

Boomerang Effects of Taliban Transition to a State Actor and the Development Challenges in Afghanistan, 2001-2023

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Abstract

The 21st century continues to wrestle with the pervasive challenges of terrorism, a complex issue that spans across borders and affects society deeply. Terrorism, characterized by violent actions from individuals or groups to instigate fear for achieving ideological or political goals, has widespread and significant effects. It causes not only physical injuries and mental distress to people but also severely disrupts societal, economic, and political stability. Despite global efforts and widespread condemnation by international bodies like the United Nations, groups with extreme ideologies, such as the Taliban, have gained considerable power. This research examines the "boomerang effects" of the Taliban's transformation from a terrorist entity to the ruling power in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2023, through the lens of the Failed State Theory. Utilizing qualitative methods and content analysis of secondary sources, this paper investigates the intricate dynamics behind the Taliban's resurgence. Contributing factors include Afghanistan's long-standing instability, poverty, religious radicalism, and the absence of effective security measures. The Taliban's aggressive strategies significantly contributed to their takeover, leading to the enforcement of their strict interpretation of Islamic law. Despite substantial international military efforts, the resurgence of the Taliban was not halted. Their governance has had devastating effects on Afghanistan's progress, resulting in massive displacement and destruction of infrastructure. Following the rapid withdrawal of US and allied forces, the Taliban's rise to power signals a critical shift in Afghanistan's governance, plunging the country into deep developmental and humanitarian challenges, exacerbated by international sanctions. With the Taliban now in power, Afghanistan's future is fraught with uncertainty, and early indicators suggest a bleak outlook for governance, predicting ongoing conflict and humanitarian issues. This paper highlights the importance of a nuanced understanding of the Taliban's far-reaching influence on Afghanistan's socio-economic and political landscape and the internal and external multiple effects of its successful transformation from terrorist Actor to a state actor by encouraging other terrorist to attempt a replication; this is in addition to exporting terrorism through its den of local and foreign terrorists. Thus, Taliban government will become a safe haven for incubating terrorism in the

world.. To this end, the paper suggested that the civilized societies and governments worldwide must mobilize their resources to jointly dismantle terrorist organizations like the Taliban, rather than viewing it as a responsibility that falls solely on superpowers.

Keywords: *Taliban, Terrorism, Islamic law, Development and transformation*

Introduction

The 21st century world is bequeathed with the problem of terrorism arising from injustice, marginalization, religion and ideology. It has a proportional effect on the people irrespective of time and space, wherever it occurs (Ruggiero, 2017). Terrorism is an act of violence by a group or individual with the intention of instilling fear in order to achieve an ideological or political goal (Krueger & Malečková, 2017). It has become increasingly globalized, affecting the lives of millions of people around the world (Acharya & Bueno de Mesquita, 2018). Terrorism is becoming more complex and sophisticated over a passage of time and this has necessitated changes in counter terrorism measures with the advance in technology which the two parties now deploy to full advantage in terrorism and Counter terrorism activities.

The impact of terrorism on individuals is significant, as it can lead to psychological trauma, physical injury, financial loss, and disruption of social and economic activities (Ruggiero, 2017). Its threat to global security has been widely recognized, with international organizations such as the United Nations condemning its indiscriminate use of violence (UN, 2019). Terrorism has the potential to destabilize governments, weaken economies, and create social unrest (Acharya & Bueno de Mesquita, 2018). The psychological impact of terrorism can be particularly intense, as victims may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety (Hussain et al., 2018)

The development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has solidified the proliferation of terrorist activities. The most remarkable is the 9/11 attack in New York in the United States of America. The use of ICT by terrorists has allowed them to coordinate their activities, communicate securely, and carry out attacks with far greater efficiency and effectiveness (Awan, 2013). These attacks change the trajectory of warfare. Thus, the United States of America states' foreign policies were restructured to confront these invisible enemies. ICT has also provided terrorists with a platform for disseminating propaganda, recruiting new members, and organizing fundraising activities (Krebs & Smith, 2017). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have been used by terrorists to spread their message, gain support from other like-minded individuals, and build networks of supporters (Berman, 2011). Furthermore, ICT has allowed terrorist organizations to carry out virtual attacks, such as cyber-terrorism, which can have drastic and far-reaching effects on their target (Krebs & Smith, 2017).

The development of ICT has also made it easier for terrorist organizations to obtain weapons, explosives, and other materials needed for their operations (Awan, 2013). The internet has become a hub for terrorists to purchase weapons and explosives, as well as acquire the knowledge and skills needed to build bombs and other weapons (Krebs & Smith, 2017). Furthermore, ICT has enabled terrorists to carry out financial transactions and collect donations from supporters, allowing them to finance their operations (Awan, 2013).

It is a known fact that while artificial intelligence, advances in weapon of mass, medium and limited restrictions are available to the terrorist organizations, state actors have more capacities to deploy more of these resources to counter them but the political and economic will to do so is lacking. The motivation is higher with the terrorist who go on suicide missions than state actors that stay in convenient offices that may be far from the theatre of terrorism to drink tea and make incremental and non-effective policies. The tenacity and extreme ideology that propelled the Taliban to success, transitioning them from a terrorist organization to a governing entity, has sparked scholarly interest in whether their ascent can be viewed as a form of liberation movement. This shift underscores the complex dynamics at play, as the Taliban's journey from insurgency to ruling power reflects a blend of resilience and radicalism. Observers and academics are now re-evaluating the narrative around the Taliban's rise, pondering the implications of labeling such a transition as part of a broader struggle for liberation. This re-examination seeks to understand the broader contexts and motivations behind the Taliban's enduring quest for control and how their ideological steadfastness facilitated their move into the halls of governance.

Statement of the Problem

Taliban terrorist activities have profoundly affected Afghanistan's development trajectory, presenting a multifaceted problem that challenges the nation's stability and growth. The resurgence of the Taliban, particularly following the withdrawal of international forces in 2021, has escalated concerns regarding the country's future. This escalation of violence and political turmoil exacerbates existing developmental challenges, ranging from economic stagnation to social fragmentation. The Taliban's governance style, marked by strict adherence to their interpretation of Islamic law, often conflicts with modern development principles, particularly in areas of human rights, gender equality, and education. This clash between the Taliban's ideological stance and development needs creates a complex environment where progress is continually under threat. The international community's response, oscillating between engagement and isolation, further complicates the situation. Economic sanctions and withdrawal of foreign aid, while intended to pressure the Taliban, often exacerbate the hardships faced by the Afghan population, undermining development efforts (Rashid, 2020).

The primary challenge confronting Afghanistan, amidst the exodus of local and foreign professionals, is the daunting task of marshaling resources for its reconstruction and development. The country's situation is further complicated by the blacklist and ensuing noncooperation from Western nations, which regard the Taliban as a significant security threat, impeding developmental endeavors. Moreover, there's a looming risk that the Taliban's ascendancy might embolden terrorist groups in regions where the US and its allies have been striving to suppress terrorism and counter Islamic extremism. Inspired by the Taliban's transition to power, these groups may escalate their operations, aspiring to similar governance roles. This scenario poses a heightened challenge to global anti-terrorism efforts, with Afghanistan potentially serving as both an inspiration and a strategic base for terrorist activities, complicating the international community's struggle against global terrorism.

The impact of Taliban activities on Afghanistan's economy is one of the most immediate concerns. The group's control over significant territories, including key trade routes and natural resources, allows them to exert considerable influence on the economy. However, their governance model,

focused on control rather than development, has led to economic stagnation. The absence of a conducive environment for investment, coupled with ongoing conflict, has deterred both domestic and international investors, significantly hampering economic growth. The agricultural sector, a cornerstone of Afghanistan's economy, has particularly suffered, with the opium trade often flourishing under Taliban rule at the expense of legitimate agricultural practices. The resulting economic decline has dire implications for the broader development agenda, as limited economic resources hinder progress in other sectors, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Byman, 2021).

The central issue in Afghanistan is the challenge of assembling a reconstruction and development team in a country facing a brain drain of both local and foreign experts. Further complicating this effort is the blacklist and noncooperation from Western nations, which perceive the country as a threat. This stance hinders the nation's developmental initiatives. Additionally, there's a potential ripple effect on regions where the U.S. and its allies are fighting to suppress terrorism and Islamic extremism. The success of groups like the Taliban in gaining governmental power could embolden terrorists in these areas to launch more audacious attacks. This scenario risks transforming Afghanistan into both a symbol and a springboard for global terrorism, complicating international efforts to combat these threats.

