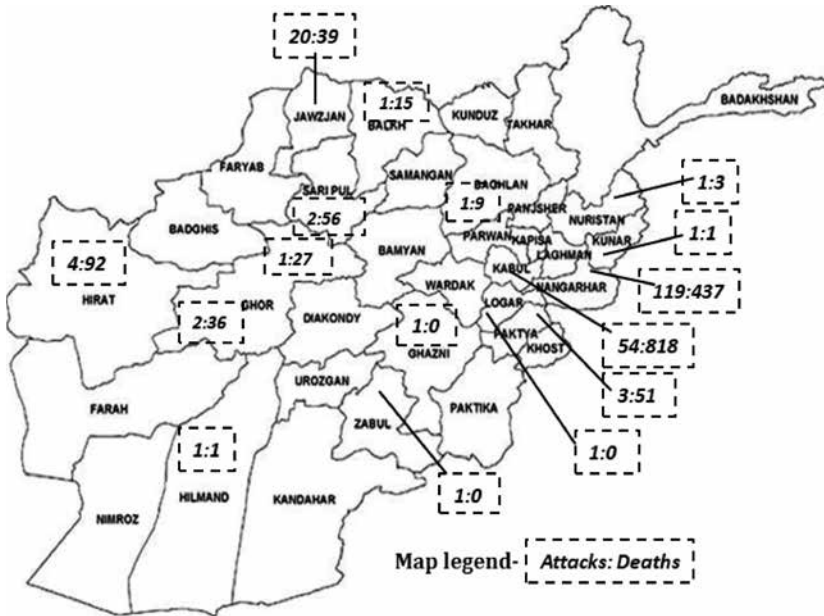
The majority of the IS-K attacks took place in Nangarhar and Kabul, which collectively accounted for 80 percent of all IS-K attacks in Afghanistan between 2015 and 2018 (see Fig 3). Interestingly, although Nangarhar was the location for more than 50 percent of all IS-K attacks, Kabul accounted for 60 percent of all deaths and injuries despite facing 25 percent attacks in comparison. In both provinces, the disproportionately high casualties are underpinned by the IS-K's high use of suicide attacks. Kabul provides the IS-K better opportunities

23. Bill Roggio and Alexandra Gutowski, "Mapping Taliban Control in Afghanistan", *FDD's LWJ*, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/mapping-taliban-control-in-afghanistan>. Accessed on July 31, 2019.



to strike both government and civilian targets. Not only is Kabul the most densely populated region in Afghanistan, it is also close to the IS-K's stronghold in Nangarhar.

Fig 3: IS-K Attacks in Afghanistan 2014-August 2019



Source: Google Images (numbers denoting IS-K attacks marked by the author).

**IS-K ALLIES AND PARTNERS**

In Pakistan and Central Asia, the IS-K faces relatively more stable states than Afghanistan, and does not face a rival like the Taliban. Therefore, the IS-K's strategy in these countries is more into forming alliances and leveraging the capacity of its most deadly groups. The benefits from successful alliances within Pakistan can help advance the IS-K's goals in both countries as it facilitates cross-border activity and propaganda, and leads to recruitment across the region.

**Table 1: IS-K Allies in Afghanistan-Pakistan**

Group Name	Ideological Cooperation	Logistical Cooperation	Operational Cooperation	Quality of Cooperation
	Pledge of Allegiance	Sharing Resources	Joint Attacks	High-End/Low-End
Bajaur Faction (TTP)	✓			High-End (Potential Merger)
Orakzai Faction (TP)	✓			High-End (Potential Merger)
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	✓	✓	✓	High-End (Potential Merger)
Jundullah Faction (TTP)	✓	✓	✓	High-End (Strategic Alliance)
Ansar al-Mujahideen	✓			Low-End
Ansar-ul-Khilafat Wal Jihad	✓	✓		High-End (Strategic Alliance)
Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ)		✓		Low-End
Lashkar-e-Islam		✓	✓	High-End (Strategic Alliance)
Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Al-Alami)		✓	✓	High-End (Strategic Alliance)
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar			✓	Low-End
Balochistan National Army			✓	Low-End

Source: Amira Jadoon, "Allied and Lethal: Islamic State Khorasan's Network and Organizational Capacity in Afghanistan and Pakistan," Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point, December, 2018, p. 45.

The IS-K's Central Asian components consist of the Omar Ghazi Group,<sup>24</sup> Shamali Khilafat<sup>25</sup> and Jamaat Ansarullah<sup>26</sup> and they were instrumental in helping the IS-K establish a presence in Jowzjan province in northern Afghanistan in 2018 till they were pushed out by the Taliban and U.S. forces.

24. An offshoot of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) originally linked to Al-Qaeda and Taliban that also saw action in Syria. Split in February 2015 from IMU to join the IS.

25. Linked to the IMU but consists of a few Syria veterans. Established in 2015.

26. A Tajik terrorist group.

The IS-K has also tagged up with Pakistan-based groups like the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami,<sup>27</sup> and Ansar-ul-Khilafat-wal Jihad<sup>28</sup> and Jundullah-TTP.<sup>29</sup> It also consists of TTP splinter groups from the Orakzai, Khyber, Bajaur, Waziristan, Hangu, Peshawar and Kurram factions that merged and pledged allegiance in 2015. Four groups are identified as having limited cooperation with the IS-K: Ansar al-Mujahideen, Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal Jamaat, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, and Balochistan National Army (BNA)<sup>30</sup> (see Table 1). All of these groups, except the BNA share a vision for a *Sharia*-based society and pan-Islamist goals. Their common targets include their respective governments, minorities, and Shias, and also the Pakistani military has subjected most of these groups to counter-terrorism operations.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) reportedly attempted to negotiate a truce between the Taliban and the IS-K in 2017 but has since stayed neutral.<sup>31</sup> In 2019, two defecting factions of the LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) had joined the IS-K.<sup>32</sup> The HQN, technically a part of the Taliban but semi-autonomous, has adopted a neutral approach to the IS-K despite other Taliban factions vigorously clashing with the IS-K.<sup>33</sup>

- 
27. Founded in 1996 and focussed on targeting the Shias. It originated as a splinter group of the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan and is largely responsible for introducing suicide bombings in sectarian attacks within Pakistan.
  28. One of the first Pakistani groups to pledge allegiance to the IS in 2014, and then to the IS-K in 2015.
  29. Founded in 2003, the group frequently targets Muslim minority sects and other religions, and maintains a presence in Sindh, Balochistan, and FATA. Pledged allegiance to the IS in 2014.
  30. Jadoon, n. 8, p. 45.
  31. UNSC, n. 4, p. 18.
  32. UNSC, S/2018/466 Ninth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2255 (2015) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan, May 30, 2018, p. 17.
  33. Antonio Giustozzi, "Taliban and Islamic State: Enemies or Brothers in Jihad?", Centre for Research and Policy Analysis, December 15, 2017, <https://www.crpaweb.org/single-post/2017/12/15/Enemies-or-Jihad-Brothers-Relations-Between-Taliban-and-Islamic-State>. Accessed on July 26, 2019.

## CONTESTATION BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC STATE AND THE TALIBAN

The Taliban and IS-K have clashed over territorial ambitions, taking away fighters from each other, sectarianism/*takfirism*,<sup>34</sup> propaganda and relations with Pakistan and Iran. The IS-K also attempted to ban production and trade in opium – indulging in vices such as drugs and alcohol is considered sinful according to the Islamic State’s beliefs – one of the Taliban’s main sources of revenue, which not only incensed the Taliban but also Afghans dependent on opium cultivation for income.

Propaganda by the IS-K remains true to the Islamic State’s *takfirism* and calls for attacks on not only other sects such as the Shias but also on other Sunni sects that do not strictly adhere to the Islamic State’s brand of Islam. The Taliban’s adherence to the Hanafi<sup>35</sup> School of jurisprudence of Sunni Islam puts it at odds with the Islamic State’s extreme Salafi *jihadism*. When the IS-K was established, it was with the aim “to impose *Tawhid* [oneness of God] and rout *Shirk* [polytheism]”, a reference to traditional Islam in which Sufi saints are venerated and shrines visited. The Taliban and most Afghans forsake Salafism for less extreme Hanafi ideals.

The Taliban is a nationalist group and generally steers clear of targeting other sects. Further, the Taliban and the HQN are widely believed to be allied to the Pakistani state and, to an extent, Iran, for which they serve as useful instruments of foreign policy, and have a lot to lose by jeopardising this relationship by aligning with the IS-K. The IS-K not only directly threatens the Taliban’s sphere of influence and resources but also the Islamic State’s idea of a global Caliphate directly opposes the Taliban’s quest for an Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. For the Taliban, the priority is increasingly inflicting large casualties on Afghan and NATO forces, and reestablishing its own credibility as the dominant player in Afghanistan.

Under the Taliban, Afghanistan had diplomatic ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates

---

34. From the Arabic *takfir*, verbal noun of *kaffara*, meaning to ‘call someone an apostate’.

35. Broad-minded without being lax, this school appeals to reason (personal judgment) and a quest for the better. It is generally tolerant and the largest movement within Islam. It is known for its liberal religious orientation that elevates belief over practice and is tolerant of differences within Muslim communities.

(UAE), which invalidated the Taliban's authority in the Islamic State's eyes. To the IS, these are not options, but acts of apostasy. Taliban leaders have always been designated as the Amir al Mu'minin (commander of the faithful) and this challenges the authority of the Islamic State's Caliph who also holds the same title.

### **THE ISLAMIC STATE'S SUPPORT STRUCTURE IN AFGHANISTAN**

The IS-K has had to modify the IS template to suit the Afghan *jihadi* landscape by keeping the various disparate groups and their sub-groups together in contrast to the IS-Central's monolithic structure with a top-down hierarchy. The IS-K's main resilience comes from its direct links and resources derived from the IS-Central even before its inception since 2013.

### **LOCAL DRIVERS OF SUPPORT FOR IS-K**

The IS-K garnered support indigenously by exploiting the political, financial and ideological crises and fracturing of other terrorist groups. Many clerics and *madrassa* instructors found the IS-K attractive which indicates a growing radicalisation of the clergy. Most defectors to the IS-K were from the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan-based outfits, mostly Pashtuns. Other support came from Central Asian fighters in Afghanistan who were becoming disillusioned with the Taliban. Certain hardline factions emerged in local outfits that were drawn to, and assimilated with, the IS-K. Some crucial factors included the ongoing Afghan peace talks between the United States and the Taliban, low morale amongst indigenous groups due to lack of funding and progress and also because some terrorist groups were considered to be proxies of Pakistan and not serving the *jihadi* and Afghan interests. The Taliban's increasing ties with Shia-majority Iran further pushed the Salafi elements to join the IS-K.

The IS-K had a sophisticated, focussed and tech-savvy image that attracted many young Afghans, and also its preference for educated and skilled fighters drew recruits who were given good financial incentives. Its Arab background gave it a legitimising effect in the *jihadi* landscape. The IS-K was perceived to have wealthy and powerful donors due to its international appeal in contrast to

the regional groups like the Taliban whose donations had reduced significantly due to the growing affinity with Iran (which incensed the Gulf donors) and because of the increased factionalism. The IS-K, thus, attracted the most mercenary-minded and corrupt elements of the Taliban and other groups. Lower-rung IS-K members joined mostly for the money while those in the upper positions, came in for the ideology. A mix of conscription/recruitment (of local youth), good salary and indoctrination (by local *mullahs*) sustains the IS-K's numbers.

### FINANCING OF IS-K

The IS-K receives extensive financial assistance from donors in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Kuwait. The IS-K's Financial Commission (FC) maintains "offices" (converted rented accommodation) in those countries and its core was based in Dubai till a clampdown by the authorities in 2017. The FC also maintains financial reserves abroad and reportedly had \$30 million in savings in 2015.<sup>36</sup> In 2016, the IS-K received \$160 million from the Gulf donors and \$78 million from the IS-Central as per sources in the IS-K.<sup>37</sup>

From 2015, the IS-K also started taxing areas under its control which included a 10 percent tax on legal economic activities and a 15-20 percent tax on illegal activities. The IS-K was, at the same time, careful not to tax the poor but rather focussed on businesses and the wealthy. As per IS-K sources, total revenue in 2015 was \$300 million out of which only \$35 million (less than 12 percent) was raised through taxes. To avoid confronting other groups that raise taxes in overlapping areas, the IS-K depends primarily on external sources of funding. It has been engaged in drawing income from other sources like mining, drug-trafficking (which it initially banned) and criminal activities (kidnapping, extortion, and smuggling).<sup>38</sup> The IS-K, like the

---

36. Theo Farrell, et al. "Book Review Roundtable: A Look Into the Islamic State-Khorasan", *Texas National Security Review*, August 13, 2019, <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/book-review-roundtable-a-look-into-the-islamic-state-khorasan/>. Accessed on August 16, 2019.

