

SECURITY COUNCIL

TOPIC A:

The question of countering the threat posed by terrorist organisations in Afghanistan



i. Introduction of Topic

Terrorist organizations in Afghanistan have been posing global threats especially in the last two decades since the 9/11 incident. The Taliban have been capturing major cities in Afghanistan and external intervention, especially from the United States, has been declared in order to minimise and counter these hazards (Coleman J.D.). Taliban have been rapidly taking control of the country over the past 20 years, partially due to the troublesome negotiations that only caused damage to the US troops, while creating an opportunity for the Taliban to take power by force (De Luce). The Security Council has been imposing a series of obligations on all states in order to combat the Taliban, including freezing finances and other financial resources possessed by the Taliban and guaranteeing that no financial resources are made accessible to or for the advantage of the organisation (Coleman J.D.). Succeeding those, further sanctions were imposed such as the prohibition of sale or distribution of weaponry to the Taliban, as well as any technical, financial, or training aid for their military activities. In the past two decades, as well as recent years, the terrorist organizations have deeply concerned states over their continuous violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights (Coleman J.D.). The resolutions regarding "the question of countering the threat posed by terrorist organisations in Afghanistan", stress the need for the suppression of international terrorism if international peace and security are to be maintained, as stated in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter (UN, EUR-Lex).

ii. Definition of Key Terms

Taliban: Taliban, alternatively written as Taleban in Pashto, is an ultraconservative political and religious party that arose in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s following the resignation of Soviet troops, the collapse of Afghanistan's communist administration, and the consequent breakdown in civil order (Britannica).

9/11: 9/11 is the September 11 attack, a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks planned by al-Qaeda. Two planes hit the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the third crashed in the west side of the Pentagon, and the fourth was intended to crash in

Washington D.C., but instead crashed into a nearby field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania (Janos).

al-Qaeda: Osama bin Laden created al-Qaeda, Arabic al-Qidah ("the Base"), a broad-based militant Islamist organization in the late 1980s (Britannica).

ISKP/ISIS-K: The ISKP (Islamic State-Khorasan Province), also known as ISIS-K, is an affiliate of the Islamic State (IS or ISIS), and holds a presence in Afghanistan, particularly in the Nangarhar province, which borders Pakistan (FAS).

Afghanistan: Afghanistan is a landlocked country in Central and South Asia. It borders Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China. The capital of Afghanistan is Kabul.

iii. Background Information

The Afghanistan war was triggered in 9/11, the September 11 attack in 2001(see Key Terms). The issue of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan as a global threat, was incited from 9/11. From 2002 until 2008, a US strategy was initiated to defeat the Taliban military. The goal was to defeat the Taliban military and rebuild core Afghan institutions (Britannica). In 2009, President Barack Obama decided to temporarily deploy more troops in Afghanistan. The scope was to protect the Afghan population from terrorist attacks. In 2011, there was a withdrawal of the US troops, and the responsibility was moved onto the Afghan military and police (Britannica). The approach proved to be ineffective as casualties were still extremely high. By December of 2014, the US and NATO (see Organizations Involved) officially ended their combat mission (Britannica).

Since the withdrawal of foreign troops, Taliban were able to advance and more easily take over Afghanistan. They continued attacking government forces and killing journalists and rights activists, spreading fear in the country. The Taliban pushed lots of propaganda and psychological operations to popularize the notion of an inevitable Taliban victory (France 24).

The goal of the Taliban is allegedly to reimpose Islamic rule in Afghanistan. They claim to focus on rebuilding Afghanistan (Nissenbaum). Their means of doing so are extremely oppressive and pose threats to Afghans' civil and political rights. The people in Afghanistan who are most impacted by the Taliban are Afghan women. Taliban leaders claim to be committed to women's rights for Islam, but in actuality they have severely limited the freedom of Afghan women (Nissenbaum). Girls are not allowed to school, and women are not allowed in the majority of government workplaces. Even in private universities, genders are segregated. Women are obligated to wear hijabs, and cannot leave their houses without being accompanied by a male relative (Nissenbaum).

iv. Major Countries and Organisations Involved

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's aim is to improve the awareness of the threats, training their capabilities to respond and prepare, and strengthening engagements with partner countries and international intervention. NATO allies closely monitored the situation in Afghanistan after 9/11, in which they had troops deployed for 20 years under the United Nations Security Council (NATO). Troops of 36 different nations under NATO are currently in Afghanistan (Saif).

SCO: The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) was founded to ensure security and maintain stability in the Eurasian region. They established a SCO-Afghanistan contact group to address the challenges after the retreat of the United States in Afghanistan (ISPI).

United States: The United States has a significant role in countering terrorist organizations in Afghanistan. The US led their forces in Afghanistan for 13 years, becoming the longest war ever fought by them (Britannica). The United States has been involved in the issue since 9/11. There are currently 2500 US troops under NATO deployed in Afghanistan (Saif).

