

South Asia and the US Global Counterterrorism Policy: Strategies, Challenges and Implications

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ABSTRACT

South Asia is the most populous and an important region in the world. Region is characterized by bitter rivalries and uncertain boundaries with its neighbors. Due to cross border sponsorship to militants, poverty and a sense of deprivation among people developed a culture of hysteria and extremism in the region. 9/11 terrorist outbreaks were one the bustles of these radical groups, in response to those extremist attacks on United States soil. The US enacted a policy known as the "War on Terror." and tabled a resolution at the UN calling for the global terrorist campaign to target terrorists and sponsors of terrorism. The Research employs a combination of qualitative, quantitative, and comparative research methods. The research concludes that the US counterterrorism Strategies has failed to deal with the Taliban and remain incapable of coming across its so-called slogan of peace, instead causing further disorder and complicating the situation in the region.

Key Words: Al-Qaeda, Deterrence, NATO, Fanaticism, Terrorism

Introduction

A major impact of the US Global Counterterrorism Policy has been felt in South Asia. Following 9/11, international politics underwent a complete paradigm shift. Globalization, the emergence of non-state actors, the complexity of interdependence, cultural interaction, and the overarching influence of globalization all played significant roles in contemporary world politics. US policy has been based on Power shifting, economic change, global democracy, dialogue diplomacy with world leaders, and a shift from conflict to cooperation. 9/11 has led the United States to rethink and redefine its counterterrorism policy. 9/11 opened the door to a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy and the appropriate measures to go with it. Over the past two decades, many countries, especially the United States, have attempted to eliminate non-state actors and violent extremist

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groups that don't adhere to international law and threaten transatlantic peace. George Bush described the Anti-Terrorism Campaign as a "war." After the September 11 attacks, significant military efforts were made against al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. It was an issue focused on rousing Americans and showing the country's commitment to defeating a dangerous adversary (Keppel, 2002). The region of South Asia faced many complications and uncertainties as the US-led War against Terrorist element capitalized in Afghanistan. The most affected countries are India and Pakistan, particularly Pakistan, which allowed NATO troops safe passage. A number of realists argue that this is neither a war against terrorism nor a war against democracy, but rather a campaign against al-Qaeda, a concept that has been called a franchise, a multi-national network, and a Muslim terror organization. A year after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the US Congress passed the USA Patriot Act, which created the Department of Homeland Security as a response to natural disasters and accidents. President George Tenet declared war on al-Qaeda in February 2001 and told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. As long as Osama bin Laden remains alive and well, the United States is at grave risk. The FBI put Osama bin Laden on its "Ten Most Wanted" list and declared his investigation a "Tier One" priority. By the end of 2000, US agencies were spending more than 7 billion dollars a year to fight terrorism at home and abroad. A new American strategy was adopted to combat Al-Qaeda; Bin Laden's terrorist group (Keppel, 2002). The current study analyzes new US counterterrorism strategies, since military force was used against al-Qaeda's vicious activities and to destroy the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's neighbors in South Asia suffered economic, social, and political consequences due to US counterterrorism policies, thereby discrediting the war's legitimacy.

US Global Counter Terrorism Strategies

Leading the world in the fight against Terrorism particularly after the dreadful violence of 9/11, The United States won the trust of the key States of the World, especially the West and announced a strategy to eradicate all terrorist groups from their hideouts. There are several key aspects to US policy to combat terrorism.

The Global War of Governed Nations

In the war against terror, the goal of the operation was to capture Al-Qaeda's leader, destroy Al-Qaeda's strongholds and dislodge the Taliban government. Throughout the history of World Wars, the United State has differentiated between terrorist group by making no distinction between them and sympathetic groups or quarters when dealing with terrorism. United States has suffered from the evil of terrorism for many years and formulated certain tactics, devices that fail to focus on apparatus and working of terrorist organizations. Despite this, the policy still stayed in touch with the cause of weapons of mass destruction. Even prior to the 9/11 attack, the United States was formulating a policy for eliminating terrorism

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and the Taliban from the mountains of Afghanistan. The United States week envisioned Osama bin Laden as a leading sponsor of terrorism and provide him with the bases to train the associates of Al- Qaeda .(Goraya, 2013)

Diplomatic Engagements

International collaboration and coordination have been promoted by the United States to fight against all forms of terrorism. It provided training and assistance in apprehending terrorist suspects, bringing them to justice, and preventing them from seeking refuge in other parts of the world. Cooperation between law enforcement, intelligence agencies, foreign ministries and foreign embassies has been necessitated through intensive diplomacy and bilateral and multilateral close relations. In response to the global threat of terrorism, the United States provides military support and diplomatic assistance to all the nations pursuing terrorism.(Litwak ,2007) And worldwide consensus has been established to combat Terrorism with maximum force and full force of action. The US erects a worldwide NATO alliance against the evils of terrorism. The United States encouraged the policy of cooperation with willing and capable states, assisted strong but willing states, pressured reluctant states, and compelled uncooperative states while fighting against global terrorism.