Furthermore, the Taliban's activities have severely impacted social development in Afghanistan, with particular consequences for women's rights and education. Under Taliban rule, women have faced significant restrictions, including limited access to education and employment opportunities. This rollback of women's rights not only contravenes basic human rights principles but also impedes Afghanistan's social and economic development. The denial of education and work opportunities for half the population has long-term implications for the country's growth and stability. Moreover, the Taliban's approach to education, focusing on religious instruction at the expense of broader curricula, limits the development of a skilled workforce essential for modern economies. These social restrictions create a cycle of underdevelopment, where lack of education and opportunity stifles innovation and progress (Giustozzi, 2020).

The Taliban's influence on healthcare and public services further illustrates the complexity of the development challenges in Afghanistan. The group's interference in healthcare delivery, often based on ideological grounds, hampers the provision of essential services. In areas under Taliban control, healthcare facilities face shortages of supplies and personnel, largely due to security concerns and the Taliban's restrictions on women's employment. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, with limited access to healthcare services and vaccine distribution in Taliban-controlled areas. The neglect of public services, including healthcare, not only impacts the immediate well-being of the population but also hinders long-term developmental goals (Rubin, 2021).

The Taliban's activities also affect Afghanistan's political development. Their governance model, characterized by a lack of democratic processes and suppression of dissent, undermines the development of stable political institutions. The absence of inclusive governance and the rule of law contributes to a climate of instability and uncertainty, deterring development initiatives. The

international community's efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Afghanistan face significant challenges in the context of Taliban rule. The question arises: how can sustainable political development be achieved in a landscape dominated by a group with little regard for democratic principles? Can international efforts and negotiations lead to a political environment conducive to development in Afghanistan?

The environmental impact of the Taliban's activities further complicates Afghanistan's developmental challenges. The exploitation of natural resources, including illegal mining and deforestation, under Taliban rule contributes to environmental degradation. These practices not only have immediate ecological consequences but also undermine long-term sustainable development. Environmental degradation exacerbates vulnerabilities to climate change, affecting agriculture, water resources, and the livelihoods of rural communities. The Taliban's disregard for environmental sustainability raises crucial questions: how can Afghanistan pursue development while ensuring environmental protection? What role can international support play in promoting sustainable practices in a conflict-ridden country? The group pervasive influence permeates various aspects of Afghan society, hindering progress and development. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted impact of the Taliban on Afghanistan's development is crucial for formulating effective strategies to address these challenges and support the country's path towards stability and growth. It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the influence of Taliban terrorist activities and development questions in Afghanistan. To this end, this paper revolves around four key objectives which include:

- 1) examine the causes and the emergence of the Taliban terrorist Group in Afghanistan
- 2) investigate the nature of the operation of the Taliban Terrorist Group
- 3) ascertain the impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities on the Socio-economic and Political Development of Afghanistan
- 4) examine why the American Coalition failed in decimating the Taliban terrorist group in Afghanistan
- 5) investigate the boomerang effects of the transition of the Afghanistan Taliban from Non-State Actor to a state actor in Afghanistan and its implications on others terrorist groups

LITERATURE REVIEW

Terrorism

Terrorism is an act that is intended to cause fear in a population, usually for political or ideological purposes (Tucker, 2020). It is usually carried out by a small group of individuals or an individual acting independently to achieve an immediate political goal or to create an atmosphere of fear and terror (Tucker, 2020). The use of violence and intimidation to achieve a political aim is a tactic used by terrorists to achieve their goals. Terrorists resort to violence and coercion to create fear and panic among the public, and to influence governments, organizations, and individuals (Ganor, 2002). Terrorists use violence to advance their political goals, to coerce governments into making concessions, to provoke the authorities into tackling them in a way that will gain them popular opinion, and to gain attention for their cause (Kamrava, 2004).

In an effort to spread fear, terrorists use violence to target civilians, government officials, and other symbolic figures. They also use violence to disrupt everyday life and to create chaos. Terrorists employ a variety of tactics, including bombings, hijackings, assassinations, kidnappings, and other forms of intimidation (Kamrava, 2004). These tactics are often designed to achieve maximum publicity, to strike fear into the hearts of the public, and to force governments to change their policies. Terrorists also use violence to demonstrate their strength and power, to gain recognition, and to show that they are willing to fight to the death for their cause (Ganor, 2002).

Terrorists use violence and intimidation to achieve their political aims, but their methods also have long-term consequences. The use of violence and intimidation can lead to a breakdown in law and order, an increase in human rights abuses, and an increase in public anxiety and fear (Kamrava, 2004). Terrorist violence can also lead to retaliatory attacks and increased radicalization, which can further fuel the cycle of violence. In addition, violence and intimidation can lead to an erosion of public trust in the government and in the rule of law (Ganor, 2002). Terrorists target civilians, government officials, and infrastructure to cause fear, chaos, and disruption in society (Tucker, 2020).

Terrorism has been used throughout history to achieve a range of political objectives, including overthrowing governments, creating fear and chaos, and influencing public opinion (Tucker, 2020). The methods used by terrorists have evolved over time, from bombings and assassinations to cyber-attacks and the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (Tucker, 2020). Terrorists have also become more sophisticated in their use of technology, social media, and propaganda to recruit, spread their message, and conduct attacks (Tucker, 2020).

The impact of terrorism on society is significant and far-reaching. Terrorist attacks can cause physical and psychological damage to individuals, destroy infrastructure, and disrupt the functioning of societies (Tucker, 2020). Terrorist attacks can lead to a wide range of economic losses, including the direct costs of physical damage, the financial losses associated with business interruptions, and the opportunity costs of lost investments. In addition, increased spending on security can lead to higher taxes and reduced public spending on other essential services. Terrorist attacks can also create a general breakdown of trust between citizens and their governments, leading to a decrease in public confidence in the government's ability to protect citizens from harm (Tucker, 2020).

The direct costs of physical damage caused by terrorist attacks can be significant. For example, a report by the Congressional Research Service estimated that the total economic losses of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States were more than \$123 billion (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2004). This included the cost of replacing the destroyed property, such as the Twin Towers, as well as the costs of the clean-up, indirect economic losses, and the loss of life.

In addition to the direct costs of physical damage, terrorist attacks can also cause business interruptions, resulting in lost sales and profits. According to a study by the World Bank, business continuity costs resulting from the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008 were estimated to be around \$2.2 billion (Abulof & Bader, 2012). This included the cost of closing businesses and the resulting loss of wages and profits. The opportunity costs of lost investments can also be significant. For

example, a study of the economic impact of terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa found that the cost of lost investment due to terrorism between 2011 and 2014 was close to \$100 billion (Khan, 2018). This is due to the fact that potential investors may be hesitant to invest in countries or regions that are considered to be at risk of terrorist attacks.

Increased spending on security can also lead to economic losses. For example, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's budget for 2018 was approximately \$44.1 billion, an increase of approximately 6.7% from the previous year (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2018). This money is used to fund counter-terrorism efforts such as border and port security, intelligence gathering, and disaster preparedness. However, this increased spending can lead to higher taxes and reduced public spending on other essential services, such as health care, education, and infrastructure.

Finally, terrorist attacks can lead to a breakdown of trust between citizens and their governments. Citizens may become less likely to trust their government's ability to protect them from harm and may become more likely to engage in activities that could be seen as suspicious, such as avoiding public places or speaking out against the government. This can lead to a decrease in public confidence in the government and further undermine the social fabric of a nation. The effects of terrorism are often long-lasting, as individuals and societies must cope with the aftermath of traumatic events (Tucker, 2020).

In order to combat terrorism, governments and international organizations must work together to develop strategies that target the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and inequality (Tucker, 2020). It is also essential to strengthen law enforcement and intelligence gathering capabilities to prevent terrorist attacks and disrupt terrorist networks (Tucker, 2020). Finally, governments must work to create an environment in which dialogue and respect for human rights are encouraged, so that individuals are not driven to violence and extremism (Tucker, 2020).

The Taliban

The Taliban (also known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) is an armed militant group in Afghanistan that has been active since the mid-1990s. The group is known for its strict interpretation of Islamic law and its use of violence to achieve its objectives. The Taliban's primary goal is to establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan and to implement their own version of Sharia, or Islamic law, on the country. This objective has been a constant in Taliban policy since the group's emergence in the mid-1990s. The Taliban's version of Sharia is based upon a strict interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah and is rooted in the Deobandi school of Islamic thought. Taliban leaders have consistently emphasized their desire to uphold the values of Islam as a way of life and to bring Afghanistan in line with their interpretation of Islamic law (Ahmadi, 2010).

The Taliban's commitment to enforcing Sharia law in Afghanistan has been a major source of tension between the group and the Afghan government. Taliban leaders have sought to impose their version of Islamic law on the population through a variety of means, including the implementation of a harsh criminal code, the enforcement of mandatory religious dress codes, and the prohibition of certain activities deemed to be un-Islamic. These efforts have been met with opposition from the Afghan government, which has maintained that Sharia law should be

interpreted in a more moderate, flexible manner, and that the Taliban's interpretation is too rigid and inflexible (Ahmadi, 2010).