37. Giustozzi, n. 6, p. 170.

38. Financial Action Task Force Report, Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), February, 2015, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/Financing-of-the-terrorist-organisation-ISIL.pdf>. Accessed on August 14, 2019.

IS-Central, draws a significant amount of donations through its online propaganda machinery. The leader of the Central Asian component of the IS-K, Tajik national Sayvaly Shafiev, is reported to be drawing funds through online propaganda in the Tajik language.<sup>39</sup>

The IS-K's FC has some autonomy in deciding the budget from the IS-Central and only certain specific contributions by donors for specific tasks or personnel are overseen by the IS-Central. The IS-K's FC currently operates under the supervision of the IS-Central's special representative to Afghanistan – Abu Yasir al-Afghani – who is supposed to be permanently based in Dubai. The IS-K FC is bound to obey Al-Afghani's recommendations when it comes to allocations of the budget. This is to prevent corruption by not letting commanders use the money at their discretion. Payments to all IS-K component groups are merit-based – prioritising recruitment successes. FTF groups in the IS-K often have to pay more to secure their local hospitality but the FC provides them with what they need to stay loyal.<sup>40</sup>

Also, the various groups in the IS-K are not allowed to save any money and have to spend the entire share of their budget due to challenges in storing cash and to avoid corruption and unilateral activities by component groups. Cash transfers from the FC are not made directly to field commanders but are done via junior financial officers who keep records of all cash transfers and usage. Each IS-K component group has its own FC. The IS-K also assigns budgets province by province, depending on the requirements. Technically, only the FC can collect taxes but, in reality, all the taxes drawn locally are also spent locally. There is an overlap between the budgets of the component groups and provinces: in practice, the provincial budget was to be split among the component groups in the province and the provincial emir was to keep the remaining funds. Once the budget of a component group was decided by the FC, certain restrictions had to be followed. The cash transfer structure was such that the IS-Central transferred the cash to the IS-K FC which then transferred it to provincial emirs, sectoral emirs<sup>41</sup> and various commissions and councils of the component groups.

---

39. UNSC, n. 22, p. 15.

40. Giustozzi, n. 6, pp. 93-98.

41. IS-K has emirs for heading particular departments such as health, security, etc.

Cash was transferred from the Gulf to the IS-K in Afghanistan and Pakistan via *hawala* networks and sometimes via complicit Pakistani businessmen. Transfers were made to large financial centres (major cities) with hundreds of *hawala* traders active to avoid leaving a trail from where smaller transfers were made to smaller locations. The FC also had dedicated staff to invest in Afghan and Pakistani businesses, transport companies in the UAE, etc. to launder the money.<sup>42</sup> With the fall of the IS Caliphate in the Middle East, the IS-K has had to depend more and more on local sources of revenue but this has the added challenge of fighting local groups like the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Islam for access to revenue streams.<sup>43</sup>

### CHALLENGES FOR AFGHANISTAN FROM IS-K

Decades of armed resistance against foreign invaders have militarised Afghan society and with the infusion of *jihadi* ideals, this has increasingly led to the primacy of Islam over tribal affinities. Antonio Giustozzi categorises fighters from such backgrounds as a “military class” of professional insurgents who have extensive combat exposure and *jihadi* knowledge, and organisations like the IS appeal primarily to them. In recent years, violence has been compounded with extensive circulation on social media, thus, in a way, making it a part of daily life. The IS-K’s brand of brutality comprises a lot of violent content to promote itself to the Afghan as well as international audience.

Fighters in different regions throughout Khorasan, with seven different local leaders, renewed their allegiance to Baghdadi in a video posted online in June 2019. Those regions included Afghanistan, Iran, India, Kashmir, and Pakistan. Many of these commanders have been critical of the Taliban becoming part of the mainstream political and diplomatic process and have appealed to Taliban members to stay true to Islam.<sup>44</sup> Hence, there is apprehension that if any peace agreement is signed by the Taliban, it would lead to increased

---

42. Giustozzi, n. 6, p. 170.

43. UNSC, n. 32, pp. 13-14.

44. Thomas Joscelyn. “Fighters Throughout the Khorasan Renew Allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi”, *FDD’s LWJ*, June 30, 2019, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/06/fighters-throughout-the-khorasan-renew-allegiance-to-abu-bakr-al-baghdadi.php>. Accessed on July 31, 2019.



recruitment for the IS-K. Also, sectarian tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia would continue to feed whatever factions of insurgents remain. Antagonism towards Shias is a major reason for the rise of the IS-K and will continue to be so.

The increasing prevalence of religious ideas and practices in Afghanistan inspired by Salafism is significant, particularly because they fuel a growing generational conflict. It is primarily the youth that is drawn to Salafism and the IS, as they are fed these ideas in new (and subsidized) *madrassas* that have sprouted across Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also have access to online propaganda and social media. And the veil of Salafism also allows young Afghans from local communities to challenge the elders who may want to maintain their authority.

The IS-K occupies territory which is bereft of any government presence in Afghanistan and also difficult to sanitise. The Afghan government has failed to effectively address local grievances in those areas – specifically eastern Nangarhar and Kunar. The IS-Central's deployment of experienced war veterans from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan to kick-start an insurgency using local forces is a close replication of how the US military wages unconventional warfare. Therefore, the IS' presence in Afghanistan is not merely a merging of groups adopting the IS brand but rather is a full-fledged IS entity and has had mixed success in implanting the IS model in Afghanistan.

# ANDSF: EVALUATING COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPABILITIES

SWATI SINHA

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since their creation more than 17 years ago, the Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF) have failed to deliver to their capacity in securing Afghanistan. The 18 years of the Afghan conflict have not only turned out to be intense but also increasingly complicated. The Taliban assaults have increased widely; they have become more frequent and a lot deadlier. Specifically, post-2014 withdrawal of the US troops, the Taliban gained vast territorial control, and in a significant push beyond their traditional southern stronghold, expanded into the eastern, northern and western parts of Afghanistan. Additionally, the long span of time has also proven that the United States-led coalition's role – to train, assist and advise in building a capable ANDSF – has not yielded the desired outcome of creating strong, self-reliant Afghan forces. Despite the efforts of training, the ANDSF face challenges from the extremist group.

With the recent breaking off of the peace talks with the Taliban by President Donald Trump – in an attempt to avert the increasingly damaging suicide attacks in the Afghan capital and across the country – it appears that the extremist groups are certain

Ms. **Swati Sinha** is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

to play by their own rules: more violence. With this crisis ahead of the ANDSF, the paper essentially attempts to understand the building, funding and challenges of the Afghan security forces.

### **FORMATION OF AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORCES**

Hamid Karzai, then chairman of the Afghanistan Transitional Administration (ATA), issued a decree on December 2, 2002, for the establishment of the Afghan National Army (ANA) during a meeting with representatives from the United Nations (UN) and the donor countries, at Petersberg in Bonn, Germany. The initial phase of the decree planned to create a multi-ethnic and all-volunteer national army of 70,000.<sup>1</sup> However, the then Afghan Defence Minister, Abdul Rahim Wardak and many experienced Western military leaders were of the view that Afghanistan needed at least 200,000 active troops to defend the country from enemy forces. Additionally, the decree stated that the ANA would comprise soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers, including all air defence forces, civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), student cadets of post-secondary institutions, and other specialised units.

The United States took on the responsibility of building the ANDSF: it saw the project as an effective alternative to the expansion of international security forces to police the war-devastated country. In 150 years of Afghanistan's turbulent history, this was the fourth time that the country was recreating the state military following its total disintegration caused by foreign invasions or civil wars.<sup>2</sup> In the initial stages of the process, the Afghan Interim Government and the United States – as the lead nation – had to decide whether build the new ANA

- 
1. "Rebuilding Afghanistan: Peace and Stability", *Petersberg*, December 2, 2002, <https://www.unric.org/html/german/afghanistan/talks2002/decreed.pdf>. Accessed on August 2, 2019.
  2. In the 1870s, Amir Sher Ali Khan recreated the Afghan Army that had disintegrated during the second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80). In the 1880s, Amir Abdur Rahman had to reestablish the army to unify the fragmented country. The army was remodelled under King Amanullah following the third Anglo-Afghan War (1919), but it met a fatal blow during the civil war of 1929. A new military establishment was created by Mohammad Nadir Shah after his accession in 1929. The Soviet-sponsored reorganisation and modernisation of the Afghan Army began in the 1960s and continued through the Moscow-backed Communist rule. It was totally disintegrated during the civil war of 1992-2001.

from scratch or to build on some of the existing structures. The process was delayed till September 2003, when a mutual decision was reached to commence the process from a “tabula rasa”,<sup>3</sup> which meant building all structures, from the MoD to the ground units, from scratch. This was an opportunity for the US to strengthen the MoD – making it more capable of executing the reforms and less susceptible to corruption and old power struggles.

The US-backed North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) assistance in Afghanistan started with an aim of complete rehabilitation of the Afghans from the conflict and Taliban cruelty. The UN-mandated, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) provided security assistance to the ANDSF from 2003-14. *Inteqal* – the Dari or Pashto translation of “transition” – was the process during which the lead security responsibility for Afghanistan was transferred from the NATO-led ISAF to the ANDSF. The transition period was launched in the 2011 and it got completed by the end of 2014 – when the mission of the ISAF came to an end.<sup>4</sup> The target for the accomplishment of the transition was set out in 2010 NATO Summit held at Lisbon.<sup>5</sup> The confirmation of transition was achieved at the 2012 NATO Summit held at Chicago where it was decided that NATO would hand over the security responsibilities to the ANDSF by the end of December 2014. There were five phases of the transition, as shown in Table 1:

- 
3. Obaid Younossi, Peterl Dahl Thruelsen, Jonathan Vaccaro, Jerry M. Sollinger and Brian Gady, “The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army”, RAND National Defence Research Institute, 2009, p. 13.
  4. “Afghanistan: Timetable for Security Transition”, July 9, 2012. “Inteqal: Transition to Afghan Lead”, NATO Library, January 7, 2015, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_87183.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_87183.htm). Accessed on August 3, 2019.
  5. The Lisbon Summit Declaration subsequently identified the ISAF mission in Afghanistan as “the Alliance’s key priority” and confirmed that a new phase in the Afghan mission would now begin, with the process of transition to Afghan security responsibility starting in early 2011 in certain districts and provinces “following a joint Afghan and NATO/ISAF assessment and decision”. The transition would be conditions-based, “not calendar-driven” and “will not equate to withdrawal of ISAF troops” which will remain in a supporting role, but would result in the Afghan forces gradually assuming full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The declaration did not, however, pinpoint which districts and provinces would be the first to transition. See: “Afghanistan: Timetable for Security Transition”, July 9, 2012, p. 5.