A Zero Tolerance Policy

Defining terrorism as premeditated, politically motivated violence against non-combatant targets is a State Department Official stance. There should be prosecution for this crime. In the fight against terrorism, it is imperative to implement the rule of law as a central principle. Through implementation of domestic laws, full support for international conventions, and international treaties against international terrorism, Anti-terrorism policies and strategies have been advanced by the United States. A top priority of the US anti-terrorism campaign is to uphold the rule of law as a means of curbing terrorist activities. Even law and law enforcement played a role in the United States' quest for the right way to fight terrorism. America's counterterror policy is based upon the principle that killing innocent civilians cannot ever be justified because of a political need, and that any act should be considered a crime. Consequently, the United States demanded that other governments deal with such acts by applying harsh penalties through the use of law supplanted by law enforcement. (Jehl, 2004). The Washington administration views any concession, inside or outside of America, to terrorists as unacceptable. Therefore, in the present-day international environment, the US government adopts a zero tolerance agenda against all suspects and terrorists from its soil and seeks to crush malicious networks and objectives of terrorist organizations like the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This policy is based on a fundamental belief that if attacked by terrorists or tormented by terrorists, the United States will

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not surrender (Rollins, 2010). The aim of the no concession policy is to put all potential terrorists on notice that terrorism is futile and unbeneficial, thereby discouraging similar acts in future. There have been numerous instances of aircraft hijacking, hijacking of embassies, hostage taking, bomb threats, and extortion. The zero tolerance and no concession policy of the United States do not mean it refuses to negotiate with terrorists. US officials occasionally negotiate and establish a dialogue posture for the release of hostages and the dissuasion of the terrorists from committing a violent act.

Adhering to International Law

Counterterrorism efforts in the United States have expanded beyond the domestic level to the international level. Several international treaties and conventions have expanded the scope of international law in order to combat terrorism, thanks to the United States and its allies. Because the United States relies on the rule of law and is dedicated to meeting its commitments under international law, it has greatly strengthened its ability to investigate and prosecute the crimes conducted against Americans in the United States and abroad. (Byers, 2002)

Conflict Resolution Scheme

After 9/11, President George W. Bush focused on the global conflicts which necessitated further investigation of old issues that were still unclear particularly in the Middle East and South Asia. The existing conflicts were linked to an atmosphere that exacerbated old issues that could not be resolved. (Miller, 2010) The conflicts between Kashmir and Palestine were major issues after the 9/11 scenario in the contemporary world. The Washington administration brings India and Pakistan to the dialogue table to solve the Kashmir conflicts. Both of them join US in war against terrorism, but US could not bring these rivals to the dialogue table but US plays a vital role in preventing war in them by following border escalation. To prevent religious conflicts between India and Pakistan, the Bush administration invested time to develop relations between them. (Sattar, 2007) It follows the policy to end regional conflicts. Both these countries have nuclear capability which brings South Asia on the verge of destruction that led the United States to contain its powers. So US influence wants both the nations to review their bilateral relations and agreements.

The Approach of Coercive Diplomacy

An integral part of the US' counterterrorism strategy is the sanctions against the countries and organizations that support terrorism. The United States has imposed a large number of economic sanctions against states and organizations that support terrorism. A number of countries and networks have promoted criminal activities and pro-terrorism environments and a counter-terrorism strategy. Congress has

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passed several acts penalizing, curtailing and freezing the funding of such platforms that elicit terrorist events and attacks around the world. Several forms of military and economic sanctions have been imposed by the U.S. Congress against states such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan and Syria are recognized sponsors of many terrorist activities. In order to protect Railways, Aircrafts, buildings, airports, public offices and other vulnerable country wide installations, multiple physical protective measures, including detective gears, searching mirrors, metal detecting devices, walk through gates, and closed-circuit television cameras, have been adopted. The United States government has created a comprehensive and cohesive teamwork between civil and military authorities to counter various terrorist activities. This team work includes measures such as keeping borders; carrying out intelligence, and addressing poverty and conditions terrorists may exploit. (Rosenau, 2008). The US strategy against terrorism includes ideology of terrorism as a weapon of statecraft and, increasingly, as an instrument of non-state actors. By effectively integrating the civil and military's' combined efforts, terrorism is targeted during battle against terrorism (Wilcox & Phillip 2003).

