

Q. Define non-state actors. 'Non-state actors are posing more threat to Pakistan's national security than threats from external state actors.' Argue in favor or against.

## 1) Introduction:

Non-state actors are indubitably wreaking havoc on Pakistan's political, social, and economic landscape. The violent activities of these groups have not only threatened the lives of innocent citizens but have also claimed countless lives. Moreover, the spectre of non-state actors has thrown political and economic stability into jeopardy. To add insult into injury, their disruptive actions continue to undermine efforts toward national progress. Hence, to counter this menace, certain practical measures are the need of the hour and absolutely indispensable.

## a) Defining non-state actors:

Robert Keohane, a political scientist, defines non-state actors as "actors in the international system that are not states but have significant influence on interstate relations or global affairs." These groups include

International  
Organizations

Multinational  
Organizations

Non-governmental  
Organizations

Terrorist, extremist,  
and separatist  
groups

Hence, these entities operate across borders without direct governmental control but still affect international politics and policies.



### 3) Origin of non-state actors in Pakistan.

The origin of non-state actors in Pakistan can be traced back to several historical and geopolitical factors:

→ During the ~~1980s~~ 1980s, the Soviet-Afghan war played a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's non-state actors.

→ The influx of weapons, radical ideologies and foreign fighters into Pakistan led to the rise of militant groups.

→ Over time, internal factors such as political instability, religious extremism, and socio-economic grievances have further fueled the emergence of homegrown insurgent, separatist, and terrorist groups.

### 4) Terrorist groups: an existential threat to Pakistan's national security

Terrorist groups, also known as violent non-state actors, are posing a threat to Pakistan's national security.

According to the Ministry of Interior, 930 people were killed in terrorist incidents across the country in 2023. Moreover, recent surge in these law and order activities have deteriorated the situation.

#### ~~4.1~~ ~~Manifestation~~

#### 4.1 ~~Violent~~ Non-State Actors operating in Pakistan:

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Lashkar-e-Thergui (LeT)

Balochistan Liberation Army

Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP)

Sipah-e-Sahabs Pakistan



These organizations, operating within the state of Pakistan, are continuously involved in myriad of terror activities.

## 4.2) Manifestation of surge in militancy

" Pakistan witnessed unprecedented surge in militant attacks as the country saw a staggering 67% rise in attacks in 2023."  
- Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS)

In August 2024, 59 terrorist attacks occurred in the country:

29 attacks  
in KPK

28 in Balochistan  
carried out by  
BLA

Source: Pakistan Institute for  
Peace Studies

## 5) Consequences of violent activities by NSA :-

### 5.1) Political and economic instability:

The continuous threat from non-state actors undermines the authority of the government, leading to frequent changes in policy, and weakened state institutions. Additionally, the economic losses from terrorism have been immense, slowing down development and increasing poverty.

### 5.2) Deteriorating social fabric :-

Violence by extremist and sectarian groups exacerbates divisions within society along ethnic, religious, and sectarian lines. This leads to mistrust among communities and weakens the unity of the nation.



### 5.3) Brain drain:-

Due to instability and threat of violence, educated professionals, academics, and skilled workers often leave the country in search of safer and more stable environment, depriving Pakistan of valuable human capital.

### 5.4) Threat to Women's rights and marginalized groups:-

Non-state actors, particularly extremist groups, often impose regressive interpretation of religious laws that curtail women's rights and oppress minorities. The attacks on female educational centers is manifestation of it.

### 5.5) Other consequences:-

National disintegration

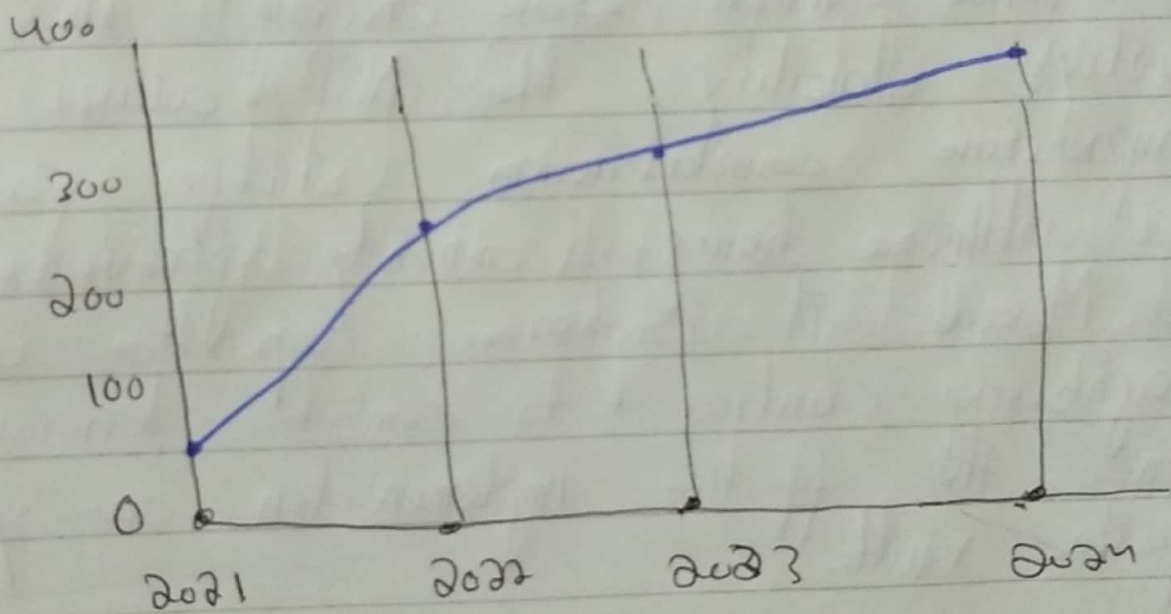
Spreading religious intolerance

Distorted international image

Jeopardized democratic values

6) Measures to control malicious activities of violent non-state actors :-

6.1) Engaging in talks with the Afghan Taliban to tackle the TTP threat.



Incidents after the Taliban takeover.

\* Source: Pakistan Institute For Peace Studies

Since Taliban's takeover, a surge in terrorist attacks in Pakistan has been witnessed. TTP is orchestrating these attacks from Afghan soil. So far,



Pakistan should engage Taliban in countering  
their menace.

## G.2) Eff Implementing National Security Policy 2022 :-

Effective implementation of NSP (2022) is crucial for addressing both internal and external threats, ~~ensuring~~ ensuring the country's stability. The NSP outlines a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy focused on intelligence sharing and community engagement. Moreover, it emphasizes cooperation with neighboring countries to combat terrorism. Hence, its effective implementation can yield positive results.

## G.3) Restructuring National Security Structure:

Pakistan's national security structure is based on Rational Actor Model, whereas Prime Minister acts as sole decision maker, lacking a critical discussion before policy making. In USA, National

Security Council works on sound input of academic experts and think-tankers, who are known experts in their area of research. Therefore, there is a need to form a comprehensive, multipurpose and all-encompassing decision-making body.

### 6.41 Strengthening Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs):

Strengthening LEAs is critical for enhancing national security. Factors that can reinforce LEAs are:

Training and Capacity building

Improved equipment and technology

Enhanced coordination



## 7) Conclusion:-

In a nutshell, non-state actors, particularly the violent ones, are operating within Pakistan, orchestrating their brutal activities. They are posing a more threat than external actors. The terrorist activities are damaging Pakistan's democratic landscape. Furthermore, innocent civilians are bearing the brunt of this menace. Thus, the aforementioned measures are essential to clamp down these non-state actors.