

Resurgence of Terrorism in Pakistan

1. Introduction:

2. Historical Context

3. Current Scenario

- a. TTP uprising in Southern KP
- b. Baloch insurgents on a rise
- c. Major incidents in recent times

4. The root causes are multifaceted ranging from political, regional to socioeconomic

- a. Geopolitical and Regional Dynamics
- b. Religious Extremism and Radicalization
- c. Foreign Involvement and Proxy wars
- d. Socioeconomic deprivation and Policy gap

5. Consequently, the impacts of growing terror activities are numerous:

- a. Security and Law enforcement
- b. Socioeconomic Development and CPEC
- c. Political discontent
- d. International image and Global distrust

b. The nation has demonstrated resilience in the past and can effectively curb insurgency

- a. Policy Reform and strengthening institutions
- b. Military-Intelligence based operation
- c. Negotiations and delivery of promises
- d. Education and Socioeconomic Uplift

7. Conclusion

The clutches of terrorism are tightening again, posing a persistent existential threat to the Pakistani state. This resurgence came from a constant build up after the military operations left it crippled earlier. Although, the insurgency is of a comparatively lower scale, constantly rising frequency as well as the intensity of terrorist activities demands a potent response. Historically, the country has navigated through various terrorist threats and uprisings due to its geographical proximity with a war-torn Afghanistan. Currently, the growing wave is stemming from various regional, political, economic and social factors resulting in a grave security dilemma, crippled socioeconomic development and political distrust. The need of the hour is a holistic approach comprising policy reforms, strong institutions, intelligence based operations, negotiations, socioeconomic uplift, and social awareness to combat insurgency and secure future.

Before delving into the terrorist resurgence, a broader understanding requires a grasp of historical context. As per **UN Security Council**, terrorism is intended at creating fear by committing violence against civilians. These tactics are deployed to pressurize governments to attain organizational along with personal gains.

Pakistan's landscape saw an unavoidable ~~terror~~ rise after its part in ousting Soviet invaders from Afghan lands through mujahideens. This, however, brought an unexpected policy ~~blowback~~, resulting in extremist ideology and radicalization of masses. The circumstances were further exacerbated post 9-11; US-led War on ~~Terror~~ inflicted serious internal and external repercussions on the country. As the Biden administration left, the Taliban regime continues to provide safe heavens to the insurgents leaving our efforts ~~unfruitful~~

Despite the heavy ~~price~~ paid by Pakistan in its war against insurgents, the current scheme of things paints a rather dull picture. The mass appeal of the radical Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in southern KPK, particularly the merged districts, has remained a constant threat to the nation. As per Doha Agreement (2021), US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan took place leaving Pakistan with a Taliban regime to tackle. Since then, a constant point of discord between Pakistan and Afghanistan, is the provision of safe havens to TTP militants by Afghan government. Further exacerbating the scenario, an ethno-centred uprising in the form of Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has crippled the security situation in parts of the province. The recent incidents

including **Jaffar Express** hijack (Mar, 2025) and sectarian violence in **Peshawar** come as a loud wake-up call.

Coming to the causes, multiple factors are at play simultaneously. To start with, the geo-politics of the region interests various key players: CPEC is a flagship project with potential to change the global trade dynamics. To counter global rise of China, threatening US-led world order, the Indo-US strategic nexus is actively creating hurdles in Balochistan province as instability will derail the development. As per **ABN news report**, US has funded a radical militant group named "Jundullah" in Balochistan; the group not only attacked Chinese soldiers but was also anti-Islam. Furthermore, the statements of RAW's ^{captured} spy Kulbushan Jadhav confessing Indian involvement leave no room for error. In addition, the TTP is backed on the other side of western front by Afghan government. The porous nature of western border inflicted serious damage. Adding to the woes, a wave of religious extremism and radicalization has long threatened the very roots of the Pakistani state. The country's participation in Afghan Jihad and later, US-led war on terror, resulted in a grave policy blowback spreading Islamic insurgent groups throughout the country.