ESTIMATED DIRECT WAR DEATHS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN (OCTOBER 2001-APRIL 2021) ²			
	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Total
US Military ³	2,442 ⁴	— ⁵	2,442
US DOD Civilian ⁶	6		6
US Contractors ⁷	3,846	90	3,936
National Military and Police ⁸	66,000-69,000 ⁹	9,314 ¹⁰	75,314-78,314
Other Allied Troops ¹¹	1,144	—	1,144
Civilians	47,245 ¹²	24,099 ¹³	71,344
Opposition Fighters	51,191 ¹⁴	33,000 ¹⁵	84,191
Journalists and Media Workers ¹⁶	72	64	136
Humanitarian Aid Workers ¹⁷	444	105	549
TOTAL	171,336-174,336	66,714	238,050-241,050
TOTAL ROUNDED	171,000-174,000	67,000	238,000-241,000

Source: <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2021>

Incitement in Antiterrorism Interaction

The World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked roguishly by terrorists on September 11, 2001. The United States and other countries were dazzled by these attacks. After the attacks, American passenger jets were hijacked. During the first two hours following the attacks, two planes collided with the towers of the World

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Trade Center in New York City, one hitting each tower. The third plane was destroyed when it crashed into the Pentagon complex. The fourth plane, which was also hijacked, crashed into an open field in Somerset County, killing all who were on board. Nearly 3000 Americans died in a miserable scenario caused by hijacked planes crashing into the WTC (Fair, 2004). The 9/11 effect diminished American pride and shattered the image of the American leadership, government and statesmen. The intense incident spread around the nation along with the anger and desire for revenge. The international community condemned these barbaric attacks with indignation and expressed solidarity with the people of the United States. General parvez Musharraf responded swiftly on national television "it is unacceptable to conduct such a vile act, anti-terrorism is our top priority during this appalling time, let us join hands with America and that we would oppose it by any means possible" (Musharraf ,2006). American think tanks and the media swiftly blamed the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, blaming them for the twin towers tragedy. President Bush expressed the wish for America to promote internationalism in the world and reassured all countries that the United States will promote peace and uphold its values. In September 2001, the Security Council and the United Nations general assembly passed a resolution condemning the terrorist attack on the United States and calling for accountability for the organizers, sponsors, and perpetrators of 9/11. By urging a joint defense against terrorism, NATO called for a coordinated effort. Different nations such as Canada, France, Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom made military deputations for a global coalition force to end the Taliban terror. In contrast, a number of countries such as China, Japan, Turkey, India, Russia, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka offered their willingness to supply logistics support to the US led allied force. Within a few days after the dreadful attack on US soil, the major states and international organizations justified their decisions to employ military force and intervene against the terrorist group operating within their jurisdiction.

The Bush Dogma

The war in Afghanistan and Iraq was justified in much the same way. Another key aspect of the Bush doctrine is that the US government has always been pressured by the US Industrial Complex. To support a prolonged military involvement in Afghanistan. Afghani oil and gas made the Caspian region a gateway to Central Asia, of vital interest to the United States. Brookings had published a report in September 2001 that revealed that the Bush administration placed high priority on exploiting the Caspian and Asian energy markets. Various military, economic, and political strategies had to be combined for the United States to maintain or prevent dominance of the region by any hostile power (Ahmed, 2005). President Bush Speeches "The great conflict between liberty and totalitarianism resulted in a decisive victory for the freedom-loving forces of the 20th century, through the fight against tyrants and terrorists, we will defend the peace. We will preserve the peace and extend it by fostering open societies on all continents through

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development of good relations between the large powers” The US strategy according to President Bush aimed to remake the world from its perspective through unmatched American power. In accordance with the Bush doctrine, the United States will, if necessary, take preventive action to forestall any of an enemy's attacks (Khattak, 2011). A major departure from American foreign policy's generally non-interventionist, isolationist tradition was represented by the Bush doctrine of preemption and prevention.

Linkages and Strategic Policy

Post 9/11, the United States foreign policy required careful attention for its vital ties with Europe, Union, Russia, China, India and Pakistan. American relations with these countries are crucial to global security and stability. The United States relied on stable European institutions, NATO and the European Union to fight terrorism. Therefore, the United States developed a cordial and credible approach to the European Union, despite disagreements on certain international issues (Huge, James, 2004). Pakistan was once again strategically a front-line ally far from the United States. During the war on terror, the US desperately needs Pakistan.