The Taliban's commitment to the establishment of an Islamic state in Afghanistan has also been a source of tension between the group and the international community. The Taliban's hardline approach to the implementation of Sharia has been seen by many international observers as a threat to the stability and security of Afghanistan, as well as a violation of human rights (McGirk, 2012). This concern has been compounded by the Taliban's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the Afghan government, its refusal to negotiate with the government, and its continued support for terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda (McGirk, 2012).

In the face of international pressure, the Taliban has maintained that the establishment of an Islamic state in Afghanistan is its primary goal and that it is committed to the implementation of Sharia law in the country. Nonetheless, the group has softened its stance in recent years and has expressed a willingness to negotiate with the Afghan government and to work with the international community to find a way forward for the country (Ahmadi, 2010).

The Taliban is an Islamic extremist group that controls much of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and is believed to have ties to both al-Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, two other militant groups (Ahmed, 2020; Solanki, 2019). The Taliban is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks and human rights violations throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan, including the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States (Ahmed, 2020).

The Taliban's relationship with al-Qaeda began in the late 1990s, when Osama bin Laden and his followers sought refuge in Afghanistan (Solanki, 2019). The two groups have since become heavily intertwined, with the Taliban providing a safe haven for al-Qaeda members and allowing them to operate within its territories (Ahmed, 2020). The Taliban has also provided al-Qaeda with financial and material support, and has allowed al-Qaeda to use its territory as a base from which to plan and carry out attacks in other countries (Solanki, 2019).

The Taliban's relationship with the Haqqani Network is more recent, but no less important. The Haqqani Network is an extremist group based in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region that has been active since the late 1970s (Ahmed, 2020). The group has close ties to the Taliban, and has been known to provide financial and military support to the Taliban (Solanki, 2019). The two groups have also collaborated on several terrorist attacks, including the coordinated assault on Kabul in 2011 (Ahmed, 2020).

These ties between the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the Haqqani Network have enabled all three groups to expand their reach and increase their power. They have also enabled them to carry out more coordinated and deadly attacks, such as the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States (Ahmed, 2020). The Taliban's ties to other militant groups have contributed to the instability of the region and have allowed them to remain a threat to peace and security throughout the world.

The Taliban first came to power in 1996, when its forces took control of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan (Khan, 2001). The Taliban, which was primarily composed of students who had been educated in religious schools in Pakistan, had risen to prominence in the early 1990s as a major force in the Afghan civil war. Its rise was enabled by the withdrawal of Soviet forces from

Afghanistan in 1989, and by the subsequent breakdown in order and authority within Afghanistan as rival warring factions vied for control (Goodson, 2009).

The Taliban's rise to power was enabled by a combination of factors. The first was the widespread disillusionment among Afghans with the civil war and the lack of progress towards stability and peace. This was compounded by the lack of support for the existing government from the international community and the lack of resources to combat the Taliban's growing power (Khan, 2001). Second, the Taliban's appeal to Afghans was based on its promise of a swift return to stability and order, and its willingness to provide basic services to the population, such as access to education and health care (Goodson, 2009).

The Taliban's rise to power also reflected a number of strategic decisions taken by the group. The Taliban was successful in exploiting the divisions among the various Afghan factions, and in creating alliances and coalitions which enabled it to gain control of strategic areas of the country (Khan, 2001). The group also adopted a policy of strict adherence to Islamic law and order, which appealed to many Afghans who wanted a return to more traditional values and norms (Goodson, 2009). The Taliban was able to mobilize popular support through the use of sophisticated propaganda, which appealed to Afghans' sense of national pride and identity (Khan, 2001). This propaganda was spread through radio, television, and print media, and it played an important role in the Taliban's rise to power (Goodson, 2009). Then, they began to expand their control throughout the country, establishing a government that was based on their interpretation of Islamic law. This government was highly repressive, denying basic civil rights to women, minorities, and other groups that it deemed to be "un-Islamic." The Taliban also imposed harsh penalties for any offenses against their interpretation of Islamic law, including public executions and amputations.

The Taliban's rule was opposed by a number of other Afghan factions, including the Northern Alliance and the United States-led coalition forces. In 2001, the U.S. and its allies launched a military campaign against the Taliban, which eventually led to the group's overthrow in late 2001.

Since then, the Taliban has continued to wage an insurgency against the Afghan government and its international allies. Despite the presence of international forces in the country, the Taliban still controls large parts of Afghanistan, especially in the rural areas. The group's influence has been especially strong in the southern and eastern regions of the country, where it has established a network of militants and recruited new members.

The Taliban's activities have caused widespread suffering throughout Afghanistan, with civilians bearing the brunt of the group's violence, including targeted assassinations, kidnappings, and bombings. The group has also been linked to the use of child soldiers and other human rights violations. The United Nations has repeatedly called on the Taliban to stop its violence and to enter into peace negotiations with the Afghan government.

Theoretical Underpinning

The paper is anchored on the Failed State Theory. The theory emerged in the early 1990s, particularly after the Cold War, as a framework to understand the collapse and dysfunction of states. Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner are often credited for popularizing the concept in their 1992 Foreign Policy article, where they discussed the phenomenon of state collapse in the post-

Cold War era. The theory examines how states fail to provide political goods—such as security, governance, and basic public services—to their citizens, leading to a breakdown in authority and order. In the context of Afghanistan, this theory is particularly relevant for analyzing the impact of Taliban activities on the state's ability to function and develop (Helman & Ratner, 1992).

A crucial aspect of Failed State Theory is the examination of political instability and the erosion of sovereignty. The theory posits that when a government loses control over its territory and cannot enforce laws, the state's sovereignty is compromised. In Afghanistan, the Taliban's control over large areas and their challenge to the government's authority exemplify this aspect of state failure. The resulting instability undermines the state's capacity to govern effectively and maintain order, a condition that has been a persistent issue in Afghanistan's recent history (Rotberg, 2003).

Failed State Theory also addresses the economic dysfunction that accompanies state failure. When a state cannot stimulate economic growth or manage resources effectively, it leads to developmental challenges. Afghanistan's economy, heavily impacted by ongoing conflict and political instability, reflects these challenges. The Taliban's activities, including the disruption of trade routes and reliance on illicit economies, exacerbate these economic issues, hindering development and contributing to state failure (Fearon & Laitin, 2004). The theory underscores the link between state failure and social fragmentation, often leading to humanitarian crises. In Afghanistan, ethnic divisions and the displacement of populations due to conflict are indicative of social fragmentation. The Taliban's rule, characterized by restrictive social policies and human rights abuses, further aggravates these issues, contributing to the state's failure and complicating efforts to address humanitarian needs (Kaplan, 2008).

A failed state often witnesses the erosion of public services and infrastructure, which is evident in Afghanistan under Taliban influence. The inability to provide basic services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure maintenance is a key indicator of state failure. In areas controlled by the Taliban, the provision of these services is often disrupted or manipulated, further deteriorating the state's functionality and impeding development (Call, 2008).

Failed State Theory acknowledges the impact of external influences and geopolitical dynamics on state failure. Afghanistan's strategic location and history of foreign intervention have significantly affected its state dynamics. The theory suggests that external factors can exacerbate internal vulnerabilities, as seen in Afghanistan, where foreign interests and interventions have often influenced domestic affairs and contributed to state fragility (Teschke, 2003).

Despite critiques, Failed State Theory remains relevant in contemporary contexts, particularly in understanding situations like Afghanistan. The theory provides a framework to analyze how states like Afghanistan, impacted by extremist groups such as the Taliban, become susceptible to failure. It emphasizes the need for a holistic understanding of state dynamics, incorporating political, economic, social, and external factors (Jackson, 2000).

Failed State Theory offers critical insights into the dynamic of terrorism and its concomitant impact on the state actors in the international stage. It helps in understanding how the Taliban's activities contribute to state failure, affecting political stability, economic growth, social cohesion, and public services. The theory aids in comprehensively analyzing the multifaceted challenges faced

by Afghanistan, highlighting the need for multi-dimensional solutions to address state failure and its implications for development (Helman & Ratner, 1992).

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The Causes and the Emergence of the Taliban terrorist Group in Afghanistan

The emergence of the Taliban terrorist group in Afghanistan is a complex phenomenon with a mix of factors playing a role in its rise. In this paper, the causes of the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan will be discussed in detail, along with citations from books and scholarly journals.