**Table 1: Transition Phases**

<b>Transition Tranches</b>	<b>Date of Announcements</b>	<b>Provinces and Cities</b>
Tranche 1	March 22, 2011	Bamyan, Panjshir, Kabul, Herat City, Lashkar Gah, Mazar-e-Sharif, Mehtar Lam
Tranche 2	November 27, 2011	Balkh, Daykundi, Takhar, Samangan, Nimroz and remaining areas of Kabul, Ghor, Jowzjan, Badakshan, Ghazni, Wardak and Badghis
Tranche 3	May 13, 2012	All the provincial capitals of Afghanistan. Tranche 3 includes all the administrative units of Uruzgan, Kapisa and Parwan—Farah, Helmand, Kandahar, Paktika, Uruzgan, Zabol, Ghazni, Khost, Paktiya, Badghis, Faryab, Kunduz, Logar, Parwan, Kunar, Nuristan, Baghlan, Badakshan
Tranche 4	December 31, 2012	Faryab, Ghor, Ghazni, Badakshan, Nuristan
Tranche 5	June 18, 2013	Kandahar, Paktika, Paktiya, Khost, Nangarhar, Kunar

Source: Prepared by the author, based on the information available on NATO website. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_87183.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_87183.htm)

President Karzai, having won a second presidential term in 2009, expressed his aspiration to see the Afghan National Security Forces take on the security related responsibility across Afghanistan before the end of 2014. At the Kabul Conference held on July 11, 2010,<sup>6</sup> the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board (JANIB) was created as the component to evaluate the districts and provinces for the transition. A formal function in Kabul denoted the end of the ISAF's mission, leaving full duty regarding security across the Afghan nation with the 350,000 in number Afghan forces.<sup>7</sup> Since January 1, 2015, the NATO-driven mission in Afghanistan of 17,000 troops, known as the "Resolute

6. "Kabul Conference Communique", July 20, 2010, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/afghanistan/Kabul\\_Conference/FINAL\\_Kabul\\_Conference\\_Communique.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/afghanistan/Kabul_Conference/FINAL_Kabul_Conference_Communique.pdf).

"Welcoming Afghanistan Government's Renewed Commitment to Ensuring Stability, Peace, General Assembly Encourages All Partners to Back Afghan-Led Kabul Process", UN Press Releases, November 4, 2010, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/ga11019.doc.htm>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

7. "NSC Takes Responsibility for Security Transition", *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, December 31, 2013, [http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national\\_detail.php?post\\_id=8987](http://www.outlookafghanistan.net/national_detail.php?post_id=8987). Accessed on August 10, 2019.

Support Mission” (RSM), has concentrated on training, advising, and assisting the Afghan security forces. Similarly, combat operations by US forces also seem to have expanded and increased in number since 2017. These two “correlative missions” comprise Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS).<sup>8</sup> The United States continues to consult with NATO allies and operational partners about RSM necessities and any follow-up on NATO-driven efforts to guarantee that the US and NATO missions are mutually supportive and united. RSM force-contributing countries have upheld the South Asia Strategy, and respected the increment in U.S. forces and the transition to a conditions-based methodology.

### **AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES: UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDING**

Funding of the ANDSF is a complex process and a number of agencies are involved in it. The aggregate sum required to support the current ANDSF stands at \$6 billion every year. In the past 18 years, since the ousting of the Taliban in Afghanistan, billions of dollars have been spent on rebuilding the war-torn country. Afghanistan’s security forces receive financial support from the NATO-run ANA Trust Fund (NATF).<sup>9</sup> The other source of funding is the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) – which is backed by the UN Development Programme.<sup>10</sup> It is used for paying salaries to the ANP, corrections personnel, and for building the capacity of the MoI. The US Congress appropriated the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) for the US Army to equip, train and sustain the ANDSF.

The buying and obtaining of major end items, i.e. weapons, ammunition, and communication equipment is done through the local contracting office, or through fund assistance executed by the Department of State (DoS) or the United Nations. The acquisition of funds for the ANA and ANP is set out in the Budget Activity Group (BAG) and Sub-Budget Activity Group (SAG), e.g. for providing

8. “Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Quarterly Report to Congress, July 1 to September 30, 2018”, Lead Inspector for Overseas Contingency Operations, November 19, 2018.

9. “NATO allies and partners reaffirm their commitment to the financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces and the importance of strong security forces to peace in Afghanistan”, NATO, June 4, 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_166573.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_166573.htm). Accessed on August 12, 2019.

10. Clayton Thomas, “Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief”, Congressional Research Service, May 1, 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45122.pdf>. Accessed on August 12, 2019.

training and equipment. A similar locally controlled database for the same is managed in Afghanistan. The availability of funds is further confirmed by reviewing the current funds status as a Memorandum of Request (MoR) that is submitted for the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A).

Despite an undeniable amount of money being spent on the development of the ANDSF, the question about their capability persists. This further brings out the negative side of the ANDSF – wherein the military equipment is provided without verifying the actual needs of the Afghan military.<sup>11</sup> A number of donor conferences are held every year in which the donor countries extend their support and development vows, however, in reality, less than 50 percent of the aid money is disbursed to the Afghan government. It is a fact that the Afghans are dependent on foreign funding, but, at the same time, it is thought provoking, because it is not understood how the ANDSF will sustain themselves after the plug of foreign aid is pulled out.

### **AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES: CHALLENGES**

The attacks against military installations have been relentless, and on several occasions, the ANDSF have been out-gunned and out-maneuvred. There is no denying the fact that the state of affairs in Afghanistan is challenging due to the deteriorating security situation. The year 2018 began with even more increase in violence inflicted by the Taliban, who now control 70 percent of the Afghan territory.<sup>12</sup> The peace momentum was augmented in Afghanistan throughout 2018 till August 2019, beginning with the Kabul Process,<sup>13</sup> Eid ceasefire<sup>14</sup> and peace postulates<sup>15</sup> demonstrated by all sections of the Afghan society

---

11. Ejaz Ahmed, "The Politics of Aid in Afghanistan", Observer Research Foundation, July 2, 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-politics-of-aid-in-afghanistan-52668/>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

12. Shoaib Sharifi and Louise Adamou, "Taliban Threaten 70% of Afghanistan, BBC Finds", BBC News, January 31, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42863116>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

13. Hekmat Khalil Karzai, "An Unprecedented Peace Offer to the Taliban", *New York Times*, March 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/11/opinion/peace-taliban.html>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

14. Timothy Jones and Masood Saifullah, "Afghanistan: Ghani Announces Ceasefire with Taliban for Eid-al-Fitr", DW, June 7, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-ghani-announces-ceasefire-with-taliban-for-eid-al-fitr/a-44106896>. Accessed on August 20, 2019.

15. "Helmand Peace Convoy Arrives in Kabul", Tolo News, June 18, 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/helmand-peace-convoy-arrives-kabul> Accessed on August 22, 2019.

and the nine rounds of US-Taliban peace talks. At the same time, amid high-level diplomatic efforts towards the Afghan peace process, violence perpetrated by the Taliban and Daesh in the Afghan provinces of Helmand, Ghazni, Badghis and Kunduz reached its peak, with a rise in the death toll of the Afghan security forces.<sup>16</sup> Under the constant threat of bullets and violence, the parliamentary election was conducted in October last year. Ahead of the Afghan presidential elections, scheduled for September 28, 2019, President Donald Trump's calling off the year-long peace process with the Taliban indisputably leaves the Afghans exposed to more violence. As such, the difficulties before the ANDSF are tremendous in extent and varied in nature. Some of the innate challenges before the ANDSF are as follows.

- **Security Situation post-2014:** Building of Afghanistan's domestic security forces to guard the country's security was a critical element of former U.S. President Barack Obama's Afghan strategy<sup>17</sup> as a pre-condition for the departure of US troops from Afghanistan. The NATO-ISAF withdrawal likely left a security deficit in Afghanistan and added to the regional instability. Since the drawdown of the coalition forces from Afghanistan in late 2014, the brunt was borne by the ANDSF who shouldered the responsibility for the security in their country. Under the umbrella of the ANDSF, the casualty rates increased and violence rose to a considerable extent, with 2015 witnessing massive belligerence across Afghanistan. The reasons attached to the incapability of the ANDSF were that the troops were inexperienced, lacked adequate training and equipment, were badly led and lacked the motivation necessary to sustain complex counter-insurgency operations for a longer duration.<sup>18</sup> One of the harshest realities which presented itself with the NATO-ISAF troops' withdrawal from the Afghan battlefield

16. Bill Roggio, "Taliban's 2018 Offensive Encompasses all Regions of Afghanistan", *FDD's Long War Journal*, May 17, 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/05/talibans-2018-offensive-encompasses-all-regions-of-afghanistan.php>. Accessed on August 22, 2019.

17. Ashley J. Tellis and Jeff Eggers, "U.S. Policy in Afghanistan: Changing Strategies and Preserving Gains", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 22, 2017, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/22/u.s.-policy-in-afghanistan-changing-strategies-preserving-gains-pub-70027>. Accessed on August 22, 2019.

18. Gurmeet Kanwal, "Post-2014 Instability in Afghanistan: Impact and Role of Regional Players", *Scholar Warrior*, Spring 2014, [http://www.claws.in/images/journals\\_doc/594868544\\_GurmeetKanwal.pdf](http://www.claws.in/images/journals_doc/594868544_GurmeetKanwal.pdf). Accessed on September 10, 2019.



was that there was an increase in the Taliban groups who were openly active in nearly three quarters of Afghanistan and who began targeting the ANDSF checkpoints and villages. As a result, maintaining security in post-2014 Afghanistan was, and continues to be, the biggest issue. While, on the one hand, there was difficulty in continuing the training of the ANDSF, on the other, there was a surge in insurgent attacks on the training camps. For this, the country faced the challenge of taking extra security measures. During the first quarter of 2018, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented 2,258 civilian casualties in Afghanistan (which is close to the losses in the previous year).<sup>19</sup> In the beginning of the third quarter of 2018, the Taliban resumed attacks soon after the Eid ceasefire ended. The coalition forces have been taking positive steps to train, assist and advise in the development of an enduring Afghan National Army (ANA).<sup>20</sup> In the first quarter of 2019, the UNAMA documented 3,182 civilian casualties (1,366 killed and 2,446 wounded).<sup>21</sup> It represented a 27 percent reduction in the overall civilian casualties as compared to the 2018 report which reported 10,993 civilian casualties (3,804 deaths and 7,189 injured).<sup>22</sup>

- **Taliban’s Position on the Afghan Government:** During the second round of the Kabul Process in February 2018, President Ashraf Ghani had offered the Taliban unprecedented rounds of talks – a move towards bringing peace in Afghanistan – that was refused by the Taliban. The reason behind the Taliban’s refusal was their position on the Afghan government, which they

---

19. “Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in the Armed Conflict: 1 January to 31 March 2018”, UNAMA Human Rights Service, April 12, 2018, [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_first\\_quarter\\_2018\\_report\\_11\\_april\\_0.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_protection_of_civilians_first_quarter_2018_report_11_april_0.pdf). Accessed on September 10, 2019.

20. “Train, Advise and Assist Command-West Develops Innovative Training Cycle”, NATO Resolute Support Afghanistan, September 1, 2018, <https://rs.nato.int/news-center/press-releases/2018-press-releases/train--advise-and-assist-commandwest-develops-innovative-training-cycle.aspx>. Accessed on September 12, 2019.

21. “UN Urges Parties to Heed Call from Afghans: Zero Civilian Casualties”, UNAMA, July 30, 2019, <https://unama.unmissions.org/un-urges-parties-heed-call-afghans-zero-civilian-casualties>. Accessed on September 12, 2019.

22. “Civilian Deaths from Afghan Conflict in 2018 at Highest Recorded Level – UN Report”, UNAMA, February 24, 2019, <https://unama.unmissions.org/civilian-deaths-afghan-conflict-2018-highest-recorded-level-%E2%80%93-un-report>. Accessed on August 4, 2019.

consider to be illegitimate and a “puppet regime”.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the Taliban still view themselves as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, formally called the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The insurgent groups are staunch in their approach: they want to liberate Afghanistan from US occupation as it was the US that overthrew the Taliban in 2001. These are the reasons why the Taliban wanted to negotiate directly with the United States, particularly about the troops’ withdrawal. The accumulation of these instances led the American diplomats to begin talks with the Taliban representatives since October 2018. The talks recently got called off by President Trump on account of the Taliban-led suicide bombings in Kabul. Surprisingly, despite nine rounds of negotiations between the US and the Taliban, the Taliban did not initiate intra-Afghan talks with the Afghan government. This reiterates the Taliban’s position on the government in Kabul: a puppet regime with no real power, and in their view, negotiations with the Afghan government would grant it legitimacy.<sup>24</sup>

- **Ethnic Divide and the ANDSF:** The fragmented nature of Afghanistan’s military undermines its ability to operate freely, and, consequently, serves dissimilar interests.<sup>25</sup> Issues of political and ethnic factionalism surround the leadership of the MoD. The endeavours of the Afghan government to construct suitable and powerful modern armed forces have been hampered by the low dimension of the mix of ethnic groups hailing from different regions of the country. Ethnic factionalism continues to be among the many prominent challenges that Afghanistan faces, resulting in little solidarity among most of the Afghan populace. The feeling of ethnic division is not just limited to the general Afghan populace but is found even among the intellectual elite.<sup>26</sup>

23. Hizbullah Khan, “Why Won’t the Taliban Talk to the Afghan Government?”, *Gandhara*, April 1, 2019, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/why-won-t-the-taliban-talk-to-the-afghan-government-/29854935.html>. Accessed on August 4, 2019.