Counterterrorism Operational Dynamics

As the US government's policy response to the dreadful attacks of September 11, 2001, the term war on terror was adopted by the American people in order to protect their homeland. The US Security Strategy 2002 provided justification for pre-emptive strikes against any threat to its national security, any threat to national security provided justification for pre-emptive strikes. As for foreign policy, President Bush also announced that America's foreign policy would target terrorists responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center, which horrified and victimized the American people. The Washington was clear that a coalition force and international cooperation was crucial for winning the war against terrorism. The region of South Asia has again acquired global importance due to its strategic outlook. Pakistan's ingress into the World Order led by the United States renewed its preemptive strike policy following the terrorist attacks and considered it to be justified. The United States then decided to attack Afghanistan following a satisfactory response from Pakistan to clear it of Taliban control and the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. President Bush now decided to pursue nations that provided support or safe haven to the terrorists. In every country throughout the world, the Washington administration announced that they needed to decide whether they were with us or against the terrorists. With 9/11's bloodshed, US policy created a global consensus for preemptive strike and intervention (Butt, 2012).

Consensus & Non-Coercive Approach

The Bush doctrine included neo-realist and pre-emptive unilateral policy to achieve the planned target under the United Nations charter. In the event of an attack on the security of a state, force may be used. The Washington administration and the European Union came up on the same page for fighting the terrorists while launching Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. (Dao, 2003). The efforts of the United States to combat terrorism included introducing a coherent counter terrorism policy including strategies for protecting US citizens against internal and external terror threats, working on the total destruction of terrorist sponsorship or terror sponsored organizations. During Operation Enduring Freedom, the counterterrorism strategy was based on the idea that homeland security was the main concern of the Washington administration and American people. (Shah, 2010) A resolution was passed by the United Nations Security Council authorizing allied forces to launch military operations against Al-Qaeda and Taliban hideouts inside Afghanistan. Its goal was also to reshape international politics by reasserting US security and economic interests in the Arab world, especially through invasions and spreading democratic values in the Muslim world

The Implications of the Us Counterterrorism Strategy in South Asia and Its Challenges

The Global Terrorism Strategy of the United States is of grave concern because it has not achieved its goals. The presence of the US in Afghanistan and the use of Drones has aggravated and worsened the situation in the entire region. US and NATO troops have a large impact on Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran, and even China. In Afghanistan Terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda have grown more active while Taliban insurgents have grown stronger. In spite of the fact that Pakistan was not connected to 9/11, it fought a US war that cost 75,000 lives and a loss of \$123 billion, In spite of declaring Pakistan a strong ally in the war against terrorism; the U.S. suspended 900 million dollars from the coalition support fund and also imposed Travel restrictions. Pakistan has been blamed for the Taliban's losses of territory and instability by supporting NATO forces. (Nirupama, 2021) Even India blames Pakistan for destabilizing the region. India has expressed concerns that the War on Terror may have trained the local terrorists, therefore, the US should remove it entirely, or they could pose a serious threat to regional security. (Srikanth, 2007) The United States appears to be trying to place all the blame for failure on Pakistan by consistently lobbying against it and placing it on the terror watch list. Taliban considered Pakistan their enemy after Pakistan sided with Americans and NATO troops in WOT whereas Pakistan has been accused of backing the Taliban by both India and the United States. As the US expands its influence in the region, China has become worried about regional security.

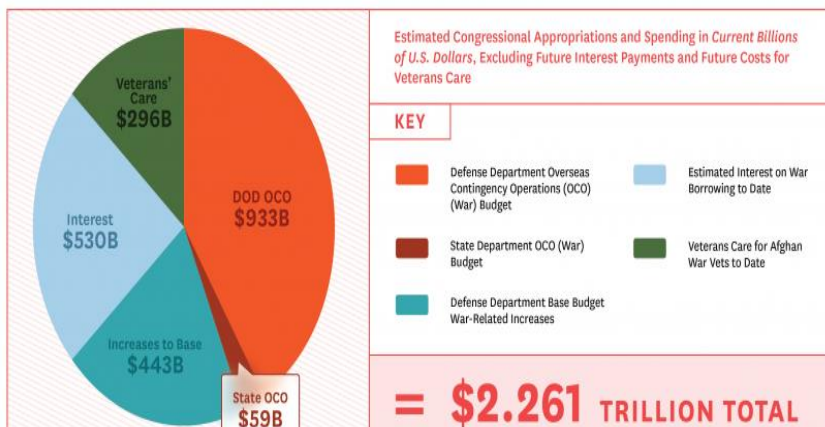
Challenges to US GWOT

The US and its people have forced a heavy financial burden on the world to fight against terrorism. A huge debt and declining standards of living has put the US economy under enormous pressure and an increasing number of Americans have turned against the US involvement in the ongoing war against terrorism. Since 9/11, its economic infrastructure has been affected, and foreign debt has increased 100 percent of American productivity. The cost of war on terror during Bush's regime was \$864.82 billion, whereas the total cost during Obama's first three years was \$477 billion, almost half the cost.