The first cause of the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan was the Soviet invasion of 1979 (Ganguly & Khemani, 2018). This invasion destabilized the country and caused a power vacuum, which was filled by a number of different militant groups. Of these groups, the Taliban emerged as the most powerful and influential. The Taliban were able to capitalize on the anti-Soviet sentiment in the country, and they were able to gain support from local populations who were looking for a way to oppose the Soviet presence (Khalilzad, 1996).

The second cause of the emergence of the Taliban was the backing they received from Pakistan (Rashid, 2000). Pakistan provided the Taliban with support in the form of money, weapons, and training. This allowed the Taliban to gain strength and expand their influence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Pakistan provided a safe haven for the Taliban, which enabled them to regroup and rearm after their losses in the Afghan civil war.

The third cause of the emergence of the Taliban was the failure of the Afghan government to provide stability and security following the Soviet withdrawal (Berntsen & Peay, 2009). The government was weak and ineffective, and the Taliban were able to take advantage of this by gaining control of large parts of the country. Furthermore, the Taliban were able to gain support from local populations who were disillusioned with the government's inability to provide stability and security.

Finally, the fourth cause of the emergence of the Taliban was the support they received from Al-Qaeda (Berger, 2012). Al-Qaeda provided the Taliban with financial and military support, which enabled the group to gain even more power and influence in Afghanistan. Additionally, Al-Qaeda provided ideological support, which helped the Taliban to gain legitimacy and acceptance among local populations.

To crown it all, the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan was a complex phenomenon with a mix of factors playing a role. The Soviet invasion of 1979 destabilized the country and caused a power vacuum, which was filled by the Taliban. Additionally, the Taliban received support from

Pakistan and Al-Qaeda, and the failure of the Afghan government to provide stability and security further enabled the group to gain strength and influence.

Nature of the Operation of the Taliban Terrorist Group

The Taliban, an insurgent group rooted in Afghanistan, has been a pivotal source of instability in the region since its emergence in the 1990s. Established with the intent to enforce a strict interpretation of Sharia law and create an Islamic state, the Taliban quickly gained territorial control in Afghanistan. Their operations are characterized by severe violence and a blatant disregard for international humanitarian norms. Signature tactics include suicide bombings targeting public spaces and government facilities, causing substantial civilian casualties. A notable instance was the Kabul voter registration center attack in May 2018, which resulted in over 60 fatalities (Gopal, 2019). The group is also known for kidnappings and assassinations of key figures, employing these tactics as political leverage. The assassination of former Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani in 2011 underscores their readiness to employ extreme violence against political adversaries (Rashid, 2010).

Beyond these targeted attacks, the Taliban employs a comprehensive strategy of destabilization, aimed at undermining the Afghan government. Their approach includes attacking military bases and exploiting local grievances to win support. The Taliban's influence isn't limited to military dominance; they also establish governance structures in controlled areas, enforcing their harsh version of Islamic law. Their governance from 1996 to 2001 is marked by severe restrictions, particularly on women and cultural practices. The demolition of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, a historic cultural site, in 2001, exemplifies their contempt for cultural heritage (Rubin, 2020). Despite international counterinsurgency efforts, the Taliban have shown resilience and adaptability, using both traditional and asymmetric warfare to challenge the Afghan government and its allies. Their enduring influence in the region is a testament to their operational adaptability and ideological commitment, posing a continual threat to stability in Afghanistan (Byman, 2021).

The financial sustenance of the Taliban is primarily rooted in illegal drug trade and other criminal activities, forming a critical component of their operational strategy. Afghanistan, being the world's largest producer of opium, provides a fertile ground for the Taliban's involvement in the narcotics trade. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Afghanistan's opium economy is a major source of income for the Taliban, estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. This illicit trade not only funds their insurgent activities but also undermines local and national governance structures (UNODC, 2020). Besides drug trafficking, the Taliban engage in various forms of criminality to finance their operations, including extortion, smuggling, and the taxing of local businesses. Kidnapping for ransom has also been a significant revenue stream for the group. High-profile kidnappings, such as the abduction of American University of Afghanistan professors in 2016, demonstrate their reliance on such tactics for financial gain (Mashal, 2020).

Furthermore, the Taliban's financial and material support is not solely derived from illicit activities; they have also received backing from external state and non-state actors. Reports suggest that countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have, at various times,

provided financial assistance to the Taliban. Pakistan's involvement, in particular, has been a subject of international scrutiny, with accusations of the Pakistani government providing safe havens and support to Taliban members (Gall, 2021). In addition to state support, the Taliban have historical ties with Al-Qaeda, which extends beyond ideological alignment to include logistical and military assistance. This relationship has been instrumental in the Taliban's operations, with Al-Qaeda providing expertise in guerrilla warfare, training, and resources. The enduring connection between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, despite international efforts to dismantle their networks, highlights the complex web of support sustaining insurgent groups like the Taliban and the challenges in disrupting their funding sources (Byman, 2021).

The Taliban's operations are mainly characterized by the use of asymmetric warfare tactics, such as suicide bombings, roadside bombs, and targeted assassinations. The group has also been known to use intimidation and coercion tactics to achieve its goals, such as threatening and attacking local populations in order to gain control of an area. Additionally, the Taliban has been known to employ the use of propaganda, such as videos and statements released on the internet, to spread its message and recruit new members.

The Taliban's operations in Afghanistan have had a profound and devastating impact on both the civilian population and the nation's economic stability. Their frequent attacks on government and civilian targets have not only caused a significant loss of life but also led to widespread displacement and socio-economic upheaval. For instance, the attack on Kabul University in November 2020, which resulted in 22 deaths and numerous injuries, exemplifies their disregard for civilian life and education (Rashid, 2021). The displacement caused by such attacks has had far-reaching consequences, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting millions of Afghans internally displaced or seeking asylum in other countries, leading to a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions (UNHCR, 2021). Moreover, the Taliban's operations have severely impacted Afghanistan's infrastructure. The destruction of roads, bridges, and public buildings has not only impeded economic activities but also restricted access to essential services, further entrenching poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

In addition to their attacks on government and civilian infrastructures, the Taliban has also targeted individuals and groups opposing their ideology, particularly humanitarian aid workers, journalists, and educators. This has significantly hindered humanitarian efforts and suppressed freedom of expression and information. For example, the targeted killing of three female media workers in Jalalabad in March 2021 underscored the risks faced by journalists in Taliban-controlled areas (Gall, 2021). Such actions not only terrorize the populace but also impede the flow of crucial information and restrict the delivery of essential services to those in need. The targeting of educators and schools has further exacerbated the situation, with the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) reporting numerous attacks on educational institutions, severely affecting the right to education for Afghan children (GCPEA, 2021). The cumulative impact of these actions by the Taliban has created an environment of fear and insecurity, significantly hindering any prospects for peace and development in Afghanistan.

In recent years, the United States and other international forces have sought to weaken the Taliban's influence in Afghanistan through a variety of military and diplomatic tactics. However,

the group remains a major source of instability in the region, and its operations continue to pose a significant threat to the security of Afghanistan and its people.

The American Coalition against the Taliban Government

The American Coalition against the Taliban Government, or ACATG, was formed in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks in 2001, as a response to the Taliban's extremist views and their support of terrorism. The coalition was a multinational grouping of nations and organizations, including the United States, NATO, the United Nations, and the European Union, which had a shared goal of defeating the Taliban government and removing them from power. The coalition sought to achieve this goal by military means, economic and diplomatic pressure, and by supporting the formation of a new Afghan government.

The United States was the driving force behind the formation of the ACATG and provided the majority of its military and economic support. After the September 11th attacks, President George W. Bush declared a global "war on terror" and authorized the use of military force against the Taliban in Afghanistan. The U.S. and its allies launched a series of air strikes against Taliban targets in October of 2001, and later deployed ground troops to the country in order to support the Afghan Northern Alliance and their fight against the Taliban. In addition to military support, the U.S. provided economic aid to the new Afghan government and helped to rebuild the country's infrastructure.

In the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) played a crucial role in the country, not only in military engagement but also in reconstruction and development efforts. In 2003, NATO deployed the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghanistan, marking the first time the organization conducted a mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area. The ISAF mission, under the United Nations mandate, was primarily focused on stabilizing Kabul and surrounding areas, providing security and support to rebuild governmental institutions. The scope of the mission eventually expanded to the whole of Afghanistan, encompassing a more comprehensive approach that included training Afghan security forces and assisting in reconstruction projects. For example, NATO's involvement in the construction of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, a crucial infrastructure project, significantly contributed to the country's economic revival and mobility (NATO, 2021). However, despite these efforts, NATO's presence in Afghanistan was challenged by persistent insurgency and complex political dynamics, impacting the overall stability and development progress in the region.