24. Ali Akbar, “Afghan Taliban will Regard Pakistan as Brother When in Power, Seek Ties Based on Mutual Respect”, *Dawn*, February 10, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1462785/afghan-taliban-will-regard-pakistan-as-brother-when-in-power-seek-ties-based-on-mutual-respect>. Accessed on August 4, 2019.

25. “A Force in Fragments: Reconstituting the Afghan National Army”, International Crisis Group, May 12, 2010, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan/force-fragments-reconstituting-afghan-national-army>. Accessed on August 24, 2019.

26. Antonio Giustozzi, “Re-building the Afghan Army”, *LSE Research Online*, June 2010, at [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28363/1/giustozzi\\_LSERO\\_version.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28363/1/giustozzi_LSERO_version.pdf). Accessed on August 24, 2019.

In an ethnically blended unit of military troopers, no less than three unique dialects would be spoken, with each having distinctive social foundations, ranging from the inborn code of the Pashtuns to the Tajik, Hazara or Uzbek ethos. Since the troops have unwavering loyalty to their valley or village, if not to their clan, the administration takes advantage of this situation. In order to build solidarity, the leadership of Afghanistan follows the principle of posting troops far away from their home districts. This practice, in turn, has hindered the development of the Afghan military, furthering the already prevalent fragmentation within it. As such the ethnic tension has risen to higher levels, giving opportunities to adversaries to take advantage of such strife.

- **Corruption:** In spite of endeavours to develop an effective police force, the ANP is plagued by corruption at each level. The ANP is responsible for looking after law, order and security in Afghanistan, at both area and town levels, which means it is directly concerned with the insurgent groups. The ANP is accountable for the counter-insurgency effort; however, it seems to be failing in its central goal due to a serious lack of resources and insufficient training. There are areas where the ANP is more focussed on taking bribes and facilitating smuggling, consequently, becoming an ineffectual and even harmful appendage to the counter-insurgency efforts. Corruption appears to have among an endemic issue all through Afghanistan, influencing every aspect of society, incorporating the relations among the populace, government foundations, global military powers, private security firms, non-governmental associations and aid agencies.<sup>27</sup> This, in turn, has created more problems.
- **Logistics Issue:** The withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014 was the onset of a massive logistical challenge that the ANDSF had to confront. For nearly two decades, the United States and its alliance partners have been attempting to help the administration in Kabul to organise, train, equip and sustain the ANDSF, comprising the Afghan National Army, Afghan Air Force, Afghan National Police, local police and intelligence service. Skilled and supportable ANDSF are essential for the

---

27. "Corruption in the Afghan National Police", Program for Culture & Conflict Studies, [https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/ANP\\_Corruption\\_Appendix.pdf/1039b0e6-3ce7-4a1d-8077-b8195c427721](https://www.nps.edu/documents/105988371/107571254/ANP_Corruption_Appendix.pdf/1039b0e6-3ce7-4a1d-8077-b8195c427721). Accessed on August 30, 2019.

US' strategy in the long run towards transitioning security responsibilities to the Afghan government. It has been demonstrated through the experience of the US and coalition partners' training that it is possible to create ANDSF units that are strategically capable, ready to fight in the battlefield and bring about stability.<sup>28</sup> However, the drawback for the ANDSF rests largely in logistics. The reasons for this drawback are: an uneducated workforce; recruitment of cadres without appropriate training; and absence of infrastructure.

- **Equipment:** Afghanistan has not gained any new tanks in decades, and in the years that followed the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, international donor countries provided the ANDSF merely with light armoured vehicles.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the Afghan ground forces have struggled to beat back a resurgent Taliban. Presently, the ANDSF training has concentrated on aerial offensives to oust the insurgents. For the same reason, NATO has been focussed on increasing the Afghan Air Force's assets and improving the special operations command to boost the combat force of the ANDSF. Although modernisation of the Afghan Air Force is proceeding, the difficulties remain in its maintenance. The roadmap of the ANDSF intends to improve its capability; however, it is dependent on continued international support.<sup>30</sup> There is a lack of attention on the Afghan Army's military assets which further suggests that the old tanks are only a part of the army's heritage, not its future.

## CONCLUSION

The future of the ANDSF remains uncertain. Despite undergoing the process of recreating the Afghan forces, the major players are aware of the prevailing challenges. Presently, therefore, the ANDSF are inadequate to meet the challenges they face. Without the help of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS), the ANDSF will find it difficult to take complete responsibility

---

28. Daniel Goure, "The Key to Success in Afghanistan is Logistics", *Real Clear Defense*, February 23, 2018, [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/23/the\\_key\\_to\\_success\\_in\\_afghanistan\\_is\\_logistics\\_113099.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/23/the_key_to_success_in_afghanistan_is_logistics_113099.html). Accessed on August 30, 2019.

29. Chad Garland, "Afghanistan's Tank Battalion is Melting Away", *Stars and Stripes*, August 17, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/news/afghanistan-s-tank-battalion-is-melting-away-1.543030>. Accessed on August 30, 2019.

30. *Military Balance*, 2019.

for the security of the country; presently, they lack the strength needed to stand on their own.

In spite of the tremendous amount of money spent on security and the objectives of partial withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the country is facing security challenges. If the Taliban's ability to gain popular support is not curtailed and ultimately reversed, the Government of Afghanistan will reach a tipping point and is likely to collapse. Additionally, the assaults by the Taliban have expanded; there is no control over corruption; and the government has proved incapable of managing the financial aid.

Some developments have been made in terms of infrastructure, democratic dividend and women's rights/freedom. Roads have been repaired and restored and there has been noticeable reconstruction, but all this may not be enough, because, what is being described as advancement may be just buying time, under the least favourable conditions: such reconstruction is of no use when extremism still exists. The way the insurgent groups have expanded and are carrying out attacks, despite the peace negotiations, reveals the inefficiency of the ANDSF.

True, in the effort of building up the ANDSF, the US has prevented another large-scale attack against its homeland, nonetheless, the presence of more than 20 terrorist or extremist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan – including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Khorasan (ISIS-K) – cannot be ignored.<sup>31</sup> In the case of the ANDSF, despite attempting offensive strikes, they are not producing the desired results. The intelligence capacity of the ANDSF still requires critical improvement. The ANDSF are facing significant challenges and will require support and assistance for some more time to be able to deal with the Taliban. However, how the situation in Afghanistan shapes up remains uncertain, with the presidential elections coming up and also the US-Taliban deal being suspended.

---

31. This information was revealed in the 24th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team that was submitted to the UN Security Council Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee in July 2019.

# NUCLEAR TERRORISM: THE CURRENT SCENARIO

SREOSHI SINHA

## INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is defined as *“an act of violence that targets civilians for the purpose of political subversion of the state to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act. A principal characteristic of terrorism, distinguishing it from many other forms of violence, is its ability to strike directly at perceptions of personal security.”*<sup>1</sup> Terrorism is a “complex phenomenon imbued with political, social, economic and psychological factors. The emergence of terrorism as a weapon of proxy war between hostile nations has further added to this complexity. Terrorism, thus, is not only a threat to state security, but has become a primary source of ‘human insecurity.’”

This dimension was aptly explained by Michael Humphrey and Andrew Davidson when they wrote, “Terrorism is taken seriously not just because of what it represents, but also because of what it brings about. Directly, terrorism is a threat to core human rights like the right to life, the right to personal liberty and security, the right to humane treatment, the right to due process and to a fair trial,

---

Ms. **Sreoshi Sinha** is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

1. Ian O’Lesser, “Countering the New Terrorism: Implications for Strategy,” in Ian O’Lesser et al., *Countering the New Terrorism* (RAND Corporation, 1999).

the right to freedom of expression, and the judicial protection and its correspondent obligation to respect and ensure all human rights without discrimination.”<sup>2</sup> It is also important to note that for the fullest realisation of the right to life, which is the fundamental of all human rights, it is important to have the right to live peacefully in a healthy environment, because a healthy environment is a precondition to the right to live. Apart from that, terrorism also “threatens norms, rules and institutions largely because it dents the rule of law, human rights, democratic procedures for settling political disputes and the laws of war, also known as the International Humanitarian Law”. In the post-Cold War era, terrorism featured at the top in the list of new threats to human security.

Post 9/11, the threat of terrorism gained a new prominence and attention. This was so “not only because of the increased ruthlessness of the attacks, but also due to their lethality and unpredictability. A growing percentage of terrorist attacks are designed to kill as many people as possible.”<sup>3</sup> Terrorists today aim at higher rates of casualty that reflects their changing motivation. The changing nature of terrorism is evident in the new kinds of threats that can emerge even from “isolated conspiracies or obscure cults with no previous history of violence”. Though conventional weapons and explosives have so far remained the weapons of choice for perpetration of violence for most of the terrorist organisations, the new terrorists have taken recourse to more scientifically and technologically modified weapons. Such weapons can cause immense destruction to lives and property and are comparatively easy to acquire and use. The possibility of weapons of mass destruction reaching terrorist groups has been a cause of concern for many decades. In 1998, Osama bin Laden, in a speech entitled “Nuclear Bomb of Islam” stated, “It is the duty of Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorize the enemies of God.” Therefore, improving security for nuclear weapons and weapons-usable nuclear materials has been the focus of attention. Though in the last few years, states have considerably improved security for nuclear radiological materials, yet, the capabilities of

---

2. Michael Humphrey and Andrew Davidson, *Political Violence and Terrorism: Social Analysis* (47, 2003, 10.3167/015597703782353104), pp. 152-169.

3. *Ibid.*

some terror organisations, particularly the Islamic State (IS), have grown dramatically, suggesting that the danger of nuclear terrorism may be greater than it was a few years ago.

In this regard, this paper analyses the dangers of nuclear terrorism by outlining the evolution of the threat of nuclear terrorism both regionally and globally. It also attempts to describe the concept of nuclear terrorism with a focus on the threat perceptions and the impacts on nuclear safety and security. Finally, it focusses on the policies relevant to guarantee nuclear security and enhance regional cooperation.

### THE CONCEPT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM

The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005) defines nuclear terrorism as *“the intentional possession or use of radioactive material or a nuclear device, or causing damage to a nuclear facility and releasing radioactive material in order to cause death or serious bodily injury or to cause substantial damage to property or to the environment”*. However, an exemption has been granted here from this definition by this convention towards the use of nuclear weapons in armed conflict between states.

Nuclear terrorism involves *“the actual or potential use of nuclear materials to generate fear in the pursuit of political ends”*. Nuclear terrorist incidents may include the *“acquisition of use or threatened use of, or attack on, nuclear materials or facilities, as well as the resort to false threats or hoaxes that, to the extent they are convincing, would have the same effect.”*<sup>4</sup> The materials that could undoubtedly be used include *“manufactured or stolen nuclear weapons (not necessarily of a sophisticated variety), and fissile materials such as HEU and plutonium”*. Another classification of nuclear terrorism is radiological terrorism, which involves the use of radioactive materials, perhaps in conjunction with regular explosives, to disperse radioactivity only to contaminate the environment.