After the **Lal Masjid Operation (2007)**, these groups, backed by Al-Qaeda, grew anti-state, attacking various military and civilian settlements. Not only this, but an enhanced foreign involvement in region by global powers resulted in the country being used as a proxy against USSR and then Afghanistan. **Global Terrorism**

Database (GTD) estimated a damage of over 83000 plus lives of Pakistanis after its participation in American war on terror.

One of the recurring factors throughout time has been the socioeconomic deprivation in parts of Balochistan and Southern KPK. This resulted in increased grievances; public sentiment was exploited by radicals and secessionists on these grounds creating an air of distrust on the governments. Moreover, the feudal system and lack of political participation further gave rise to their sentiments. The **Human Development Index (HDI)** of Balochistan stands at 0.460, the lowest in Pakistan; literacy rates in Southern KPK districts range between 31-35% as per **Ministry of Planning and Development**. All these factors portray a policy gap and neglect on the part of governments, which only exacerbated the situation. Ultimately, the earlier peaceful groups took weapons and turned violent, with foreign involvement in exploiting faultlines.

As we turn to the consequences, these are also multifaceted, ranging from security threats, hurdles in law enforcement to lack of progress in CPEC projects and political discontent. The major damage has been inflicted upon the security situation of the country through the killings of military personnel and civilians. From 2007 to 2014, the growing frequency and intensity resulted in lives lost, massive economic damage and shattered global image. The large scale military operation, including Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fassad, did some damage control, but since 2022 the resurgence has been observed.

A leading national newspaper reports a 49 percent surge in terrorist attacks in 2024 from the previous year. Hence, the consequences continue to curtail the efforts.

On the growth and development side, the growing insurgency has taken a serious toll on the flagship project between China and Pakistan. The earlier determined timeline for the completion of second phase was 2025 but as of now the major projects have all come to an unfortunate halt. Despite providing the security, the attacks on Chinese engineers and workers saw a constant rise leading to re-examinations of Chinese government. Since 2021, 14 terrorist attacks have killed 20 Chinese nationals and

in juxed 25, as per **Pakistan Today** reports. The main force behind these attacks has been Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which aims at secession of Balochistan region.

Consequently, all these events inevitably led to a lack of political trust and shattered the soft ~~image~~ image of the country on the global stage. An unstable region with growing armed insurgency is not much likely to demonstrate itself via political struggle. Coupled with political engineering in the past, a growing distrust of parliamentary politics and its institutions nurtured discontent and a feeling of otherness. Apart from internal lack of trust and political impacts, the sufferings also manifest themselves at the global level. **The Global Terrorism Index** ranked Pakistan at second place, just behind Burkina Faso in world terrorism rankings. These attacks and such reports portray a rather gloomy state of affairs and stains country's soft power on various global forums.

As far as the solution to these grave national matters is concerned, there does exist a silver lining in the clouds for the country, as is shown by its past. The

state has dealt with such terrorist attacks and groups and can do so again by reigniting the **National Action Plan**. To counter and consequently eliminate such activities, the short term solution lies in targeted military operations or the intelligence based operations (IBOs), followed by negotiations with groups of mild behaviours. Also, those who are ready to surrender should be allowed to rejoin the state. To make these effective, the state should also carry long term policies: engaging other international stakeholders and neighbouring countries to stop foreign funding, delivering its own promises to the people of land and socioeconomic uplift of the region. The route is long and hard, but the state and its institutions are more than capable of ensuring long-term peace.

The resurgence of terrorism is an alarming factor demanding an instant solution by curbing armed militants, negotiations and delivering socioeconomic promises. Although, the issue now seems of archaic nature, the constant regrouping and resurfacing continue to instill a feeling of insecurity across the country. Various internal and external factors have further exacerbated the issue in large parts of Balochistan and Southern KPK. The armed forces and state institutions have demolished the enemy in the past and need a similar response backed with non-kinetic measures to sustain long-term peace and prosperity.