

Maktab Competitive Exams Services

Current Affairs Workshop for CSS 2025

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Radical Shift in Insurgency in Pakistan: A Need of Rethinking Afghan Policy

A Glance at Contemporary Events:

1. Balochistan Bombings (February 2024) Pishin District and Killa Saifullah. Islamic State – Pakistan Province (ISPP) claimed responsibility, stating both attacks
2. Gwadar Port Authority Complex Attack (March 2024) Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), specifically its Majeed Brigade, claimed responsibility, stating the attack was a warning to foreign investors, particularly from China.
3. Karachi Airport Bombing (October 2024) Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility, continuing its campaign against Chinese interests in the region (Zirab)
4. Kurram District Ambush (November 2025) Gunmen ambushed a convoy of over 200 vehicles transporting Shia Muslims from Parachinar to Peshawar. the attack is suspected to be sectarian in nature
5. Airstrikes in Paktika Province in the wake of Terror Attack in South Waziristan (Operation Azm e Istehqam)
6. Abduction of Mine Workers (Januray 2025) Militants abducted 16 mine workers associated with a project linked to the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.
7. In the 2024 Global Terrorism Index, Pakistan is ranked among the top ten countries most impacted by terrorism, reflecting the persistent threat within its borders.
8. Pakistani security forces experienced their deadliest year in nearly a decade, with an average of seven deaths daily, totaling at least 685 fatalities and 444 terror attacks. (Associated Press)
9. The year 2024 saw a total of 1,612 fatalities due to terrorism, including both civilians and security personnel, marking a 73% increase in losses. (Associated Press)
10. Pakistani security forces conducted approximately 59,775 counter-terrorism operations in 2024, resulting in the elimination of 925 terrorists, including 73 high-value targets. (Dawn)
11. BLA is the fastest Growing Terrorist group with responsibility of 36 % of total terrorist attacks in Pakistan

Various Dimensions of Terrorism in Pakistan:

1. **Religious and Sectarian Terrorism:** Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)
2. **Ethno Nationalist Terrorism:** BLA, BLF

3. **Political Terrorism:** Political parties with militant groups
4. **Militancy with International Collaborations:** Al Qaeda, ISIS, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, East Turkestan Islamic Movement
5. **State sponsored and Proxy Terrorism:** India, Afghanistan, Iran
6. **Terrorism against Economic Assets:** BLA - CPEC
7. **Digital Terrorism:** Information warfare against State Institutions

Role of Afghanistan in Current Insurgent Landscape of Pakistan:

1. The group got realigned in recent years. Its affiliated groups; Jamat ul Ahrar, Tariq Gidar Group, Hizbul Ahrar renewed their pledge of allegiance to Noor Wali Mehsud. Realignment of TTP Doctrine (Inqalab e Mehsud: **Transforming the fundamentals from Hanafism to orthodox Salafism**). Major aim is destruction of existing order. (MITNOR – Three aspects: Ideological exclusivity, Illiberalism, Historic Frame of Reference)
2. Afghan Taliban Nexus: Strategic Depth – Similar Islamic Ideology – Afghan Taliban's own weaknesses (Northern Alliance (National Resistance Front) and ISK - killing of Khalil Haqqani)
3. Pakistan halted transit trade 54 million dollars losses to Afghanistan
4. Expulsion of Afghan Refugees (Four periods of Afghan refugees - Security and Economic Burden – Smuggling of Dollars)
5. The stance of Taliban remained unchanged - Questions credibility of Pakistan – Taliban emerging ties with Russia, India and China – Pakistan unable to use political leverage because of Reduce economic dependence of Taliban on Pakistan – TAPI – Qosh Tepa Canal

Pakistan's Vulnerabilities:

1. Massive strategic miscalculations to help lift Afghan Taliban into power by ignoring their ideological bond with TTP.
2. Policy of appeasement towards TTP: Secret release of Muslim Khan and Ehsanullah Ehsan and recent negotiations with TTP were tactical blunders that emboldened them.
3. Miscalculating "Center Periphery Model" with respect to upsurge in terrorist activities in recent times.
4. Weakness of diplomatic maturity was seen from Pakistani side in recent Pak Afghan peace talks
5. Massive resistance was seen by locals of FATA
6. The military's India Centric perspective does not prepare itself for combating a still deadlier enemy. (18000 vs 70000 deaths)
7. Engaging Jirgas and religious scholars for confidence building measures have proved counter-productive and many of the members of such delegations have proved spoilers rather than helping the state reach a consensus

Policy Options for Pakistan to Counter Terrorism:

1. There should be an open discussion and ensure transparency in the country's Afghan policy within and outside parliament, including on terrorism in Pakistan

2. Instead of looking at them as old allies, Pakistan needs to engage with the Taliban in a bilateral state to state framework to seek security cooperation. Talks between the two states should be held on Track I Basis.
3. National consensus on Zero Terrorism Policy (Same as we did in Paigham e Pakistan Initiative 2018)
4. Well-honed top bottom collaboration between counter terrorism departments and regular audits of their performance is essential
5. Need of avoiding political bickering and blame game on each other by political parties on the matter of national security policies
6. Need of spreading a counter narrative of such retrogressive ideologies at societal level
7. De-radicalization centers to de-radicalize the mindset of youth (Saboon, Rastoon, Helia)

Pakistan's Initiatives to counter Terrorism:

Anti-terrorism Act 1997, Formation of NACTA in 2007, Anti-Money Laundering Act 2010, Anti-terrorism Act Amended in 2013, Pakistan Protection Ordinance 2014, National Internal Security Policy 2014, National Action Plan 2015, Paigham e Pakistan Initiative 2018, Revision of National Internal Security Policy 2018, Anti-Terrorism Act amended in 2020, Anti-Money Laundering Act amended in 2020, United Nation Security Council Act 2020, Revision of National Action Plan 2021, National Security Policy 2022, Operation Azm e Istehkam 2024