Germany: Germany has 1,300 soldiers deployed in northern Afghanistan (Saif). They are the nation with the second most troops in Afghanistan. German Humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan has funded a total of 451.4 million euros since 2001. Since August 2021, humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan has increased by 100 million euros (Amt).

v. Timeline of Events

1999 (Oct. 15) Al-Qaeda and Taliban Nexus: The Security Council recognizes Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee as terrorist entities and imposes sanctions on their funding, travel, and arm shipments (CFR).

2001 (Sept. 11) Terrorists Strike the United Nations (9/11)

2001 (Sept. 18) War Footing: Bush signs a joint resolution allowing the use of arms on those responsible for 9/11 (CFR).

2001 (Nov. 9) Talibans retreat: Taliban strongholds weaken after offences. The United Nations establishes a transitional administration to invite members to send peacekeeping forces (CFR)

2001 (Dec. 3) Bin Laden escapes: The leader of al-Qaeda is found in Tora Bora but the US forces do not lead the assault (CFR).

2002 (Apr. 7) Reconstructing Afghanistan: Bush announces the reconstruction of Afghanistan. He plans to create a sort of Marshall Plan (WW2), but for Afghanistan. The US congress decided that over 38 billion dollars were to be used for assistance to Afghanistan (CFR).

2003 (May 1) "Major Combat" Over: Bush announces that major combat activity has ceased and they are now in a period of stability in which they can continue with reconstructions and activities (CFR).

2004 (Jan.) Constitution for Afghanistan: Afghan delegates agree on a constitution for Afghanistan (CFR).

2004 (Oct. 9) New Afghanistan President is elected: Hamid Karzai becomes the first democratically elected leader of Afghanistan (CFR).

2005 (May 23) US Commitment: Karzai and Bush announce a joint declaration in which they are strategic partners (CFR).

2009 (Feb. 17) Obama Recommits to Afghanistan: Obama plans to send 17,000 more troops to Afghanistan.

2010 (Nov) Security transition: NATO countries sign a declaration to pass on full responsibility for security in Afghanistan to the Afghan forces (CFR).

2011 (May 1) Osama Bin Laden Killed: The Al-Qaeda leader is killed by US forces in Pakistan (CFR).

2011 (Dec. 5) Bonn Conference: An international conference is held to discuss Afghanistan's political future (CFR).

2014 (May 27) US Troop withdrawal: Obama withdraws US forces from Afghanistan. Troops remain after the combat mission at the end of 2014. By 2016, most troops were planned to be withdrawn (CFR).

2017 (Aug. 21) Trump Prolongs War: Trump presses an open-ended military commitment to avoid a "vacuum of terrorists" (CFR).

2019 (Sept. 7) Trump calls off Peace Agreements: Trump cancels a secret meeting with the Taliban and Afghan president (CFR).

vi. Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Both of the following resolutions have been attached as Annex A (S/2020/185) and Annex B (S/2020/184) to the UN Security Council Resolution 2513 (2020). (see point viii)

S/2020/185 - Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

The document was stipulated as both the US and Afghanistan “are committed to working together to reach a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement that ends the war in Afghanistan for the benefit of all Afghans and contributes to regional stability and global security.” It includes four parts which are interrelated and interdependent: 1) address the continuing terrorist threat in Afghanistan and the use of its soil by any international terrorist groups or individuals; 2) set a timeline for the withdrawal of all U.S. and Coalition forces from Afghanistan, as they are no longer necessary to achieve security objectives; 3) guarantee a political settlement resulting from intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations between the Taliban and an inclusive negotiating team and 4) a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. This document was issued the 29th of February 2020 in Kabul, Afghanistan, between the US and Afghanistan and afterwards recognised by the Security Council on the 9th of March 2020.

S/2020/184 - Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America

This document, as the previous one (S/2020/185), was stipulated with the aim of reaching a comprehensive peace agreement which, both parts agreed, is made of four parts. The four parts are: 1) prevent the use of the soil of Afghanistan by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies, thanks to steps that will be taken by the Taliban; 2) announce timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan; 3) the start of intra-Afghan negotiations among Taliban and Afghan sides on the 10th of March 2020; 4) the item of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire on the agenda of the intra-Afghan dialogue and negotiations. This document was signed on the 29th of February 2020 in Doha, Qatar, and was recognised by the Security Council on the 9th of March 2020.

vii. Main Issues

The main issues related to terrorism in Afghanistan regard humanitarian aspects and violation of human rights.