NATO's contribution to Afghanistan extended beyond military operations to encompass significant economic assistance. This support was vital in the immediate post-Taliban era, where the newly established Afghan government required substantial international assistance to rebuild the country's infrastructure and institutions. NATO facilitated various development projects, ranging from education and healthcare to governance and infrastructure development. These projects were aimed at fostering long-term stability and growth within Afghanistan. For instance, NATO's involvement in building schools and hospitals and providing vocational training to young Afghans was a key component of its strategy to support sustainable development (NATO, 2021). The organization also played a pivotal role in coordinating international aid and ensuring that

reconstruction efforts were aligned with the Afghan government's priorities. Despite these contributions, the effectiveness of NATO's economic assistance in Afghanistan has been a subject of debate, with concerns regarding the alignment of military objectives with developmental goals and the sustainability of the projects implemented.

The United Nations played a significant role in the coalition's efforts against the Taliban. On 12 September 2001, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1368, which authorized the use of "all necessary means" to combat terrorism and called for an end to the Taliban's oppressive regime (Bapat, 2008). This resolution, which was sponsored by the United States, was the first formal international statement of support for the American-led military action in Afghanistan and gave further legitimacy to the coalition's efforts (Wippman & Reisman, 2008).

The resolution also called on all states to "take all necessary steps to prevent and suppress" terrorist acts and to deny "safe haven" to anyone involved in terrorism (United Nations, 2001). This was particularly important, as the Taliban had been providing sanctuary to al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations (McChrystal et al., 2009). Thus, by passing Resolution 1368, the UN was helping to ensure that the coalition would be able to effectively combat terrorism in Afghanistan and prevent the Taliban from providing a safe haven for terrorist groups.

The UN also played an important role in the coalition's efforts by providing humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was instrumental in providing food and shelter to millions of internally displaced persons who had been forced to flee their homes due to the conflict (Bapat, 2008). Additionally, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provided logistical support and coordination for the humanitarian agencies operating in Afghanistan (United Nations, 2008). The UN also provided financial assistance to the Afghan government and to the Afghan people, which helped to rebuild the country's infrastructure and improve the lives of its citizens (McChrystal et al., 2009).

The United Nations, recognizing the critical need for support in Afghanistan, took significant steps to aid the war-torn country, culminating in the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in 2004. UNAMA's primary objectives involved aiding in the reconstruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure and fostering key governance principles such as the rule of law, human rights, and democratic processes. The mission played a crucial role in various aspects of nation-building, from overseeing the implementation of development projects to advising on political and human rights issues. For example, UNAMA was instrumental in the organization and monitoring of Afghanistan's 2004 presidential elections, the first democratic elections in the country's history, marking a significant step in its political reconstruction (United Nations, 2021). Additionally, the mission has been actively involved in promoting human rights and gender equality, advocating for the protection of women and minorities, and supporting the development of legal frameworks that uphold international human rights standards. However, despite these efforts, challenges such as ongoing conflict, political instability, and the resurgence of the Taliban have continually hindered the mission's ability to achieve its objectives fully.

Similarly, the European Union (EU) has played a vital role in supporting Afghanistan, particularly through financial and diplomatic efforts. The EU's contributions were consolidated under the EU-

Afghanistan Joint Reconstruction and Development Programme established in 2003, which focused on promoting economic development, education, and human rights. The programme channeled funds into reconstruction and development projects, such as building schools and healthcare facilities, and implementing vocational training programmes to enhance employment opportunities (European Union, 2021). This initiative represented a significant investment in the country's future, aimed at fostering sustainable development and stability.

In addition to development aid, the EU has been a key player in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Afghan conflict. It has supported peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban, providing a platform for dialogue and advocating for a political solution to the ongoing crisis. The EU's involvement in these negotiations underscores its commitment to a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, although the fluctuating security situation and complex political dynamics in the region continue to pose significant challenges to these efforts (Council of the European Union, 2021).

In summary, the American Coalition against the Taliban Government was an international coalition of nations and organizations that sought to defeat the Taliban and end their oppressive regime. The coalition was supported by the United States, NATO, the United Nations, and the European Union, who provided military, economic, and diplomatic support. This coalition was instrumental in the eventual downfall of the Taliban and the establishment of a new Afghan government.

Impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities on the Socio-economic and Political Development of Afghanistan

The Impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities on the Afghanistan Development is a topic of great importance. The Taliban is a terrorist organization that has been active in Afghanistan since the early 1990s and has been responsible for numerous human rights violations and acts of violence against civilians. In addition, the Taliban has been involved in numerous political and economic activities that have had a negative impact on the country's development.

The Taliban's activities have had a significant impact on the development of Afghanistan. Since the group's emergence in the early 1990s, the Taliban has been responsible for numerous human rights violations, including targeted killings, kidnappings, and the use of torture. The group has also been involved in numerous political activities, such as attempting to gain control of the government and imposing its own laws and regulations. In addition, the Taliban has been involved in economic activities, such as taxing Afghan citizens, controlling the opium trade, and using foreign aid for its own purposes (Gill, 2018).

These activities have had a negative impact on the development of Afghanistan. The Taliban's control of the government has resulted in a lack of economic and political stability, which has hindered the country's ability to make progress in terms of economic and social development. In addition, the group's involvement in the opium trade has led to a rise in drug-related crime and corruption, which has further hindered the country's progress. Furthermore, the Taliban's use of foreign aid for its own purposes has limited the amount of money available for development projects (Gill, 2018).

Economic Impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities

The economic ramifications of the Taliban's activities in Afghanistan and the broader region are profound and multi-dimensional. Taliban insurgencies and control in various parts of Afghanistan have led to substantial economic dislocation, with adverse effects on infrastructure, human capital, agricultural productivity, and international economic relations. The economic discourse surrounding the Taliban's impact encompasses direct costs such as the destruction of property and infrastructure, and indirect costs including the deterrence of foreign investment, disruption of agricultural and industrial production, and the imposition of international sanctions. The magnitude and scope of these impacts have been substantiated by various studies and reports which will be cited accordingly in the subsequent analysis.

Firstly, the direct economic impact of the Taliban's activities can be seen in the destruction and degradation of vital infrastructure. The targeted demolition of roads, bridges, and utilities by the Taliban has been a strategy to undermine the Afghan government and exert control. The World Bank (2021) estimates that the damage to physical infrastructure not only impedes immediate economic activity but also imposes long-term costs on the economy due to decreased efficiency and increased transaction costs. Furthermore, the Asian Development Bank (2020) discusses how the destruction of infrastructure leads to a significant diversion of resources towards reconstruction efforts, which would otherwise be used for development projects. The Taliban's operations also directly impact the agricultural sector, which is a cornerstone of Afghanistan's economy. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that the opium trade, which is heavily taxed by the Taliban, undermines legal agricultural practices and distorts the economy by inflating land prices and labor costs (UNODC, 2021). This illicit economy not only fuels the insurgency but also deprives the Afghan state of much-needed revenues and contributes to a culture of lawlessness and corruption.

The second major economic impact of the Taliban is related to human capital. The human costs of Taliban activities – including death, injury, and displacement – have profound implications for economic productivity. The loss of skilled workers, disruption of education, and deterioration of health services compound to erode the quality of the labor force. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has highlighted that Afghanistan faces a dramatic reduction in life expectancy, educational attainment, and increased poverty rates due to ongoing conflict (UNDP, 2021). These developments not only represent a tragic loss of human life and potential but also signify a severe blow to the economic prospects of the country, as a robust and skilled workforce is essential for both recovery and development.

Thirdly, the Taliban's activities have significant external economic impacts. International sanctions and the consequential isolation of Afghanistan from the global financial system have been a response to the Taliban's refusal to adhere to international norms and human rights standards. Such isolation has resulted in reduced foreign direct investment and limited access to international markets. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) notes that the Afghan economy suffers from these sanctions which compound existing vulnerabilities, leading to a reduction in the potential for economic growth and development (ADB, 2020). This isolation has also had a detrimental effect on the inflow of international aid, which has been a critical component of Afghanistan's economy, especially in terms of funding for development and humanitarian projects.

Finally, the economic impacts of the Taliban's activities can be further understood through the lens of the broader socioeconomic and political instability they engender. This instability has far-reaching effects, including the erosion of state legitimacy, the disruption of governance, and the curtailment of economic reforms. The complex interplay between these factors leads to an environment that is not conducive to sustainable economic development. For instance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has emphasized the importance of political stability for economic progress in developing countries, and the situation in Afghanistan is a clear example of how the lack of such stability can severely inhibit economic performance (IMF, 2021).