A Cost Analysis of WOT

It is estimated that the US government spent trillions of dollars since 9/11 on Afghanistan and Iraq. The estimated cost for the United States in combating terrorism is at \$30 billion (Mazhar & Goraya, 2010). Because the Federal Government launched a global campaign against terror, the United States was affected and victimized against its security and peace. About 3 million jobs were lost after the Federal Government closed 95 percent of "American banks". In his opinion, he believes that it is unrealistic to refer to the fight against terrorism as a war, as no superpower can be used to overwhelm and conquer the one in power. Bush instead chose to pursue an expensive, fatal, low-level war. President Obama's budget of domestic security, external defense and military affairs increased 50% from \$354 to \$547 billion from 1950 to 2004. For nearly fifty years, the US had spent an excess sum on homeland security. Between 2001 and 2020, the United States has spent almost \$2,407 billion in containing and combating terrorism around the world.

U.S. Costs to Date for the War in Afghanistan, in \$ Billions, 2001–2021



Source: <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2021>

Psychiatric disorders

The US military personnel have fought a long war against terror in different places around the world, most notably in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, US military personnel have suffered, sacrificed and suffered psychological problems. In addition, somatic disorders are common in areas of world conflict and war. More than one third of US soldiers fighting abroad against terror are addicted to anxiety medications. (Axelrod & Borzutzky, 2006) The war against terror has had indirect effects on traumatized individuals. Among the military men and civilian population in the United States, depression and psychological illnesses were again promoted by factors such as poverty, hunger, political instability, unemployment, and economic crises. NATO troops under US command were discouraged after failing to eliminate intense resistance from dissidents in Afghanistan. The US-led alliance suffered losses of lives and huge material setbacks.

An Exacerbated Muslim-Western Gap

Numerous studies suggest that the war on terror has contributed to increased divergence between the west and the Muslim world. It increased anti-Western and anti-American sentiments among Muslims and precipitated the labeling of Islam as an extremist and military ideology. Therefore, the international media played an important role in simplifying the distance between the West and Muslim World through the representation of Islam as a religion of fanaticism, militancy, and extremism. Following 9/11, the United States displayed distrust and problems towards Muslim states (Esposito, 2011).

Institutional Repercussions

A survey of US military personnel who served in the Afghanistan war revealed that almost 17% of participants had suffered greatly, been victimized and sacrificed, and that some became addicted to anxiety pills. As a result of conflict, many regions of the world experience high rates of somatic disorder. Inability to eliminate the strongest resistances of the local groups resulted in the death of US-led NATO forces. NATO countries and various European Union states are experiencing serious economic difficulties.

Conclusion

The terrible terrorist attacks of 9/11, conducted and sponsored by Al-Qaeda a terrorist organization based in Afghanistan these attacks gave rise to the formulation of an integrated counter terrorism strategy. In this regard doctrines of preemptive strikes, the Global War of Governed Nations (GWOT), front lines of Europe, the Bush Doctrine, coercive diplomacy, Zero tolerance policy, ward system, diplomatic tactics and military operations were to be held in terrorist-

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supporting countries. South Asia states have been asked for regional help by the US in response to dissidents and terrorist perpetrators entering the territories of sovereign states. This grand military operation led by the US Army failed to produce any tangible results despite costing millions of lives and trillions of dollars. It is not only Afghanistan that has suffered from the US operations; it is also the whole region, especially Pakistan. Through joint ventures, military operations and diplomatic engagements, the United States continues to engage international partners to strengthen, but has been unable to punish those responsible for 9/11. Counterterrorism strategy has been partially successful, but on the whole US stakeholders do not consider it a complete success and view it as a big mistake. In order to maintain peace & ensure stability in the South Asian region, the US should adopt and share a clear policy as since 2001 several regional countries have been harmed by drone attacks, suicide attacks, and violent confrontations, and should not be allies of the United States or of any other military organization in the future.

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