The actual physical damage may range from the non-existent to the horrific, but the common effect will be to create terror in the minds of the public, which is the desired end-state for the terrorist. It

---

4. M. Rajesh Basrur and Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *“Nuclear Terrorism and South Asia”*. *Occasional Paper*, 2003, Sandia National Laboratories.



is important to understand the types of nuclear weapons in brief, in order to understand what nuclear terrorism might involve. Broadly, a nuclear weapon is “an explosive device whose destructive force results from either nuclear fission chain reactions or combined nuclear fission and fusion reactions.” This further persuades that nuclear weapons whose “explosive force results exclusively from fission reactions are commonly referred to as *Atomic Bombs*, while those that derive much or most of their energy in nuclear fusion reactions are termed *Thermonuclear Weapons*”.<sup>5</sup>

However, till date no terrorist organisation is known to have developed, attained or deployed nuclear weapons. Hence, the seriousness of the danger remains disputable. Predominant assumptions about nuclear terrorism are that it is difficult to execute as it would require significant skill and ability, besides access to the relevant resources. Hence, this reinforces the perceptions that while ‘biological, chemical and radiological terrorism is likely, nuclear terrorism is improbable’. A few researchers<sup>6</sup> have rejected the probability of nuclear terrorism on the grounds of technical hurdles, internal factors such as geography and politics, and have ridiculed it as “an overrated nightmare”.<sup>7</sup> The terrorists of today, in order to achieve their ends, take recourse to inflicting the maximum amount of destruction in terms of human lives and the environment, hence, the possibility of a crude nuclear bomb being built by a group of sophisticated terrorists may not be ruled out. There have been reported cases, where tons of plutonium and Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) have been stolen.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the amount of nuclear material needed for making a nuclear bomb (a ‘dirty bomb’) is small and often difficult to detect, hence, it is a major challenge to stop nuclear smuggling, or to recover such material after it has been stolen.

- 
5. “Atomic Power for War and Peace”, *Popular Mechanics*, October 1945.
  6. Bernard Anet, Ernst Schmid and Christoph Wirz, “Nuclear Terrorism: A Threat to Switzerland?” Spiez Laboratory, Defence Procurement Agency, [http://www.vbs.admin.ch/acls/e/current/fact\\_sheet/nuklearterrorismus/pronto](http://www.vbs.admin.ch/acls/e/current/fact_sheet/nuklearterrorismus/pronto). Accessed on October 30, 2003.
  7. Karl-Heinz Kamp, “An Overrated Nightmare”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 52(4), July/August 1996.
  8. Reshmi Kazi, *Nuclear Terrorism: The New Terror of the 21st Century*, Monograph (New Delhi: IDSA, 2013).

## ACTS OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM

Nuclear weapons and weapons-usable nuclear materials can be procured by terrorists in different ways and through different media. This can be through acquisition and development of nuclear weapons and components where the terrorists might steal or forcefully acquire nuclear weapons. But irrespective of the weapons being strategic or tactical, in view of the built-in safeguards, they will not be able to use such weapons. Sophisticated weapons are less exposed to risks in comparison to the conventional ones because of the protective devices such as the Permissive Action Links (PALs) that render it difficult to use them.

Apart from this, terrorists might also obtain sensitive nuclear materials for radiological terrorism. Such materials are mostly useful in the civilian sphere and not for military purposes and can be available from local hospitals, medical research institutions, laboratories and pharmaceutical companies. These materials, which are often referred to as radioisotopes, include cobalt-60 (external radiation therapy), iodine-131, iridium-192 (both for internal therapy), and technetium-99 (for imaging).<sup>9</sup> Hence, such materials mostly remain under “deficient security.” The extent of the problem is hard to estimate, but it is known that even in countries where security regulations are tight, considerable leakage occurs. For instance, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in 2018, had helped in removing “27 unused highly radioactive sources from five South American countries in a significant step forward for nuclear safety and security in the region. It was the largest such project ever facilitated by the IAEA.”<sup>10</sup>

Nuclear power plants are subject to other potential threats. States should define nuclear security requirements for nuclear or other radioactive material and associated facilities based on a threat assessment or a Design Basis Threat (DBT), which anticipates direct attacks from the ground, air, and possibly water.<sup>11</sup> But yet, some contemporary DBTs do not take into account some worst-case scenarios that are difficult to ignore after the events of 9/11.

---

9. International Atomic Energy Agency, *Feasibility of Producing Molybdenum-99 on a Small-Scale Using Fission of Low Enriched Uranium or Neutron Activation of Natural Molybdenum*, Technical Reports Series No. 478, IAEA, Vienna (2015).

10. *Ibid.*

11. Project on Government Oversight, 2001.

The destruction of the World Trade Centre brought particular attention to the potential effects of a large passenger plane crashing into a nuclear reactor. Aircraft engines, the most rigid parts, could possibly penetrate the containment structure and cause a major fire or explosion, releasing radioactivity on a massive scale. Some nuclear power plants may be inadequately equipped to counter sophisticated armed attacks. However, to prevent such incidents from taking place, the relevant measures have been taken over the years. For instance, the introduction of no-fly zones, which are such prohibited zones in the sky through which aircraft are not permitted to fly. Apart from that, double wall containment structures have also been designed to prevent the reactors getting damaged by any external forces and also “provide radiation shielding in operational states and accident conditions”.<sup>12</sup>

#### **NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMITS AND NUCLEAR TERRORISM**

The commencement of the Nuclear Security Summit took place through the April 2009 speech whereby the then US President Barack Obama affirmed to hold a global nuclear security summit from 2010 as part of an initiative to “secure all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world within four years”. Four summits were to be held in total, the first in Washington, D.C. in 2010, and then in Seoul, South Korea, in 2012, the next in the Hague, Netherlands, in 2014 and, finally, in Washington, D.C., again in 2016. These summits were held with a broad aim to address the threat of nuclear terrorism by “minimizing and securing weapons-usable civilian nuclear materials, enhancing international cooperation to prevent the illicit acquisition of nuclear materials by non-state actors such as terrorist groups and smugglers, and taking steps to strengthen the global nuclear security system”. The summit mainly focussed on the nuclear weapons-usable materials in the civil sphere and not the ones in the military sphere. Each summit created an agreement that reaffirmed the bigger objectives of the summit and urged states to take actions, like ratification of key treaties or limiting nuclear reserves of weapons-usable materials. These suggestions were upgraded by states’ specific commitments at each summit. The last summit that was held in 2016 saw the closure

---

12. International Atomic Energy Agency, n. 9.

statement given by the then US President Barack Obama, focussing on the “high-level initiative to reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism and secure weapons-usable nuclear materials”. The four semi-annual summits from 2010-16 were successful in bringing about a high level of political attention towards the threats posed by the vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials around the globe and reinforcing the worldwide nuclear security system. Though these summits have fetched tangible results in nuclear security, the question that remains is whether the summits alone can prevent nuclear terrorism or not<sup>13</sup>. What else needs to be done to tackle the threat of nuclear terrorism in the future is briefly explained below.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE?**

According to William Langewiesche,<sup>14</sup> “Though potential nuclear terrorists might face a lengthy set of technical or logistical hurdles, yet it is not impossible for the terrorists to overcome such hurdles and actually take recourse to a probable nuclear explosion. Nuclear terrorism involves a lot of steps to be first accomplished in order to detonate a nuclear bomb, starting from procuring nuclear weapons-usable materials to fabricating a nuclear bomb to transporting it, yet the fact that it is not impossible, still remains”. Given such difficulties in procuring nuclear weapons-usable materials, the only option available to the terrorists is to steal them. In this regard, it can be said that these days absence of information is no longer an obstruction for the terrorists – rather the ability to get access to the nuclear materials is. Information on how to use nuclear materials to produce an explosive device might be easily available to the modern tech-savvy perpetrators. Hence, the foremost way to prevent terrorists from creating such mayhem is by preventing them from getting access to nuclear materials and nuclear facilities. Putting a ban on reprocessing and decreasing the use of HEU for civil purposes might ebb the availability of these materials to the terrorists. Apart from this, an effective international mechanism designed to look

---

13. Kelsey Davenport, Arms Control Association, August 25, 2017. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NuclearSecuritySummit>. Accessed on August 10, 2019.

14. William Langewiesche, *The Atomic Bazaar: The Rise of the Nuclear Poor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

after nuclear security may be helpful in addressing the gaps in the global nuclear security arrangements and building a credible global nuclear security regime. Along with that, nuclear security should become a national responsibility for every state irrespective of its nuclear capabilities. According to former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "The primary responsibility for preventing non-state actors and terrorists from acquiring the most devastating weapons known to humanity lies with national governments. But international cooperation and assistance shall remain indispensable." This has to be done by strengthening the international mechanisms for nuclear security which shall be the benchmark for every state. This threat has to be treated with urgency by every state around the globe. It might also be helpful to carry on effective dialogues amongst states after every nuclear summit takes place. Such effective dialogues might bring together high-level policy-makers of the world to contribute effectively towards nuclear security. Other than that, a uniform risk assessment system by every nation of the world might help in preventing such mayhem. A uniform "threat and risk assessment might enable a state to manage the risk and to assign priorities in allocating resources (e.g. human and financial) to organisations and to nuclear security systems and measures." The important and the most competent authorities should cooperate in the risk assessment mechanism to make sure that the assessment results in actually providing useful information regarding any upcoming threat. Other than destroying the capabilities of the terrorists, a multi-layered defence strategy is required, that would not only destroy the terror cells but also obstruct them from acquiring nuclear materials, either in the form of theft, gift, bribe or extortion, purchase or by any other means of unilateral intentional transfer.<sup>15</sup> For this to happen, much more national and international involvement is required. The supplies of the HEU and the nuclear arsenals of countries that shelter terrorists or terror organisations are required to be addressed. But the greatest challenge that remains in terms of strengthening the nuclear security mechanisms of states is that nuclear security is still considered highly confidential, hence, very little information is communicated regarding this issue. Sometimes, it so happens that

---

15. Kazi, n. 8.

even the national governments of states themselves are unaware about the effectiveness of the nuclear security arrangements. Hence, that remains a major obstruction for the implementation of policies that strengthen the nuclear security of states. But, in spite of this, a strong commitment to tighten nuclear security principles is required. However, even such a commitment will not be enough unless it is implemented effectively and sustainably, and a culture for security is developed, and complacency is combatted effectively. On the implementation front, there must be uniform implementation of all the international frameworks and the risk assessment mechanisms of every state, irrespective of its nuclear capabilities or cross-border terrorism threats. A state must also be technologically more powerful than the modern age terrorists, because the terrorists, who believe in mass casualty, may discover different ways to get access to sensitive materials in spite of a well-developed security mechanism. They may even bribe or blackmail the insiders within a nuclear security station to commit an act of contravention. In such a situation, the technology should be strong enough to detect the theft or illegal transfer of such materials. It is evident that both national and regional governments need to know that today's nuclear terrorists are way ahead of their conventional counterparts. So, in order to keep up with the terrorists, the national and regional governments need to stay a few steps ahead of them. The military and intelligence agencies should think from the perspective of the terrorists to figure out their upcoming plans, and always act on even the smallest warning, without ever ruling out the possibility of a probable mishap. In this way, hopefully, we can save the world from the threat of an unimaginable catastrophe.

# TERRORISM IN SRI LANKA: AN INDICATOR OF PERILS THAT HAUNT SOUTH ASIA

POOJA SINGH

## THE BIGGEST TERRORIST ATTACK ON SRI LANKAN SOIL

Generally understood as the indiscriminate use of unlawful violence against civilians for the purpose of fulfilment of political goals, terrorism is inarguably one of the most significant security threats that sovereign nations are faced with in contemporary times. Terrorism is as much a global phenomenon as it is a local notoriety. The increasing global interconnectedness and technological advancement which has immensely empowered individuals and states in matters of security, human rights, activism and governance, has also led to increased volatility and security breaches in the international arena. The bomb blasts that devastated the South Asian nation of Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday earlier this year, took place when the country was completing a decade of relative peace after the end of the civil war (between the Sinhalese majority population and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2009) are proof of the same.

