

Committee/Council: Security Council

Issue: The threat of the Taliban militia in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan

Student Officer: Sofia Kopsacheili

Position: Deputy President

Introduction

The Taliban are an Islamic fundamentalist group located in the two neighboring countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the two groups differ from each other. The Afghan Taliban group is the first one founded and therefore the “leading” one. The Pakistani Taliban pledge their support to the Afghan group and state that they faithfully follow them. But examining the facts and not the statements that is not quite true, most of all, because the two of them have different goals and somehow different ways of applying their policies nowadays.

First of all, the Afghan Taliban aim at a political legitimacy and at an economic profit. They impose taxes, blackmail companies, exploit natural resources and traffic opium poppy with their annual income reaching \$400 million. They now have a website bearing their name, Islamic Emirate, where they upload their statements and videos. The oxymoron is that during their regime they prohibited the use of media, such as the radio, TV and the internet, the exact same tools they use now to keep their name and actions ‘alive’ in the people’s minds. Their current goal, according to what they state, is to create a deeply Islamic state and of course to send the foreign armies, the US and NATO troops, away.

On the other hand, the Pakistani Taliban, or TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban), do not want a political legitimacy but are committed to what they think is the proper implementation of the holy jihad. Their propaganda and war are against the Pakistani government, the Pakistani Shias, whom they consider heretics, and many others, who are considered rivals. For example, they accuse the public health system of trying to sterilize Muslims. Generally they are accused of being more violent and aggressive than the Afghan Taliban, however, the difference in that section is quite small.

The question is whether we can refer to the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban as the same group. As mentioned before, that is what the Pakistani Taliban state. However, when Mullah Omar commanded them to stop the war against the Pakistani government, they disobeyed him, although they had stated loyalty to him.

Muhammad Omar himself has stated that the actions of TTP are not connected to the Afghan Taliban. However, they do not cut their ties to them, because they need their help in recruiting people from Pakistan and they need their support.

The most important and cruel measure the Taliban have adopted, especially during their regime in Afghanistan until 2001, was the strict implementation of the Sharia law. Men forced to grow full beards, women forced to wear head-to-toes burkas and women and girls denied access to education and work. It was and remains a cruel and reprehensible humanitarian violation.

However Mullah Omar, Taliban's founder, and former leader, has stated that if they take over the regime again, they will allow TV, women's education and generally try to come closer to the public and understand them, according to the code of conduct they have adopted within their group. But that is not supported by their actions since their actions against women remain cruel. On the other side, the Pakistani Taliban do not even state that they will stop their inhuman actions, but rather continue them by having a campaign against girls' education.

The challenge now is to convince the groups to join negotiations with both Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the presence of US and NATO troops in Afghanistan is another factor that probably prevents the negotiations. Especially, because Kabul (Afghanistan's capital) accuses Islamabad (Pakistan's capital) of spoiling opportunities for talks.



Definition of Key-Terms

Taliban

Taliban are an Islamic fundamentalist group located in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pashtun

A Pashtun is a member of an ethnic group of Afghanistan and parts of western Pakistan.¹

Sharia law

The Sharia law is the code of law derived from the Koran and from the teachings and example of Mohammed; "sharia is only applicable to Muslims"; "under Islamic law, there is no separation of church and state".²

Mujahideen

Mujahideen are the Muslims that are engaged in the holy jihad, but the violent and aggressive means of implementing their beliefs leads to them being called either as international warriors or as terrorists.

Northern Alliance

The Northern Alliance was an Afghan military group that was formed in 1996 after the Taliban took over Kabul, in order to fight them. The group was active as long as the Taliban's regime lasted, from 1996 till 2001.



¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Pashtun>

² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Sharia+law>

Background Information

In 1992 the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan falls and a civil war begins. Within the chaos, as always, a new movement, named the Taliban (in Pashto it means "student") appears and promises the establishment of peace. The group is funded by Mullah Mohammad Omar but is cultivated by the main intelligence service of Pakistan, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Why? Because Pakistan wanted Afghanistan to be on its side and not an Indian-ally. After all, India is Pakistan's chief rival and Pakistan needed Afghanistan, in order to secure open trade with central Asian states. So, the group was formed by Islamic fighters, who had fought the Soviet occupation and then by Pashtuns and was obviously supported by ISI, which had stopped supporting the previously major Mujahideen party.

