

Write a note on Non-State Actors = Question  
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## INTRODUCTION

NON-STATE ACTORS: NSAs

NSAs have been defined by many institutions  
In simple terms, Non-State Actors can be defined as:

"Organizations or individuals with sufficient power to influence and cause change in politics and not belonging to any established institution of a State."

OR

"Any entity which has a role to play (i.e. Actor) but it is neither a state nor its established institution."

Non-State actors can be both positive and negative. One of the greatest threat posed to the Global world is the presence of Violent Non-State actors (VNSAs)

VNSAs:

In international relations, Violent Non State actors are individual or groups that are independent of any government who use/employ violence for the furtherance of their objectives."

The presence of NSAs in South Asia World has posed a threat to international security landscape since the events of 9/11.

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The presence of NSAs in South Asia is a harsh reality. Numerous militant organizations operate in different South Asian Nations like Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Iran.

## BACKGROUND & THE GENESIS OF UNSAs:

### AFGHAN JIHAD MOVEMENT: AFGHAN WAR

In the development of various militant groups in the region, local and regional factors have played a crucial role in their emergence.

Afghan Jihad is widely regarded as the epicenter and fountainhead of militancy.

In 1980s various Jihadi organizations the United States engaged in a notorious proxy war to combat Communism supporting various Jihadi organizations, many of which operated in Pakistan. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, actively supported these organizations with human resources, financing, and weaponry to achieve their strategic interests. Several Groups such as

Harkat-ul-Mujahidden (HuM),

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM),

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT),

Sipah-e-Sahaba,

Lashkar-e-Jhanghi,

Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) were propped up

in Pakistan before the Taliban and Al-Qaeda decade by the support of US & other Western States with financial backing of Saudi Arabia.

The primary objective of these groups was to wage a proxy war against Communist/Soviet threat in Afghanistan.

### ⇒ KASHMIR CONFLICT

Pakistan also began using these groups as strategic assets in relation to the Kashmir conflict. Subsequently, Pakistan's policy toward the Afghan Jihad had a radicalizing effect in its society. Following the demise of the former Soviet Union, many of these organizations redirected their militant activities toward Kashmir, leading to numerous crises b/w Pak-Ind. India alleges that these VNSAs receive support from Pakistan, an accusation that Pak consistently denies. However, the twin Peak crisis in 2001-2002, the Mumbai attacks in 2008, and the Pulwama Attacks 2019 were all claimed by these NSAs, pushing the nuclear armed adversaries.

Similarly, Pak also accuses India as responsible for financing, arming, and training the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA).

which is a separatist movement in Baluchistan, as well as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in Pakistan.

These groups are mostly fighting against the Indian forces in Jammu & Kashmir, out of which some are purely indigenous, whereas some have been directly linked with other NSAs such as Al-Qaeda, JeM, ~~HeT~~ HM, LeT, HuM, all banned by Pakistan in 2002.

### ⇒ COLD WAR ERA (1945-1991)

VNSAs also got their ideological root from Socialist Ideology of Cold War years.

For example: The insurgent movement throughout Latin America and the Middle East have been influenced by Cold War's proxy wars b/w US & Soviet Union. They have been influenced by Socialist ideology of Soviet Union.

### ⇒ Post 9/11 Development

After this incident, militancy & extremism escalated. Development of 9/11 revolutionized Militancy.

Behind militancy, there was Nationalist passion, but after 2001, 9/11, religious fervour

took its place. In post 9/11 scenario, VNSAs persistently challenged the legitimacy & power of the States. By employing violent tactics, they want to attain public support & legitimacy.

## → FATA

Earlier, FATA was <sup>an</sup> independent region that attracted militants of Russia, Middle East & Central Asia. Many militant organizations resided there but after 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment, FATA was merged to KPK.

## CLASSIFICATION OF GOOD AND BAD

After APS incident, Pak said,  
Neither we are with India <sup>Good</sup> nor Bad (Militants)

## CHARACTERISTICS

- Organized groups
- Command structure
- Operate outside the State Control.
- Employ extreme violent tactics against civilian population.
- Induct activists by force or attract volunteers
- Want to erode the public confidence in State and multiply insecurity
- In exceptional situations VNSAs also enjoy territorial control. TTP controlled certain pockets of FATA, LTTE in Sri Lanka and Moro Islamic Liberation Front of Phillipines.
- are active in the form of insurgents, terrorists, militias & organized & criminal groups.

→ In advance, these narrative employ latest technique of propaganda.

## Change of Narrative: From Ethnic to Religious

Prior to 9/11 VNSAs were primarily motivated by ethnic considerations, however, in post 9/11, era "Mitti" "Millenaricism" with intense religious fever seems the prime motivation.

## Objectives: Change in State Policies

1) Act of terrorism are primarily carried out to compel the states to change the policies.

2) E.g In 2004, Madrid attacks forced Spain to withdraw troops from Iraq. However, in the backdrop of APS attack in Peshawar in 2014,

Pakistani leadership developed consensus on NAP, thus opted for an offensive strategy

Strategy

2) To challenge the legitimacy & power of the State and attain their own legitimacy

## Role of States in promotion of VNSAs

To undermine rival states, often state financed, trained and extended diplomatic support to VNSAs.

Situation slips out of control when states failed to realize that power to retain gun and exercise powers to run the state are exclusive powers of the states. States cannot afford militias, parallel administrative or judicial apparatus.

## ROLE OF MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

By excessive and repeated media coverage, media unconsciously provides oxygen to the UNSAs. Before implementation of NAP claiming of responsibility through media by UNSAs was an established norm. However, by barring mass media to accommodate such claims NAP, bailed out the media.

### Role of Internet

UNSAs are also very possessive about technology, when they are declined physical space, they prefer to remain alive in cyber space. Terrorism is a theatre, and the internet a stage where terrorists can perform certain roles.

For example: while executing a terrorist attack, planners also want to use it to attract an audience, inspire new talent, multiply a feeling of insecurity and erode public confidence in the state.

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Interactive Opportunities for Secret Discussions  
Communication

Internet offers interactive opportunities for VNSAs to connect with their supporters and amplify their voice. For secure comm, the dark web offers anonymity. Anonymous identities and end-to-end encryption are added attractions that increase the challenge for law enforcement agencies.

### → Access to Extremist Propaganda

Extremist propaganda is now disseminated in English, Bangla, Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Urdu, and other vernacular languages through social media. Dabiq, an online magazine published by the militant Islamic State in different languages, opts for purpose-driven communication.

Similarly, a cyberwelfare magazine for Jihadists titled "khybernetiq" provides info to the militants about technology and enables them to participate in the Cyber War against their enemies.

### Emotional ~~Because of the signif~~ EXPLOITATION OF THE SYMPATHIZERS

Because of significant presence of youth in cyberspace, terrorist groups have made it an norm to record video messages prior to suicide attacks. These messages



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glorify the volunteerism of the bombers and are aimed at attracting new recruits. Separately handlers also identify those who share pro-militarist and anti-west posts on social media. Those considered potential sympathizers are contacted by authorized persons who engage them in radical conversations. After assessing their mindsets, they share videos and other materials with them. If the target <sup>express</sup> accepts interest, they are enrolled for diff tasks in terrorist outfits.