In conclusion, the Taliban's terrorist activities have resulted in a multifaceted economic impact on Afghanistan. The destruction of infrastructure, erosion of human capital, imposition of international sanctions, and the creation of a general environment of instability have all contributed to a debilitating economic situation. The extent of this impact is evidenced by the comprehensive reports and analyses provided by international organizations such as the World Bank, UNODC, UNDP, ADB, and IMF. These bodies provide a framework for understanding the challenges faced by Afghanistan and underscore the need for a concerted international effort to address these issues for the betterment of the Afghan people and the region.

Political impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities

The political impact of the Taliban's terrorist activities is a subject of critical importance, considering the transformation of Afghanistan's political landscape and the broader regional and international implications. The Taliban's ascent and persistent presence in Afghanistan have led to significant shifts in governance, the rule of law, and international relations. To understand these shifts comprehensively, it is essential to consider reports and analyses from credible sources that document and study the Taliban's political activities and their consequences.

The first dimension of the Taliban's political impact concerns governance and the rule of law within Afghanistan. The Taliban's approach to governance is underpinned by their strict interpretation of Islamic law, which contrasts sharply with the democratic processes and human rights norms that were being established in Afghanistan before their resurgence. The Taliban's rule has seen the dismantling of democratic institutions and the erosion of civil liberties. Human Rights Watch (2021) has reported on the Taliban's rollback of women's rights, suppression of dissent, and the use of military courts to enforce their rule, often disregarding due process (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The political monopoly the Taliban seeks to enforce undermines the establishment of a pluralistic society where multiple political voices and parties can contribute to the nation's governance.

Furthermore, the Taliban's impact on domestic policy and national unity is profound. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the Taliban's governance model has led to the exclusion of significant segments of the Afghan population from political participation, particularly women and ethnic minorities (UNAMA, 2021). This exclusion exacerbates ethnic divisions and hinders the development of inclusive national policies. The lack of transparency and restrictions on media have also led to a governance environment where accountability is minimal, and policy-making processes are opaque (Freedom House, 2021).

On the international stage, the Taliban's activities have strained Afghanistan's diplomatic relations. The Taliban's harboring of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda has been a source of international condemnation and has led to strained relations with the global community. The United Nations Security Council has enacted numerous resolutions imposing sanctions against the Taliban for their support of terrorism and their undermining of the peace and reconstruction process in Afghanistan (United Nations Security Council, 2021). These actions have left Afghanistan increasingly isolated, complicating the provision of international aid and the potential for diplomatic and trade relations that could assist in the country's development.

Lastly, the geopolitical impact of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan extends into the wider region of South Asia and beyond. The International Crisis Group (2021) notes that the security vacuum left by the withdrawal of US and NATO forces and the subsequent takeover by the Taliban have caused regional powers to reassess their security and foreign policies. The Taliban's relationships with neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran, have been contentious and have implications for regional security and counterterrorism efforts (International Crisis Group, 2021).

In conclusion, the Taliban's political activities have had a multifaceted impact on Afghanistan, affecting the internal dynamics of governance and policy, altering the course of the country's human rights trajectory, and significantly influencing its international relations and regional geopolitics. The transition of power to the Taliban has brought about significant changes in Afghanistan's political structure and has raised numerous challenges that have implications for regional stability and international security.

Social impact of Taliban Terrorist Activities

The social impact of the Taliban's activities is a deeply complex and pervasive issue that has been the subject of extensive study and analysis. The Taliban's brand of militant fundamentalism has dramatically affected the societal fabric of Afghanistan, manifesting in various forms such as the suppression of women's rights, the curtailment of education and cultural freedoms, the displacement of populations, and the exacerbation of sectarian tensions. These impacts not only reshape the social structure of Afghanistan but also have lasting implications for the well-being and development of its population.

Firstly, the suppression of women's rights under Taliban rule stands as one of the most egregious impacts on Afghan society. The Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law has led to the enforcement of policies that severely restrict the freedoms and rights of women. This includes limitations on education, employment, and freedom of movement. Reports by the United Nations (UN) highlight the systematic discrimination against women and girls, including barriers to accessing healthcare, which has profound implications for their social status and health outcomes (United Nations, 2021). The social exclusion of half the population has far-reaching consequences for societal advancement and economic participation, essentially halving the potential human capital available to the nation.

The impact on education extends beyond gender discrimination. The Taliban's activities have often directly targeted educational institutions, educators, and students, disrupting the education of

millions of Afghan children and young adults. UNESCO has reported on the closures of schools and higher education institutions, particularly those serving girls and women, as a result of Taliban policies (UNESCO, 2021). The loss of educational opportunities contributes to a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, with long-term implications for social mobility and the capacity for societal progress.

Furthermore, the Taliban's influence has led to the displacement of large segments of the Afghan population. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ongoing conflict, exacerbated by Taliban offensives, has resulted in millions of Afghans being internally displaced or seeking refuge in other countries (UNHCR, 2021). This displacement has significant social implications, disrupting communities, separating families, and placing immense strain on social services both within Afghanistan and in host countries.

Lastly, the Taliban's activities have intensified ethnic and sectarian divisions within Afghanistan, contributing to a climate of fear and mistrust. The Taliban, predominantly Pashtun, have often been accused of persecuting ethnic and religious minorities. The social fabric of the country has been weakened by these divisions, with reports of targeted violence and discrimination exacerbating existing societal cleavages (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The erosion of social cohesion poses a critical challenge to national unity and the prospects for peace and reconciliation.

In sum, the Taliban's terrorist activities have had severe social impacts on Afghan society. The undermining of women's rights, the destruction and closure of educational facilities, the displacement of populations, and the exacerbation of ethnic and sectarian tensions collectively depict a society in distress. These social issues require concerted attention from the international community, regional actors, and Afghan leaders to address the humanitarian crises and social injustices that have been perpetuated by the Taliban's activities.

Why the American Coalition failed in decimating the Taliban terrorist group in Afghanistan

The Taliban's ascent to power in Afghanistan, marked by resilience and extreme religious ideology, was bolstered by funding from Islamic nations and fundamentalist organizations. This enabled them to overcome the Western-backed government. Characterized by a high level of motivation and indoctrination, Taliban fighters readily engaged in suicide missions and aggressive tactics against their adversaries, contrasting with the more calculated and restrained approach of American-led allies.

Transitioning from a terrorist organization to a governing body, the Taliban faced massive destruction and challenges on both sides of the conflict. Governance has proven difficult for the Taliban, as the skills and resources required for running a state differ vastly from those needed in insurgency. As reported by the Crisis Group (2022), one year post-Taliban takeover, Afghanistan has seen a reduction in conflict but continues to struggle with significant security issues, including the presence of foreign militants.

The Taliban's sheltering of figures like the late al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri underscores the ongoing threat to both internal and external security interests. Despite the leader's death, the threat from his followers persists. This situation, combined with the Taliban's limited resources and technical expertise, has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, challenging their efficacy as a

government and highlighting the complexities of transitioning from militant group to state authority. The major question is, what are the factors that led to the failure of the American coalition against the Taliban in Afghanistan? This question will be addressed in the subsequent sections.

Geographical complexity of Afghanistan

The geographical complexity of Afghanistan played a crucial role in the Taliban's resistance against the American Coalition. The country's terrain, characterized by rugged mountains, vast deserts, and sparse infrastructure, posed significant challenges to Coalition forces accustomed to more conventional warfare settings (Jones, 2020). This harsh landscape acted as a natural fortress for the Taliban, providing ample opportunities for concealment and guerrilla tactics. The mountainous regions, with their intricate network of caves and hidden valleys, offered the Taliban safe havens and strategic vantage points. Their deep understanding of this local terrain was pivotal in orchestrating hit-and-run attacks, allowing them to strike unexpectedly and then swiftly disappear into the landscape. One notable instance illustrating this advantage was the Battle of Tora Bora in 2001. Here, the Taliban and their allies utilized the complex cave systems and mountainous terrain to mount a formidable defense against U.S. and allied Afghan forces. Despite superior firepower and technology, the Coalition found it challenging to dislodge the Taliban from this natural stronghold. The geographical intricacies of Afghanistan, thus, not only provided the Taliban with tactical advantages but also stretched the Coalition's resources and capabilities, complicating their counterinsurgency efforts significantly.

Asymmetric Warfare Strategies

In their fight against the American-led Coalition, the Taliban adeptly employed asymmetric warfare strategies, which fundamentally challenged conventional military tactics and approaches. A core component of these strategies was the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which became a hallmark of the Taliban's resistance (Smith, 2019). These IEDs were not only cost-effective but also highly adaptable, capable of being hidden in various terrains and detonated remotely, causing substantial damage and casualties. This unpredictability and the extensive use of IEDs made it extremely challenging for Coalition forces to secure regions and protect their personnel. Furthermore, the Taliban's reliance on suicide bombings added another layer of complexity. These attacks, often carried out by highly indoctrinated individuals willing to sacrifice their lives, struck fear and uncertainty among both military and civilian populations. A notable instance of this tactic was the 2011 attack on the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul, where Taliban insurgents, including suicide bombers, launched a well-coordinated assault, leading to numerous casualties. This attack not only demonstrated the Taliban's capacity to strike high-profile targets but also highlighted the difficulties faced by conventional forces in preempting and responding to such asymmetric threats. Collectively, these tactics undermined the Coalition's efforts in establishing security and maintaining control, as they continuously had to adapt to the evolving and unconventional methods of warfare employed by the Taliban.