By 1996 the Taliban had taken over Kabul and turned Afghanistan into an Islamic Emirate. After that, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban government. However, Afghanistan lost its position in the United Nations, because the Taliban's policy and inhuman actions (such as the strict implementation of the Sharia law) were/are against the United Nations' policy and ethics.

The exact same year, Osama bin Laden, chief of al-Qaeda was expelled from Sudan and asked for refuge in Afghanistan. Mohammad Omar was later accused of his decision to allow him to remain in Afghanistan because that later led to the US invasion. There are two theories why Mohammad Omar took that decision. The first one is that the idea of becoming a revolutionary icon won him over and the second is that he was 'forced' to do that because of the hospitality mentioned in Pashtunwali, the pre-Islamic tribal code.

After these incidents, the Northern Alliance was the only military and political opposition against the Taliban and maintained a section of northern Afghanistan. By 1998 the Taliban's regime had expanded to 90% of the country. However, not for long.

In 2001 after the 9/11 US asked Afghanistan to hand al-Qaeda's leader over, however, it refused. That led to the US invasion and the longest war in the US history. After that, they crossed the Pakistani borders and some tried to become a member of the society in Pashtuns areas, where many have lived as refugees during the Soviet occupation. Because of that, the US asked for the cooperation and help of the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, and his response was positive. However, his tactic is named as a "double game". On the one hand, he supported the US "global war on terror", but on the other hand he continued having relations with the Taliban and even continued cultivating them. The main reason was that after 2001 Kabul started cooperating with New Delhi and that threatened Pakistan's policy.

After that the Pakistani Taliban arose from the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) through the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with ties to al-Qaeda. At the same time, the Afghans and the UN-sponsored Bonn Conference created a new government, by leaving the Taliban out of it. The next year an election for a transitional administration takes place and a constitution gets ratified. The same year in Pakistan, the national military moves against the TTP for the first time, after the US pressure for an al-Qaeda free FATA.

On 23 April 2013, Mullah Mohammad Omar dies in a hospital in Pakistan, but his death is not announced. Only after some suspicious incidents is the group forced to finally announce it on 29 July 2015. Right after that, his inferior, Mullah Akhtar Mansour was appointed to his position, but just a year later in May 2016 gets killed as a target during a US drone strike. This was a loss for the group since it was the first time after many years that the group took over a major city under his commands, among his other accomplishments.



Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the country most affected by the Taliban since that is where they first appeared, took over, became the regime and until today has to fight them.

Pakistan

Pakistan is the country, to which the Taliban fled after the US invasion. After that, the Pakistani Taliban have been created that until today fight the Pakistani government and tries to take over the country and create a religious Islamic state.

United States of America

As mentioned before, the US has gone into its longer war in Afghanistan. It invaded the country after the 9/11 and the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden and until today its troops are present.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has also troops in Afghanistan and along with the US aims at fighting the Taliban and strengthening the national forces.

Timeline of Events

| Date | Description of event |
|-------------|--|
| 1992 | The communist People's Party of Afghanistan falls |
| 1992-1996 | Civil war in Afghanistan |
| Early 1990s | The Afghan Taliban were formed |
| 1994 | The Taliban entered Kandahar |
| 1995 | The Taliban took over Herat, Afghanistan's third-largest city |
| By 1996 | The Taliban had taken over Kabul |
| 1996 | Osama bin Laden sought refuge in Afghanistan |
| 2001 | After the refusal of Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden, the US invaded in Afghanistan |
| 2001 | The creation of the new government in Afghanistan |
| 2002 | Election for a transitional administration |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 2002 | The national military of Pakistan moves for the first time against the Pakistani Taliban |
| 2003 | A constitution gets ratified |
| 2006 | A CIA drone killed 83 students |
| 2007 | Pakistani special forces seized the Red Mosque in Islamabad killing dozens of people |
| Late 2007 | The formal announcement of the TTP creation |
| 23 April 2013 | Mohammad Omar died in a hospital in Pakistan |
| June 2014 | A UN report shows that the Afghan Taliban have expanded in the south and east |
| 2014 | The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) stopped |
| 29 July 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The death of Mohammad Omar is officially announced • Mullah Akhtar Mansour takes over the leading position in the Taliban |
| 2015 | A new NATO-led mission, called Resolute support, started in order to train the Afghan security forces |
| May 2016 | Mullah Akhtar Mansour gets killed in a US drone strike |

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

Assembly resolution 51/108, Council statement S/PRST/1996/40

On 22 October, the resolution passes calling for the fights to end and denounces the violations and discrimination against women and girls.