On the fateful day of April 21, 2019, a series of bombs blasts ripped through churches and hotels in Sri Lanka, killing at least

---

Ms. Pooja Singh was an intern with the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

290<sup>1</sup> people and injuring hundreds. Several of these bombs went off inside churches during the Easter services, which showed clearly that the Christian population of Sri Lanka, which is a religious minority in that country, was the intended target. Four cities, namely, Colombo, Negombo, Batticaloa and Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia were targeted. In Colombo, an explosion went off during the Easter services at St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo at around 9 a.m. Three high end hotels, namely, Cinnamon Grand, Shangri-La Hotel and The Kingsbury were also targeted. The final blast which occurred at a private house in Mahawila Gardens in the Dematagoda area, killing three police officers in its wake, also took place in the capital city. In Negombo, St. Sebastian's Church was targeted at around 9 a.m., and in the city of Batticaloa, a bomb tore through the evangelical Zion Church at the same time. The devastation hit the city of Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia in the early afternoon in the form of a blast at a hotel in front of the Dehiwala Zoo.<sup>2</sup> State Minister of Defence Ruwan Wijewardene noted that the Easter Sunday bombings could have been retaliation for the terrorist attack on the two New Zealand mosques in March.<sup>3</sup>

The island nation continued to grapple with security challenges in the aftermath of the blasts as security officers warned about a new wave of terror attacks targeting the bridges in the capital city of Colombo when further explosives were unearthed on subsequent days.<sup>4</sup>

The attacks, which were subsequently dubbed as the worst terrorist attacks on Sri Lankan soil, were also among one of the worst carried out worldwide since the 9/11 attacks on the US soil. As the country dealt with the devastation, fear and grief caused, reports arguing that the country's police forces were warned beforehand about the possibility

1. The death toll remains debatable as news outlets across the world reported figures ranging from 258-321.
2. Cody McCloy, Natalie Yubas, Henrik Pettersson, Ignacio Osorio and Padraic Driscoll, CNN, April 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2019/04/world/sri-lanka-attacks/index.html>. Accessed on August 30, 2019.
3. Anusha Ondaatjie, "ISIS claims responsibility for Sri Lanka serial bombings, ISIS. Sri Lanka Terror Attack", *Livemint* April 23, 2019, <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/isis-claims-responsibility-for-sri-lanka-serial-bombings-1556016713858.html>. Accessed on August 29, 2019.
4. Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Sri Lankan security agencies warn of fresh terror attacks", *The Economic Times*, May 5, 2019, <https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/sri-lankan-security-agencies-warn-of-fresh-terror-attacks/articleshow/69191276.cms>. Accessed on August 29, 2019.



of terror attacks on churches trickled in. Weeks before the calamity hit, New Delhi and Washington had both provided intelligence about such dangers but the Sri Lanka security forces failed to take proper precautionary measures. The warnings were overlooked as a result of the deterioration in the working relationship between Sri Lanka's president and prime minister, as well as a sense of complacency in Colombo following the end of the civil war a decade earlier.<sup>5</sup> Both Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe publicly acknowledged that the intelligence report was not shared with them. The glaring inadequacies resulted in a parliamentary inquiry which reported that Sirisena failed to follow the proper national security protocol.<sup>6</sup> Further inquiries into security lapses are since being carried out by the Parliament of the country as a result of which numerous officials have been suspended.

In the aftermath of these attacks, a national emergency was declared on April 22 in order to provide the security forces with sufficient leeway and power to catch the members of the local *jihadist* groups that claimed responsibility for the attack. The Sri Lankan government stated that two local Islamist groups – National Thowheed Jamaath (NTJ), led by Zahran Hashim, and Jamathei Millathu Ibrahim (JMI) – carried out the bombings and were being probed for their links to the attack as well as possible links to international terror outfits.<sup>7</sup> The state of emergency was then extended every month for four months and was finally lifted on August 22 when the office of the president did not issue any fresh proclamations to extend it for any further period. The emergency aimed to provide the security officials extensive powers to arrest and detain suspects for long periods and the police was recently quoted saying that all those directly responsible for the suicide bombings have either been killed or arrested.<sup>8</sup> The Sri Lankan president also said that since there were international organisations

---

5. Viraj Solanki, "The increasing presence of ISIS in South Asia", IISS, June 1, 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2019/06/isis-south-asia>. Accessed on August 29, 2019.

6. PTI, "Sri Lanka ends emergency four months after Easter attacks", *The Economic Times*, August 23, 2019, <https://m.economictimes.com/news/international/world-news/sri-lanka-ends-emergency-four-months-after-easter-attacks/articleshow/70801429.cms>. Accessed on August 30, 2019.

7. Anusha Ondaatje, n. 3.

8. PTI, no. 6.

behind these acts of local terrorists, the country had decided to seek international assistance for the investigations.<sup>9</sup>

### ISLAMIC STATE AND DEEPENING OF SECURITY CONCERNS IN SOUTH ASIA

Sri Lanka has had a troublesome history of inter-communal violence much like its other South Asian counterparts but what increased the concerns regarding these attacks were the speculations regarding the involvement of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)<sup>10</sup> in their planning and execution. Not long after the attacks, the ISIS, through its AMAQ news agency claimed responsibility for the attack. It sent out a tweet citing a 'security source' and claimed that the attacks were the work of the "fighters of Islamic State".<sup>11</sup> These terror attacks now form part of a larger narrative about which the entire South Asian region needs to be cautious.

The level of coordination, the sophistication of the explosives and techniques of execution employed, and the motive – if the New Zealand attacks are taken as one – definitely make a convincing case for the involvement of the ISIS. The Islamic State, as has been previously observed, has orchestrated multiple attacks on sacred sites of worship after being sufficiently motivated by the mere idea that any region or section of the population that does not subscribe to the organisation's beliefs regarding Islam deserves to meet a cruel fate. What adds to this perilous ideology is the way the ISIS functions. By adopting suicide bombing as its primary way of launching attacks, it has effectively demonstrated that loss of life will not act as a deterrent against the organisation's quest to fulfil its goal of *jihad*. This makes it very hard to counter its reign of terror.

---

9. Anusha Ondaatjie, n. 3.

10. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, officially known as the Islamic State and also known by its Arabic acronym 'Daesh' is a 'Salafi, Jihadist' militant group that follows a fundamentalist Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam. The organisation which has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the United Nations along with many individual nation-states and international organisations, originated in 1999 and is widely famous for its destruction of cultural heritage sites, beheadings and other inhuman acts, and gained prominence in early 2014 when it drove the Iraqi government forces out of the key cities in its western Iraq offensive and started functioning as a proto state. The group is believed to be active in 18 countries, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

11. Anusha Ondaatjie, n. 3.

The Easter attack, which followed in the bloodied footsteps of a historical trend of terrorism in the region also signalled a new and heightened vulnerability for the entire South Asian region. The region has been constantly marred by conflicts along religious and communal lines which facilitates the penetration of terror outfits like the Islamic State. As the blasts clearly indicated, the loss of its Caliphate in West Asia in March at the hands of US-backed Kurdish forces should not be taken to mean that nations across the world stop considering the ISIS as a potent security threat. In fact, in the face of its weakening influence in West Asia, the notorious terrorist organisation is increasingly looking for territories where it can extend its influence; and South Asia, which accounted for 31 percent of the total terror attacks in the world in 2017<sup>12</sup> and was witness to many other deadly attacks in 2018 and 2019, seems a strong contender, fit for such expansion.

According to the Global Terrorism Index of 2018, India ranked seventh among countries affected by terrorism while its neighbour Pakistan, with which India shares a contentious relationship, ranked fifth. To make matters worse, Afghanistan was placed second, preceded only by Iran.<sup>13</sup> These rankings should be warning enough for the entire region that it currently stands on very thin ice when it comes to security threats posed by terrorism.

After losing its stronghold in the region of West Asia – which acts as the organisation's primary operation ground – the ISIS has started functioning more like a traditional insurgent group rather than a proto state; however, its potency does not seem to have diminished to levels that could be classified as unthreatening. Instead, in recent times, it appears that rather than acting like a mere terrorist organisation, the Islamic State has started acting as a sponsor of terrorism worldwide by asking for allegiance from terror

---

12. As reported by the Global Terror Database. The Global Terror Database is an open source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970 onwards. It is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland.

13. The Global Terrorism Index is a report published annually by the Institute of Economics and Peace. The index provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism since 2000. It produces an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism and systematically ranks the nations of the world according to the terrorist activity.

groups worldwide in addition to rolling out its own propaganda. Its presence in South Asia, which has increased to concerning levels in recent years, alludes to the same.

On May 10, 2019, following the Easter blasts, the ISIS proclaimed a new Indian Subcontinent Province in the aftermath of the death of its last known operative in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This new province is supposed to cover nine nations, including India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives. In Pakistan, the group functions through its branch, the Islamic State–Khorasan Province while 11 other militant organisations have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. In India as well, many other groups like the Indian Mujahideen, Bilad al-Hind and Junood ul Khilafa-fil-Hind are suspected to have links with the West Asian terror group. Additionally, citizens from many countries of the region – including from Maldives, Sri Lanka and India – have gone to Syria and joined the ranks of the ISIS after intensive radicalisation.<sup>14</sup>

These observations help us to understand the *modus operandi* of the ISIS when it comes to the region of South Asia. Firstly, the citizens who have undergone radicalisation in Syria and have been trained in the methods of the organisation, act as connectors for local terror outfits on their return from Syria. Secondly, local terror perpetrators pledge allegiance to their Middle Eastern counterparts and carry out attacks in its name, and, lastly, in what can be termed as perhaps the most concerning strategy, the Islamic State has started establishing direct roots, communication channels and training grounds in the region itself. This makes for a deadly nexus of terrorism which demands joint action by all the countries of South Asia.

### **COMBATING TERRORISM IN THE REGION**

As outlined in the paper earlier, the blasts that shocked Sri Lanka have far-reaching regional and global implications and, hence, all the countries of the region, and, by extension, the free world, should act in solidarity to combat terrorism in all its tainted glory. Unfortunately, the manner in which the Sri Lankan government and the rest of the region of South Asia, along with other countries of the world and international organisations responded, left much

---

14. Viraj Solanki, n. 5.

to be desired. To begin with, the political fissures in Sri Lanka led to neglect of intelligence regarding the attacks. In an admirable show of concern for its neighbours and its capability to track terror threats, New Delhi had repeatedly warned Colombo against the possibility of terror strikes but Sri Lanka failed to act on this information. To make matters worse, Sri Lanka's Army Chief, Lt Gen Mahesh Senanayake later commented in an interview to the BBC that the Sri Lankan attackers had visited Kashmir and Kerala in India for "some sort of training" or "to make more links" with other outfits. The statement, which was made without any further proof, and which was later rejected by Dilbag Singh, the police chief of J&K, indicated a lack of "joint, and strengthened regional resolve to combat the same (the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism)".<sup>15</sup>

The major regional organisation SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) has proven rather inadequate in dealing with security breaches over the years, despite signing multiple agreements such as the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism<sup>16</sup> and SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.<sup>17</sup> This does not create an environment conducive for combating terrorism in the region.<sup>18</sup>

Countries of the region must set their differences aside and jointly devise methods of countering terrorism and violent extremism to ensure that the population of the region is secure.

---

15. Kabir Taneja, "India, Sri Lanka ended up doing a favour to ISIS by not showing joint resolve to fight back", ORF, May 16, 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-sri-lanka-ended-up-doing-a-favour-to-isis-by-not-showing-joint-resolve-to-fight-back-50902/?amp>. Accessed on August 30, 2019.

16. The SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, which was signed on November 4, 1987, came into force in August 1988, following its ratifications by all the member states. Following this, at the Islamabad SAARC Summit in 2004, the member countries adopted the Additional Protocol to the SAARC's Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, which came into effect during the Dhaka Summit but cooperation under the banner of SAARC has not been successful.

17. The SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters which calls on participating state parties to provide each other the widest possible cooperation for combating crime by strengthening cooperation in prevention, investigation and prosecution of crimes is expected to help the member nations in their fight against terrorism but due to the lack of sincere efforts and trust on the part of the political leaders and policy-makers involved, no real progress has been made on this front.

18. Anand Kumar, *The Terror Challenge in South Asia and the Prospect of Regional Cooperation* (New Delhi: IDSA, Pentagon Security International, 2012), pp. 126-127.

The establishment and proper functioning of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) appears to be a correct initiative in this direction. External international assistance should also be actively sought. It is a rather worrying predicament that an accidental fire in the Notre Dame – which was no doubt an unfortunate tragedy exactly a week earlier – garnered extensive support from the international community, while the attack on churches in Sri Lanka failed to generate the same level of attention. A global fight against terrorism will remain unsuccessful if enough attention is not paid to the region of South Asia.