Cultural and Political Misunderstandings

The American Coalition's efforts in Afghanistan were significantly impeded by cultural misunderstandings and a lack of insight into the intricate political landscape of the country. The

Coalition's strategies often overlooked the complex tribal dynamics, social norms, and historical contexts that are deeply ingrained in Afghan society (Johnson, 2021). This oversight led to policies and military actions that sometimes contradicted or offended local customs and values, inadvertently fueling resentment and opposition among the Afghan populace.

Moreover, the political landscape in Afghanistan is characterized by a mosaic of tribal affiliations, warlordism, and regional loyalties, which the Coalition struggled to navigate (Ahmed, 2022). Efforts to implement Western-style democratic systems and governance models did not resonate with the traditional and tribal structures prevalent in the country. This disconnect resulted in a lack of legitimacy for the government institutions that the Coalition attempted to establish and support.

The failure to adequately understand and engage with the cultural and political realities of Afghanistan not only limited the effectiveness of the Coalition's initiatives but also provided the Taliban with opportunities to exploit these gaps, strengthen their influence, and garner support from local communities disillusioned with foreign intervention (Khan, 2020).

Ineffective Afghan Governance and Corruption

The ineffectiveness of Afghan governance and pervasive corruption were critical factors undermining the American Coalition's efforts to decimate the Taliban. The Afghan government, supported by the Coalition, struggled to establish its legitimacy and effectiveness, largely due to rampant corruption at various levels (Rashid, 2021). This corruption eroded public trust and hampered the delivery of essential services, creating a vacuum that the Taliban often filled by providing alternative governance structures and judicial systems. Corruption manifested in numerous ways, from the misappropriation of funds and resources to the appointment of unqualified personnel in key government positions (Khalilzad, 2020). These practices not only weakened the government's administrative capacity but also alienated the population, many of whom viewed the government as exploitative rather than representative.

Additionally, the Afghan military and police forces, crucial to maintaining security and combating the Taliban, were plagued by corruption. This resulted in issues like "ghost soldiers" (non-existent personnel on the payroll) and the sale of military equipment to insurgents, directly undermining the fight against the Taliban (Schroden, 2019). The compromised integrity of these security forces diminished their operational effectiveness and contributed to the Taliban's resilience and resurgence. These governance failures and the systemic corruption within the Afghan state apparatus significantly impeded the objectives of the American Coalition, as they not only strengthened the Taliban's position but also weakened the foundational aspects of the Afghan state that were essential for long-term stability and security.

Limited Engagement and Support from Local Populations

The limited engagement and support from local populations in Afghanistan significantly contributed to the American Coalition's failure to decimate the Taliban. A crucial aspect of any counterinsurgency strategy is winning the "hearts and minds" of the local population; however, the Coalition's efforts in this regard were largely unsuccessful (Jones, 2021). This failure stemmed

from a combination of cultural misunderstandings, civilian casualties from military operations, and a lack of tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Afghans.

The Taliban, conversely, often succeeded in garnering local support, capitalizing on grievances against foreign forces and the corrupt Afghan government. They positioned themselves as defenders of Afghan values and sovereignty, effectively exploiting nationalist sentiments (Brown, 2022). Furthermore, the Taliban's use of informal justice systems, which were more accessible and efficient than the state's corrupt legal system, gained them favor among local populations.

Another factor was the Coalition's reliance on military solutions at the expense of sustainable, community-based development projects. This approach neglected the socio-economic needs of the local populace, creating a void that the Taliban frequently filled by providing basic services and security, albeit through their governance framework (Ahmed, 2023). The alienation of local communities and the perception of foreign troops as occupiers rather than liberators played into the hands of the Taliban, who were able to maintain a significant degree of popular support or at least acquiescence. This local support was a vital lifeline for the Taliban, enabling them to continue their insurgency against the Coalition and the Afghan government.

The boomerang effects of the transition of the Afghanistan Taliban to a state actor in Afghanistan and its implications on others terrorist groups

The transition of the Taliban from a non-state actor to a governing power in Afghanistan marks a pivotal moment in global geopolitics and terrorism dynamics. This transformation, often referred to as the "boomerang effect," has profound implications not only within Afghanistan but also for other terrorist groups worldwide. It challenges traditional notions of insurgency, statehood, and the nature of modern conflicts. This paper probes into the ripple effects of this transition, examining how the Taliban's shift to a state actor influences the strategies, ideologies, and operations of various terrorist organizations, reshaping the landscape of global terrorism

Legitimization of Militant Tactics

The Taliban's transition from a non-state actor to a state actor in Afghanistan has inadvertently led to the legitimization of militant tactics among similar groups globally. This transition is perceived as a success story for an insurgent group, showcasing that sustained militant resistance can eventually lead to political power (Smith, 2022). This perception emboldens other non-state actors, who may view the Taliban's trajectory as a viable blueprint for achieving their objectives.

The success of the Taliban has also resulted in a reevaluation of strategies among other terrorist and insurgent groups. Seeing the effectiveness of the Taliban's long-term, multifaceted strategy combining guerrilla warfare, political negotiations, and fostering local support, groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab might adapt similar approaches (Johnson, 2023). The Taliban's persistence and eventual ascension to power challenge the conventional notion that non-state militant groups cannot sustain long-term campaigns against state actors, potentially leading to an increase in protracted insurgencies worldwide.

Shift in Global Terrorist Dynamics

The ascendance of the Taliban from a non-state actor to a state actor in Afghanistan has significantly realigned global terrorist dynamics, with profound implications for groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This transition represents not just a territorial gain but a symbolic victory that reshapes the ideological landscape of global jihadism (Ahmed, 2024). It has prompted a reassessment of alliances, strategies, and objectives among various terrorist groups.

The Taliban's success has particularly impacted Al-Qaeda, a long-time ally. Historically, the Taliban provided sanctuary to Al-Qaeda, facilitating its global operations. With the Taliban's rise to power, Al-Qaeda faces both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it could benefit from a more secure base of operations; on the other, the Taliban's need for international legitimacy might constrain Al-Qaeda's activities (Khan, 2022). The Taliban's governance role may necessitate a distancing from Al-Qaeda's more global jihadist agenda, potentially leading to strategic divergences.

For ISIS, the Taliban's success presents a competitive challenge. ISIS has always criticized the Taliban for its nationalist focus and willingness to engage in political negotiations, contrasting it with its own transnational jihadist ideology. The Taliban's statehood could further exacerbate this ideological rift, potentially leading to intensified competition for recruits, resources, and ideological dominance within the jihadist landscape (Williams, 2023).

Moreover, the Taliban's rise impacts smaller regional groups. Groups in regions like Africa and Southeast Asia may seek to replicate the Taliban's model, combining insurgency with political maneuvering. This could lead to a surge in localized insurgencies, as groups attempt to emulate the Taliban's success in gaining territorial control and political influence (Brown, 2023).

In addition, the Taliban's transition affects global terrorist networks' relationships with state actors. Regional powers, previously supporting certain groups as proxies, might reassess their strategies in light of the Taliban's success. This reevaluation could lead to shifts in funding, support, and strategic alignments, further altering the global terrorist landscape (Rashid, 2023). The Taliban's rise to power as a state actor fundamentally alters the dynamics of global terrorism, influencing everything from ideological narratives to strategic alignments and operational tactics. This shift necessitates a reevaluation of counterterrorism strategies and international security policies, as traditional approaches may no longer be effective in this new context.

Influence on Regional Geopolitics

The transition of the Taliban from a non-state actor to a state actor has profound implications for regional geopolitics, particularly affecting neighboring countries like Pakistan and Iran, and influencing regional power dynamics. This transition not only alters the political landscape of Afghanistan but also has ripple effects across the region, impacting diplomatic relations, security concerns, and regional alliances (Kumar, 2024).

Pakistan, which shares a long and porous border with Afghanistan, faces a complex set of challenges and opportunities with the Taliban's rise to power. Historically, Pakistan has had a

nuanced relationship with the Taliban, often accused of providing covert support to the group (Hussain, 2023). The Taliban's ascendance could embolden militant groups within Pakistan, potentially destabilizing its internal security. Conversely, Pakistan might leverage its historical ties with the Taliban to exert influence in Afghanistan, positioning itself as a key regional player (Rahman, 2022).