As a consequence of the Taliban's recent military offensive and of the withdrawal of foreign troops, the violence in Afghanistan has reached new heights of egregious human rights violations, demonstrating the escalating and devastating tactics of directly targeting civilian populations by terrorist groups. (Fionnuala Ní Aoláin¹) Women and girls are the most impacted by the Taliban, "experiencing the same rights violations as 20 years ago at the control of the Taliban, including the forced wearing of a Burka, forced marriage, restriction on freedom of movement and required use of a mahram, prohibition on working and restricted access to health care, education and more." (OHCHR) These grave violations of human rights could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, as reported and condemned by the High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

Humanitarian aspect is also critical, as almost half of Afghanistan's population are in need of emergency relief assistance, with needs expected to rise, while the country is "in the throes of a third wave of COVID-19 and a severe drought". (International Organization for Migration IOM) Furthermore, medical staff and patients are put at a tremendous risk, hospitals, electricity and water infrastructure are damaged and life in the cities is not safe anymore, due to the use of explosive weaponry. (International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC)

viii. Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

S/RES/1267 - 15th of October 1999

The following resolution was adopted by the UN Security Council on the 15th of October 1999 in an effort to face and resolve the problem of countering terrorism in Afghanistan, in particular the Taliban and Al-Qaeda factions. Clauses 1 and 2 urge the Taliban to stop the use of their territory by terrorist organisations and to turn over Osama Bin Laden. The other clauses (3-16) express what measures have to be taken by all States against the Taliban, by imposing sanctions on their funding, travel, and arm shipments. In particular clause 6 asks for the establishment of a Committee of the Security Council consisting of all the members of the Council (the Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee).

S/RES/2513 - 10th of March 2020

¹ Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

This resolution was put forth by the UN Security Council to welcome the significant steps taken towards ending the war in Afghanistan and opening the door to intra-Afghan negotiations enabled by the Joint Declaration (S/2020/185) between the US and Afghanistan and the peace agreement signed by the US and the Taliban (S/2020/184), expressed in clause 1.

Clauses 2, 5, 6 and 8 call upon the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban “to pursue additional confidence-building measures — including by reducing violence and releasing prisoners — in good faith” and all States to provide their full support, thereby creating the conditions for a durable peace, essential for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Clauses 3 and 4, instead, affirm the need for diverse and inclusive intra-Afghan negotiations and a political settlement which must protect the rights of all Afghans and “build on the economic, social, political and development gains achieved since 2001”. Lastly clause 7 expressed the readiness of the Council to review the status of individuals and groups designated in the sanctions established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), mindful of the Taliban action in intra-Afghan negotiations.

S/RES/2593 - 31st of August 2021

The following resolution was adopted by the United Nations Security Council after the terrorist attacks that took place near Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul on 26 August and were claimed by the Islamic State in Khorasan Province.

Clauses 1 and 6 directly address the attacks of 26 August, by condemning them and asking for strengthening security, in order to allow for the rapid and secure reopening of the Kabul airport. Clause 2 concerns the issue of terrorism in Afghanistan, affirming the importance of combating it. The humanitarian aspects are addressed in clauses 3 and 4, as they underline the necessity of strengthened efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and major Afghan refugee-hosting countries, of upholding human rights and of seeking an inclusive political settlement, “with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women”.

Lastly, clause 5 regards the right of Afghans to travel abroad, stated by the Taliban on 27 August. This resolution furtherly notes the Taliban’s condemnation of this attack; and their commitment in fighting terroristic organizations (clauses 1 and 2).

S/RES/2596- 17th of September 2021

This resolution was adopted by the UN Security Council to extend until 17 March 2022 the mandate of UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan), stressing “the critical importance of a continued presence of UNAMA and other United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes across Afghanistan” and calling upon “all Afghan and international parties to coordinate with UNAMA “. (Security Council)

ix. Possible Solutions

Damage the Taliban regime: by imposing international sanction on their funding, travel, and arm shipments, since they are a designated terrorist organisation and a risk for the international peace and security, as though it was imposed in 1999 with the Resolution 1267 of the Security Council.

Guaranteeing the respect of human rights: by establishing of a fact-finding mission to work in Afghanistan to assess the situation on the ground and report back to the Human Rights Council on human rights any violation of human rights and by using the full capacity of the Council to engage with all stakeholders to protect and support the most vulnerable, including children, women and girls, internally displaced persons, the disabled, human rights defenders, journalists and educators (OHCHR).

Ensuring humanitarian aid to the population: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) together with the Afghan Red Crescent declared they will continue to work in Afghanistan, with the aim of increasing the number of health structures, ensuring the dignity of detained populations, and connecting separated families across borders. The ICRC has furtherly urged the international community to provide more protection for civilians and vital infrastructure, such as hospitals, from attack and help prevent collateral damage caused by fighting in populated areas. The IOM stated that all parties to the conflict and neighboring countries must ensure that border crossing points remain open, and humanitarian workers are able to access vulnerable populations in the border areas.

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