Resolution 1193 (1998)

On 28 August the Security Council once more demands an end to the hostilities and an investigation on the death of two UN staff members.

Resolution 1214 (1998)

On 8 August the Security Council recalls its previous resolution and supports the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan.

Resolution 1267 (1999)

On 15 October a resolution which demands from the Taliban to hand over the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and forbids the entrance or exit any aircraft in the region that the Taliban controlled without permission, passes.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The US invasion itself was an attempt to contain the Taliban forces. Although the reason/triggering factor was the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden it has ended up as the longest war in the US history with the goal of strengthening the resistance of the Afghan forces against the Taliban. Despite the original plan of withdrawing its troops by 2014, President Obama has announced that 9,600 forces will remain in Afghanistan in 2016 and 5,500 will remain after he leaves office in 2017.

The presence of NATO also aimed at the solving of the situation. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) took place from August 2003 until the December of 2014. After that in 2015 it has "renewed" its presence in Afghanistan with the NATO-led mission, called Resolute support, aiming at the training of the Afghan forces, so they can fight the Taliban.

These have caused a severe controversy and reaction from the Taliban. Therefore their withdrawal may bring a more peaceful environment, since the Taliban state that their presence is the main reason for their violent acts. However, the risks are even bigger. First of all the Taliban may simply continue their actions and even at a more intense level without the resistance of the foreign forces and it is questioned whether the national armies can handle the situation alone and without any foreign assistance.

Additionally, many efforts for negotiations have been made throughout the years, but none of them succeed. One reason is the unwillingness of the Taliban to enter the table of the negotiations. After all, the Taliban officials that have talked about joining the negotiations have been assassinated, according to what US officials have reported. And the other one is that Islamabad has spoiled opportunities for

negotiations many times and that's the main reason Kabul accuses it. (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22957827>)



Possible Solutions

- ❖ Knowing that Pakistan supports the Afghan Taliban until today, a way to stop them is for Pakistan and Afghanistan to compromise. The only card that Afghanistan can use at the present moment is the Durand Line (the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan). Since Pakistan wants an official document/ treaty, so that its claims to the land are legal, a possible solution for Afghanistan would be to hold a referendum with international supervision on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line. This way the Pashtuns would decide for themselves.

- ❖ A crucial step that should be taken is a negotiation. Especially after the failure of all the previous attempts, this time, it should be strict between the government and the Taliban, because the presence of foreign powers would definitely minimize the possibilities of the Taliban accepting the negotiation, and with some specific goals:
 - First of all, as the President of Afghanistan has already stated, the inclusion of the Taliban in the government should be discussed,

taking into consideration the influence and control of some regions they have.

- Secondly, the control of the regions should be on the table. The setting of exact boundaries would be difficult, but the main goal of the government should be to maintain the free movement between the provinces.
- ❖ Concerning the US troops there are two sides:
 - The first one is that the withdrawal of the US troops will pave the way to the negotiations between Afghanistan and the Taliban
 - And the second one is that the Afghan security forces are not ready and properly trained to deal with the Taliban forces on their own and that the Taliban will take advantage of this opportunity to rise again.

Bibliography

http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/taliban/p35985?cid=marketing_use-taliban_infoguide-012115#!/p35985?cid=marketing_use-taliban_infoguide-012115

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Civil-war-mujahideen-Taliban-phase-1992-2001>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/15/obama-delay-withdrawal-us-troops-afghanistan>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federally_Administered_Tribal_Areas

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durand_Line

<http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/un-afghan-history.shtml>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wahab-raofi/a-solution-to-the-afghanistan_b_9202196.html

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/02/involving-the-taliban-in-afghanistan-solution-william-r-polk-part-3/273489/>

<http://www.anusha.com/solution.htm>