#### **THE AFTERMATH: LESSONS TO BE LEARNT**

The Sri Lankan tragedy that plunged the island nation into grief also reminded the entire region that the constituting countries must learn some important lessons when it comes to dealing with terror attacks. First and foremost, the countries need to strengthen their intelligence networks and be vigilant in the face of warnings issued by other nations. The security forces, intelligence networks and political leadership should ensure that there are no communication gaps and factions in the nation's leadership that translate into lapses on the security front. Local terror groups should be actively monitored and investigations should also be carried out about their possible links to international terrorist organisations. Extremist violence, along with communal and regional violence, should also be monitored to verify whether the perpetrators have other dangerous allegiances. Media narratives should be constructed in a manner to prevent inter-state tensions and further escalation. Most importantly, the security agencies should carry out extensive studies to map out what breeds terrorism in the local context, whether it is the propaganda of terror outfits like the ISIS, right wing extremist nationalism leading to alienation of a section of the population, economic inequalities or plain religious fanaticism that leads to such deadly terror attacks because while the involvement of the Islamic State is a worry inducing phenomenon, if local terror groups manage to orchestrate such devastating attacks without any external assistance, then the security of the region is far more threatened in comparison.

# RISE OF TERRORISM IN AFRICA AND INDIA'S ROLE IN UPHOLDING PEACE IN THE REGION

CHAYANIKA DEKA

## INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, there has been an increase in the number of terrorist activities in Africa, especially in North Africa, the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. A number of terrorist groups comprising mostly *jihadist* or ethnic or religious militias are operating across the continent, raising the alarm of a serious security threat not only for Africa but also for the whole world. These extremists and non-state actors have gained a foothold in most areas of Africa that are often gripped with numerous challenges such as meagre economic prospects, ineffective security services, ethnic conflicts and lack of governance. Somalia, Libya, parts of northern Nigeria, Mali, western Tunisia and Kenya have become the hub of terrorist activities. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its branches operating in the Sahel and Sahara region, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabab and its affiliate Al-Hijra in Kenya have carried out unpredictable events of mass violence in their respective areas of operation. In the

---

Dr. Chayanika Deka is a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi.

wake of the deadly attack by Al-Shabab at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, killing 67 people in September 2013, abduction of more than 250 girls from Chibok by the Boko Haram in Nigeria in April 2014, various acts of kidnapping and murder in Libya, and ethnic separatist movements created by insurgency groups in Mali and Algeria attracted greater international attention – including from India – towards Africa. Through participation in various UN peace-keeping operations, India has always provided commendable support to the African nations in resolving their conflicting situation. However, India as a major player in world politics, needs to refocus its policy to deal with terrorist threats in Africa. This paper focusses on the evolution of terrorism on the African continent, featuring the recent trends of terrorist activities in Africa. The paper also highlights the role and scope of India in assisting Africa to eliminate terrorism from its roots.

### **UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM**

There is no universally agreed definition of terrorism. The study of terrorism can be explored through various lenses and events of interest for policy-makers, not just restricted to a particular academic discourse.<sup>1</sup> It was only after the 9/11 attack that the analysis of terrorism gained prominence in international politics and the security arena, bringing serious policy attention towards its threats. The concerted effort of the United Nations in defining and preventing terrorism is crucial in this regard. Terrorist groups, through numerous acts of mass violence, have destroyed core values, i.e. rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of civilians, tolerance among people and nations, and overall development that the United Nations always preaches to meld with its ideals of universal global peace. A High-level Panel Report of the United Nations Secretary General in 2004 defined terrorism as “any action – that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act”.<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. M. Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 1.
  2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.



Although it is the most frequently cited definition of terrorism, the UN has not been wholly successful in defining terrorism; it still remains a contested term. The inherent dilemma is that one cannot argue that an act of violence against a society or an established order is an act of terrorism; sometimes, violence or terrorist activities can be used to condemn domination and exploitation of the existing government in the name of national freedom.

The seeds of modern terrorism can be said to have been sown during the revolutionary tactics employed in the independence struggles against exploitative regimes in France, Europe, the USA and Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>3</sup> In the 20th century, terrorism included more sophisticated use of violent tactics by underground individuals, groups, or state actors that terrorised the masses for eccentric, criminal or political reasons.<sup>4</sup> Today, terrorist groupings have maintained their sporadic acts of terrorism involving mass fatalities through moving resources, conventional and unconventional weapons, recruiting operatives, planning and coordinating their activities within and across national borders, and have become trans-global in their areas of operation.

The activities of Al-Qaeda and extremist political and nationalist groupings operating across the world became synonymous with global terrorism since the 9/11 attack in 2001.<sup>5</sup> The roots of Al-Qaeda can be traced back to the Af-Pak region where it had been sustained for many years until 2011. After the death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011, the global reach of Al-Qaeda has been severely affected due to the inability of its present leadership to carry out terrorist strikes on a global scale. However, the terrorist grouping is looking for an opportunity to revive itself with the support of regional cadres. Al-Qaeda still carries out strikes regionally as its regional command and control has remained undamaged. Its affiliates – the Taliban of Pakistan and Afghanistan, Haqqani network of Afghanistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) of Pakistan, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) based in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb based in Algeria and Mali, Al-Shabab

---

3. J. Davis, *Terrorism in Africa: The Evolving Front in the War on Terror* (UK: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 59.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

of Somalia and Boko Haram of Nigeria – have maintained their capability for sporadic acts of terrorism involving mass fatalities in their respective areas of operation. The most important trend of Al-Qaeda in the present time is that it has become more diffused and a multi-hub organisation, with branches all over Europe and US where it has often deeply penetrated the minds of the Muslim communities residing in these countries. The group has also found an increasing support base in Africa and West Asia.

Apart from Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has posed a serious threat all over the world. Its capturing of lands in Iraq and Syria, the persistent travelling of foreign terrorist fighters worldwide to join the ISIS and the increase of terrorist plots in the West by individual *jihadis* or lone wolf attacks have become the current trends of global terrorism.<sup>6</sup> The Islamic State (IS) targets the defenceless civilians and repressed local population by employing barbaric acts like beheading, execution, stoning, indiscriminate mass casualty attacks, and kidnapping of children for enslavement. Two most important features of the IS are that this terrorist outfit continues to be active in areas where the government lacks a meaningful presence, and, secondly, it makes the most use of the media and social networking sites to draw potential recruiters and affiliates, apart from those in Iraq and Syria.<sup>7</sup>

### **TERRORISM IN AFRICA**

The genesis of African terrorism can be traced back to various factors. The first and foremost was the colonial rule. Colonialism in Africa created uneven development, promoting extractive and export oriented industries at the expense of the general welfare of native Africans. The colonial rule created a system of enclave production involving mining, oil drilling and cash crop agriculture, carved out isolated regions that were tied to the world economy but largely disconnected from the productivity concerns of Africa.<sup>8</sup> This, in turn, led to gross inequality in the region and damaged financial structures,

---

6. Country Report on Terrorism 2014, US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239403.htm>, p. 7. Accessed on October 8, 2015,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

8. A Hailu, "The State in Historical and Comaparative Perspective: State Weakness and Specter of Terrorism in Africa", in John Davis, ed., *Terrorism in Africa: The Evolving Front in the War on Terror* (UK: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 41.

leading to economic marginalisation. This negative effect culminated in fragmentation of the continent into many small and economically unviable states. Nations in Africa have existed without a strong economic foundation, which often led to the failure of statehood.

Secondly, at the time of independence, the newly emergent leadership set about the tasks of restructuring. These elite leaders lacked vision and had little knowledge about the socio-economic and political traditions of Africa. In the process of nation-building, they merged Western ideas with a vague version of their traditions, completely overlooking historic or contemporary realities.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, this political leadership amassed unlimited powers and utilised the state as a private domain without representing the masses. They distorted the notions of democracy, accountability, pluralism in accordance with their own vested interests.<sup>10</sup> The impact of such a lack of leadership on the African states was so great that they still suffer from negligence, authoritarian ruling and lawlessness. All these had set the stage for extreme violence in the region.

Thirdly, economic resources comprise one of the major causes of violence in Africa. These economic variables are manifested in the form of vast natural resources such as diamonds in Sierra Leone, Angola or the Congo, or oil in the Niger Delta. These regions have witnessed extremist activities like drugs, human trafficking, cattle raiding, criminal and illicit arms flow.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, poverty, poor governance and corruption make the fragile African states susceptible to violence. Therefore, one can argue that although the unjust rule of colonialism laid the foundation for extremist activities in Africa, in later years, scanty economic conditions, poor governance and incompetent security structures created more space for non-state actors to gain a foothold in the so-called stateless areas.

Terrorism in Africa, in particular North Africa, the Horn of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa has been on the rise with the recent activities of groups such as Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, consisting mostly of *jihadi* or ethnic or religious militias, operating across Africa in areas like Somalia, Libya, parts of northern Nigeria, Mali, western Tunisia and Kenya.

---

9. Ibid., p. 42.

10. Ibid., p. 43.

11. Ibid., p. 46.

The AQIM, from time to time described as an operational branch of the global Al-Qaeda, continues to operate in the poorly governed areas of northern Mali and Algeria.<sup>12</sup> For years, the AQIM and its offshoots have pursued strategies that attempted sophisticated attacks in the local context. In northern Mali, these groups depict themselves as honest and pious Muslims and the local governing administration as corrupt. The French military intervention in Mali has pushed back the Islamist rebels and secured control of the northern cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. It has been realised that the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the government's security structure are handicapped with regard to competent staff.<sup>13</sup> As a result, while most of the rebel leaders have been killed, the core fighters remain unchallenged.

Salafi-Jihadi terrorism is evolving in northern Africa which includes Libya, Algeria and Tunisia. In the absence of an effective state security apparatus, violence in Algeria and Libya is pervasive with a range of violent actors and agendas. In Tunisia, the Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia (AST) *jihadi* group has implemented a contradictory strategy; on the one hand, the group practises social service, transmitting its message of *dawa* efforts (missionary work), while, on the other, it spearheads violent attacks at both national and international levels.<sup>14</sup>

In Libya, in a complex environment where the country is divided on ethnic, regional, hometown and tribal lines, numerous militias have emerged.<sup>15</sup> Kidnapping and the murder of foreigners have become part and parcel of Libya since the fall of the Qadhafi regime in 2011. In October 2013, former Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zidan was detained by an armed group. There have also been growing incidents of killing of security personnel and bomb attacks due to the ineffectiveness of the Libyan government to provide security to

---

12. Aaron Y. Zelin, Andrew Lebovich, "Assessing Al-Qa`ida's Presence in the New Libya", *CTC Sentinel*, vol 5, issue 3, March 2012, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/assessing-al-qaidas-presence-in-the-new-libya>. Accessed on September 29, 2015,

13. M. Boas, "Guns, Money and Prayers: Aqim's Blueprint for Securing Control of Northern Mali", *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 7, issue 4, April 2014, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/guns-money-and-prayers-aqims-blueprint-for-securing-control-of-northern-mali>. Accessed on October 1, 2015.

14. "Expert Meeting: Salafi Jihadism in Tunisia", International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Hague, <https://icct.nl/update/expert-meeting-salafi-jihadism-in-tunisia/>. Accessed on September 20, 2015.

15. Boas, n. 13.

civilians.<sup>16</sup> *Jihadi* group such as Shura Council of the Youth of Islam in Derna have claimed that the recruitment centres have been set up in the country with the objective of teaching the “pure faith” of Islam to the masses.<sup>17</sup> Apart from Islamist threat, Libya’s oil and gas infrastructure (situated in the border areas) and the workers functioning in these sectors are also under constant attack.<sup>18</sup> Many analysts opine that terrorist groups such as the AQIM, Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Ansaru operate freely in the porous border areas on account of the lack of effective presence of the central government, and target Western private groups, corporations, and tourists.<sup>19</sup>

Boko Haram, the Nigerian militant group, is a growing threat in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. The aim of Boko Haram is to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria. It has approximately 15,000 to 20,000 members and the recruitment profile consists of forcible enrolment, particularly of teenage boys and girls who have been kidnapped.<sup>20</sup> Boko Haram has received weapon supply from Chad and Libya and is increasingly launching operations in Nigeria and its border areas. The Nigerian government under President Buhari has launched various counter-terrorism offensives in conjunction with the Nigerian Air Force and Nigerian Army in the northeastern areas such as Borno, Yobe Adamawa and Sokoto states. Boko Haram has continued to inflict human casualties and significant economic damage. On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped more than 250 schoolgirls from Chibok in Nigeria’s northeastern Borno.<sup>21</sup>

---

16. Ibid.

17. A. Pargeter, “Kidnapping and Murders Targeting Foreigners in Libya”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 7, issue 5. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/kidnappings-and-murders-targeting-foreigners-in-libya/>. Accessed on October 2, 2015.