Iran, sharing cultural and religious ties with Afghanistan's Shia minority, views the Taliban's Sunni-dominated government with caution. The Taliban's rule raises concerns for Iran regarding the treatment of Shias in Afghanistan and the potential for Sunni extremism spilling over its borders (Nasr, 2023). However, Iran might also see an opportunity to counterbalance U.S. influence in the region by engaging with the Taliban, despite ideological differences.

The Taliban's governance also impacts regional power dynamics, particularly concerning the roles of Russia and China. Russia views the situation as an opportunity to expand its influence in Central Asia and counter NATO's presence, while China sees economic opportunities and security concerns related to its restive Xinjiang province (Zhang, 2023). Both countries might engage in a pragmatic relationship with the Taliban, prioritizing regional stability and economic interests over ideological concerns.

The Taliban's transition affects not only direct neighbors but also the broader regional geopolitical environment. It challenges existing security and diplomatic frameworks, forcing regional powers to reassess their strategies in Afghanistan. This reevaluation may lead to new alignments and tensions, as countries navigate the complexities of dealing with a former insurgent group now in power.

Inspiration to Separatist Movements

The Taliban's transition from a non-state actor to a state actor in Afghanistan has had a significant inspirational effect on separatist movements around the world. This development serves as a potent symbol and a case study for various separatist and insurgent groups, providing them with a blueprint for achieving political and territorial objectives (Wilson, 2024). The Taliban's success demonstrates the potential for a non-state actor to not only survive against a superior military force but also to eventually assume control of a state.

One notable impact is on the morale and strategic thinking of separatist movements. Groups fighting for autonomy or independence, such as the Kurdish forces in the Middle East or separatists in the Donbas region of Ukraine, may draw lessons from the Taliban's persistence, tactical adaptability, and ability to negotiate from a position of strength (Taylor, 2023). The Taliban's journey from insurgency to governance reinforces the notion that sustained armed struggle can lead to political gains, potentially encouraging these groups to continue or intensify their campaigns.

Additionally, the Taliban's successful transition has led to an increased emphasis on gaining and maintaining territorial control among separatist groups. The control of territory not only provides a base of operations but also serves as a tangible symbol of sovereignty and legitimacy. This

strategy can be seen in movements like the Southern Transitional Council in Yemen and Baloch separatists in Pakistan, who seek to establish and expand their territorial foothold (Khan, 2023).

Moreover, the Taliban's ability to engage in international diplomacy and secure some level of recognition or tacit acceptance from certain countries provides a model for separatist movements. It illustrates the potential for gaining international legitimacy or support, which is crucial for the sustainability of such movements (Garcia, 2023). The Taliban's transition thus resonates beyond Afghanistan, potentially reshaping the strategies and aspirations of separatist movements worldwide. It underscores the evolving nature of non-state actors and the challenges they pose to the traditional state-centric international system.

Changes in International Counterterrorism Strategies

The rise of the Taliban from a non-state actor to a state actor in Afghanistan necessitates significant shifts in international counterterrorism strategies. This transition challenges the conventional frameworks and approaches that have been used to combat terrorism, prompting a reevaluation of policies by major powers like the United States and the European Union (Barnett, 2024). The need to adapt to this new reality is imperative for maintaining global security and addressing the evolving nature of terrorist threats.

One major shift is the increasing focus on diplomatic and political engagement, rather than solely military solutions. The Taliban's governance role in Afghanistan creates a complex situation where traditional military interventions are no longer viable, requiring a nuanced approach that balances security concerns with diplomatic considerations (Friedman, 2023). This shift involves engaging with the Taliban to some extent, to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorist activities, while also applying diplomatic pressure to uphold human rights and counterterrorism commitments.

Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on regional cooperation and multilateral efforts in counterterrorism strategies. The situation in Afghanistan demonstrates the limitations of unilateral actions and underscores the importance of collaborating with regional powers, including neighboring countries and regional organizations, to address shared security challenges (Kumar, 2024). This approach aims to create a more coordinated and comprehensive response to the threat of terrorism.

Moreover, the changing dynamics in Afghanistan have led to a reassessment of intelligence and surveillance strategies. Given the Taliban's control of a state apparatus, intelligence agencies are required to adapt their methods to monitor and counter terrorist activities within Afghanistan and prevent their spread beyond its borders (Harris, 2023). This adaptation may involve increased reliance on technological advancements, such as satellite imagery and cyber intelligence, and enhanced cooperation with regional intelligence networks. The Taliban's transition has also highlighted the need to address the root causes of terrorism, including political instability, economic underdevelopment, and governance issues. Counterterrorism strategies are increasingly incorporating elements of development aid, political support for stable governance, and efforts to address ideological extremism (Muller, 2023).

To crown it all, the Taliban's transition to a state actor represents a paradigm shift in the landscape of international terrorism, necessitating a recalibration of counterterrorism strategies. This recalibration involves a blend of diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation, intelligence adaptation, and addressing underlying socio-political issues. The transition of the Taliban from a non-state actor to a state actor in Afghanistan has significant implications for global terrorism and counterterrorism strategies. This development has legitimized militant tactics for other non-state actors, inspiring groups worldwide to adopt similar approaches (Smith, 2022; Johnson, 2023). It has also realigned global terrorist dynamics, affecting relationships between groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, and influencing smaller regional insurgencies (Ahmed, 2024; Williams, 2023).

Regionally, the Taliban's rise has reshaped geopolitics, particularly impacting neighboring countries like Pakistan and Iran, and altering the strategic calculations of major powers like Russia and China (Kumar, 2024; Nasr, 2023). Furthermore, the Taliban's success has provided a symbolic boost to separatist movements globally, offering a model of transitioning from insurgency to governance (Wilson, 2024; Taylor, 2023). This paradigm shift necessitates a reevaluation of international counterterrorism strategies, highlighting the need for diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation, adaptive intelligence strategies, and addressing the root causes of terrorism (Barnett, 2024; Friedman, 2023).

The Taliban's evolution from insurgency to statehood underscores the complexity of modern terrorism and the interconnected nature of global and regional security dynamics. It challenges existing frameworks and demands a more holistic and multifaceted approach to international security and counterterrorism.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the emergence of the Taliban terrorist group in Afghanistan is a complex issue that is rooted in the country's history of instability, poverty, and lack of security. The Taliban has employed a variety of tactics to further their aims, including violence and intimidation, to gain control of the country and spread their strict interpretation of Islamic law. The US-led coalition has maintained a strong force in the region to counter the Taliban's activities and ensure the stability of the region. The impact of the Taliban's terrorist activities on Afghanistan's development has been devastating, leading to millions of civilians being displaced and the destruction of much of the country's infrastructure. Although progress has been made in recent years, the Taliban continues to pose a serious threat to the safety and security of Afghanistan.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were stated based on the identified findings:

- 1) To address the root causes of the Taliban's emergence, it's essential to invest in rural development and education in Afghanistan. Initiatives that provide alternative livelihoods and promote moderate religious education can counter extremist indoctrination. Additionally, fostering a political environment that is inclusive of all ethnic and tribal groups can help reduce the sense of alienation that often drives support for groups like the Taliban.

- 2) Counterterrorism strategies should focus on disrupting the Taliban's logistical and financial networks. Enhanced intelligence cooperation among regional and global actors is crucial. Implementing sophisticated surveillance and targeted operations can weaken the group's operational capabilities. Additionally, counter-narrative campaigns to undermine the ideological appeal of the Taliban can be effective.
- 3) International efforts must focus on rebuilding Afghanistan's infrastructure and economy, severely impacted by Taliban activities. Investing in education, healthcare, and job creation can alleviate the socio-economic conditions that foster extremism. Politically, supporting democratic institutions and processes is vital to counter the Taliban's influence and encourage political stability.
- 4) Future interventions in similar contexts should prioritize understanding local cultures and dynamics. Training for foreign troops on cultural sensitivity and local customs can build trust with local populations. Long-term commitment to nation-building, rather than solely military objectives, is crucial for sustainable peace and stability.
- 5) Vigilant international monitoring and diplomatic engagement are necessary to ensure the Taliban do not support other terrorist groups. Sanctions and international pressure can be tools to hold the Taliban accountable to international norms. Simultaneously, offering diplomatic incentives for positive behavior could encourage the Taliban to reject global terrorism and focus on responsible governance.
- 6) Additionally, the transition of the Taliban to a State actor is likely to embolden other terrorist organizations to following this trajectory, thereby impacting regional geopolitics and altering global terrorist dynamics. In response, the civilized societies and governments worldwide must mobilize their resources to jointly dismantle terrorist organizations like the Taliban, rather than viewing it as a responsibility that falls solely on superpowers.

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