18. G.D. Porter, “Terrorist Targeting of The Libyan Oil and Gas Sector”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 8, issue 2, February 2015. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/terrorist-targeting-of-the-libyan-oil-and-gas-sector>. Accessed on October 3, 2015.

19. S.L. Arson, “AQIM’s Threat to Western Interests in the Sahel”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 7, issue 4, April 2014. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/aqims-threat-to-western-interests-in-the-sahel>. Accessed on October 2, 2015.

20. J. Zenn, “Boko Haram: Recruitment, Financing, and Arms Trafficking in The Lake Chad Region”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 7, issue 10, October 2014. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/boko-haram-recruitment-financing-and-arms-trafficking-in-the-lake-chad-region/>. Accessed on October 28, 2015.

21. J. Zenn, “Boko Haram and The Kidnapping of the Chibok Schoolgirls”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 7, issue 5, May 2014. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-haram-and-the-kidnapping-of-the-chibok-schoolgirls>. Accessed on September 30, 2015.

In January 2015, Boko Haram carried out the “deadliest massacre” in its history, reportedly killing over 2,000 people in attacks on Baga and the surrounding towns, in Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> On March 7, 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau pledged loyalty (*baya*) to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in an Arabic-language statement, with English and French sub-titles, posted on Boko Haram’s official Twitter.<sup>23</sup> Since then, the IS’ influence motivates Boko Haram terrorists to create an Islamic state through guerrilla warfare and territorial control.<sup>24</sup> From 2018 onwards, Boko Haram has carried out attacks on military bases in Nigeria. The most recent attack took place on January 14, when Boko Haram destroyed the Nigerian town of Rann, in Borno state, displacing 8,000 refugees and killing 10 people.

In Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, Al-Shabab, the Somali based Islamist group, presents a serious threat to the security of the region. The group revived itself with the deadly attack at the upscale Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, killing 67 people, in September 2013, and the killing of 147 students following a siege at the Garisa University College campus in April 2015. The brutal activity of this group refocused the international attention. The group has expanded its network and operations beyond south-central Somalia, into both east Africa and northern Somalia.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from Islamist terrorism, maritime piracy has also attracted international attention towards Africa. Being the top crude oil exporters to China, the US and European Union, the coastal regions of Nigeria and Angola have become a hub of illegal activities. Of the nine Gulf of Guinea countries, eight export metals and oil to the American and European markets. The number of attacks in the Gulf of Guinea were recorded as 201 in 2018, higher than in the year 2017 that witnessed 107 attacks.

---

22. M.K. Narayanan, “A Savage New World of Terrorism”, *The Hindu*, April 15, 2015, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/counterterrorism-islamic-state/article7102336.ece>. Accessed on September 30, 2015.

23. D. Milton, and Muhammad al-Ubaydi, “Pledging Baya: A Benefit or a Burden to the Islamic State?”, *CTC Sentinel*, vol 8, issue 3, March 2015, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-biography-of-boko-haram-and-the-baya-to-al-baghdadi>. Accessed on September 30, 2015.

24. Narayanan, n. 22.

25. *Ibid.*

Amidst this diverse dynamics of terrorism in the continent, Africa's international partners such as the US, France and international organisations like the US and the European Union have provided troops and well-trained peace-keepers – to deal with non-state activities – with improved equipment and support services to bring back stability in Africa. Despite this, the above attacks show significantly that the country is on the verge of falling into the trap of the Islamic State that is feared to spread across the West African region. There is a pressing need for a vibrant, coordinated and sustainable approach to counter-terrorism in Africa.

### **INDIA'S ROLE IN MAINTAINING PEACE IN AFRICA**

India's policy towards Africa has been reasonably successful. It reflects a blend of our values and interests. India-Africa relations have a long and distinguished history which has evolved over time through mutual understanding and support for each other. India's friendship with the African nations can be traced back to the efforts of dynamic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who contributed enormously to constructive India-Africa relations.

India assisted the African countries in their liberation movements against colonial rule and accelerated the decolonisation process in Africa. India also played a major role in freeing South Africa from the inequity of the apartheid regime. Moreover, Indo-Africa cooperation achieved a greater impetus when the efforts of both India and Africa led to the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), strengthening Afro-Asian solidarity at the international level.

In recent times, India-Africa engagement has gained a greater thrust with the expansion and diversification of trade, investment and economic relations. The first India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008 marked the beginning of a multi-layered level of engagement between India and Africa, running at three levels: the pan-African level through growing ties with the African Union; the regional level through Regional Economic Communities; and with all countries at the bilateral level.<sup>26</sup> India has been actively

---

26. R. Bhatia, "India's Africa Policy: Can We Do Better?", *The Hindu*, July 15, 2010. <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/indias-africa-policy-can-we-do-better/article515718.ece>. Accessed on October 1, 2015.

involved in Africa's economic development, human resource development, energy development, capacity building, agriculture and food processing and infrastructure development.

India's persistent involvement with the African continent necessitates cooperation in the peace and security arena. With its increasing presence in Africa, India has a greater role to play in resolving the conflicting situations of the African countries. It is with this background, since the commencement of the UN peace-keeping efforts in 1948, that India has contributed immensely with thousands of military and civil personnel to monitor ceasefires, mediate between conflicting parties and help with the transformation of war-torn societies into hopefully stable and lasting peace.<sup>27</sup> India has taken active part in all the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations in Africa, contributing nearly 34,466 personnel, and emerging as one of the largest contributors to peace-keeping operations.<sup>28</sup> India has always provided commendable support with well-trained troops to the African nations like Congo, Somalia, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Rwanda, Angola and Sierra Leone, among others. India plays a crucial part in the ongoing UN Mission of Sudan. Its humanitarian efforts by way of peace-keeping operations in Africa symbolise greater Afro-Indian solidarity and are largely recognised by the African nations.

Realising the interlinking relationship among peace, security and development, increasing importance has been given to India-Africa security cooperation to meet the challenges in conflict ridden Africa. India has pursued defence engagements with Nigeria, Zambia, Lesotho and Botswana that provided exposure to the Africans about the professional aptitude of the Indian armed forces.<sup>29</sup> India has also begun security cooperation with numerous African countries like Mauritius, Seychelles, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Mozambique and Nigeria.

Poor governance and lack of the security apparatus in the coastal areas of Africa has resulted in piracy, drug trafficking, gun running,

---

27. M. Hanse and Mirium Moller, "House of Cards? India's Rationales for Contributing to UN Peacekeeping", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, vol. 26 (2), 141-157, 2014, p. 141.

28. R. Beri, "India's Role in Keeping Peace in Africa", *Strategic Analysis*, 32 (2), 2008, pp. 197-221.

29. Ministry of Defense (2007) "Annual Report", [https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2007\\_0.pdf](https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/MOD-English2007_0.pdf). Accessed on September 29, 2015.



terrorism and other illegal activities.<sup>30</sup> The threat of piracy in the western Indian Ocean and the actions of Somalian pirates remain issues of concern for all the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs). Therefore, there is a necessity to expand cooperation between India and Africa to address the emerging threats of piracy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The Indian Navy has been actively making efforts in capacity building and sharing best practices with regional coastline countries through a number of activities such as bilateral naval exercises, regular ship visits, training, transfer of naval hardware, and sharing of intelligence.<sup>31</sup>

### CONCLUSION

There has emerged a growing terrorist network, especially the rise of affiliates of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, across Africa, which has made the continent a high priority concern globally. International partners including the US, China, the European Union and United Nations continue to work tirelessly, providing a multilateral response to disrupt these threats. But one needs to remember that regional variations across the continent attract different reactions, depending on the nature of the threat.

Africa's importance in the international system has been rising and it has become the centre of attention for many. Though India has a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation with Africa, there is scope for improvement. There is a requirement for India to refocus its policy in dealing with terrorist activities in Africa. India can no longer afford to be an unenthusiastic player in this arena, especially when it is itself a victim of terrorism; and also, to improve its chances of becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which India rightly deserves. In order to address the emerging threats of terrorism, cooperation between India and Africa should be expanded at all levels. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for African partnership in the global response to curb international terrorism. The India-Africa Summit of 2019, held in New Delhi, gave special focus towards terrorism. There should

---

30. H. Siddiqui, "Maritime Security Likely to be Hot Topic at India-Africa Summit", *The Financial Express*, September 15, 2015.

31. Ibid.

be greater cooperation in the fields of intelligence, investigation, prosecution and counter-insurgency operations in order to promote peace and strengthen relations with the African countries; this is also the guiding philosophy of India's continuous commitment to Africa.

# NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles submitted to *Defence and Diplomacy* should be original contributions and should not be under consideration for any other publication at the same time. If another version of the article is under consideration by another publication, or has been, or will be published elsewhere, authors should clearly indicate this at the time of submission.

Each typescript should be submitted in duplicate. Articles should be typewritten on A4/Letter paper, on one side only, **double-spaced (including the notes)** and with ample margins. All pages (including those containing only diagrams and tables) should be numbered consecutively.

There is no standard length for articles, but 3,000 to 3,500 words (including notes and references) is a useful target. The article should begin with an indented summary of around 100 words, which should describe the main arguments and conclusions of the article.

Details of the author's institutional affiliations, full address and other contact information should be included on a separate cover sheet. Any acknowledgements should be included on the cover sheet as should a note of the exact length of the article.

All diagrams, charts and graphs should be referred to as figure and consecutively numbered. Tables should be kept to a minimum and contain only essential data. Each figure and table must be given an Arabic numeral, followed by a heading, and be referred to in the text.

Articles should be submitted on high-density 3-inch virus free disks (IBM PC) in rich text format (RTF) together with an **exactly matching double-spaced hard copy** to facilitate typesetting; notes should be placed at the end of each page. Any diagrams or maps should be copied to a separate disk separately in uncompressed TIF or JPG formats in individual files. These should be prepared in black and white. Tints should be avoided, use open patterns instead. If maps and diagrams cannot be prepared electronically, they should be presented on good quality white paper.

Each disk should be labelled with the journal's name, article title, author's name and software used. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that where copyright materials are included within an article, the permission of the copyright holder has been obtained. Confirmation of this should be included on a separate sheet included with the disk.

Copyright in articles published in *Defence and Diplomacy* rests with the publisher.

## STYLE

**Authors are responsible for ensuring that their manuscripts conform to the journal style.** The Editors will not undertake retyping of manuscripts before publication. A guide to style and presentation is obtainable from the publisher.

The style should be followed closely. Dates in the form January 1, 2000. Use figures for 11 and above. British spellings are to be used. Authors should provide brief biographical details to include institutional affiliation and recent publications for inclusion in About the Contributors. Sub-headings and sub-sub-headings should be unambiguously marked on the copy.

## NOTES

Notes should be **double spaced** and numbered consecutively through the article. **The first line of a note must align with subsequent lines. Each note number should be standard size and have a full point.**

- a) References to books should give author's name: title of the book (*italics*); and the place, publisher and date of publication in brackets.  
e.g. 1. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense* (NY: Columbia UP, 1961), Ch. 2, pp. 14-18.
- b) References to articles in periodicals should give the author's initials and surname, the title of the article in quotation marks, title of the periodical (*italics*), the number of the volume/issue in Arabic numerals, the date of publication, and the page numbers:  
e.g., Douglas M. Fox, "Congress and the US Military Service Budgets in the Post War Period," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, vol. 16, no. 2, May 1971, pp. 382-393.