



**Center for Global & Strategic Studies  
Islamabad**

**Growing Terrorism in Afghanistan: Analyzing the  
Recent Attacks on Afghan Soldiers**

*Published on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2017*



The internal security of Afghanistan was once again jeopardized when more than 140 Afghan soldiers were killed while several others were injured in a recent attack by Taliban on Friday, 21 April 2017, in the Province of Balkh. The attack happened in the northern part of the province at the Command Center inside a Military Base of the Afghan Army. The number of wounded soldiers in this attack is nearly 200 and Taliban have already claimed the responsibility of this attack. However, according to the claims made by Taliban, the death toll for the soldiers is 500 and this might as well be true

because the official sources of Afghan Army have tried to present incorrect figures in the past to hide embarrassment. It is not certain what the actual



number is but if it really is nearing 500 persons, then the implications can be devastating as it also indicates absolute security failure of the Afghan security infrastructure.

This is not the first time when the internal security of the state was compromised and there are several major reasons behind this security lapse. The attack lasted for several hours where even a mosque and a dining facility was also targeted inside the base. It is a major question mark on the internal security of Afghanistan because only 10 attackers were able to kill nearly 150 soldiers inside a military base, and an attack of this magnitude and nature has never been seen before.

Following are some of the major implications of the current security situation in Afghanistan:

- a. Due to the increasing attacks and heavy use of force, the territorial and political gains of Taliban are increasing.

- b. Due to the overwhelming number of arms supplied by India, most of them are falling into wrong hands and are being used against the state of Afghanistan.
- c. Due to the weakening ground presence of the security forces, the recruitment process is getting crippled and the Afghan youth is reluctant to join their own security forces.
- d. Due to the weakening hold of Afghan forces on their territory, Taliban and other terrorist groups are regrouping and reorganizing themselves for a stronger offensive.

#### *Territorial Gains of Taliban & Other Non-State Actors*

One of the major motives behind this raid by Taliban is territorial gain. The Taliban are increasingly gaining territory and the Afghan Security Forces are not only intimidated by these non-state actors, but are also losing control of their territories at a rapid pace. Attacks and raids of this magnitude by Taliban and Daesh are playing a major role in decreasing the military strength of Afghan Armed Forces.

Terrorist groups such as Taliban, Daesh, ETIM and others have always found Afghanistan as the safest haven in the region and have been using the Afghan territory as their home-ground for decades. These groups have organized themselves in Afghanistan not only to launch offensives inside the state, but also against the neighboring countries of Afghanistan such as Pakistan, Central Asian Republics and even China in the form of ETIM.



In the current situation, the Afghan administration appears to be helpless and is falling as a victim at the hands of these groups. The increasing Indian influence and the decreasing US interests in the region are now beginning to display their implications on the country that has been war-torn for decades if not centuries. Even though the United States alongside its allies in the Global War on Terror contributed significantly in rebuilding Afghanistan, the country tragically fell victim to the menaces of terrorism and corruption soon after, which is extremely unfortunate.

As a result of this recent attack in which, Taliban have claimed to have killed more than 500 soldiers, the reputation of Afghanistan's Security Forces has been damaged at the global level like never before. Moreover, it has also raised many question marks on the

quality of training they are getting from their Indian instructors. Furthermore, these attacks have weakened the political standing of the Afghan Government inside the country.

### *Increasing Indian Influence in the Ranks of Afghan Security Forces*

Moreover, the increasing Indian influence in the state has introduced Afghanistan to a new generation of weapons. India has been selling weapons and other equipment to Afghanistan and major portions of these supplies have gone into wrong hands due to the lack of accountability and increasing corruption in the ranks of newly formed Afghan Security Forces that are still at the stages of infancy.

Moreover, these attacks are also causing major hindrances in the recruitment process as the Afghan youth is getting more inclined towards joining the stronger side, i.e. Taliban. In addition to that, the number of new recruits in the army and paramilitary forces of Afghanistan is dramatically decreasing due to several other reasons and among them is corruption and poorly managed administration. Indian Army has a lot of influence in the training and facilitation of Afghan Army and the reputation of Indian Army as an ill-disciplined force and human rights violator is known to the world.

India has been committed to use Afghanistan for its own vested interests in the region and unfortunately, the Afghan administration led by President Ashraf Ghani has given a free hand to New Delhi to do that. Clearly and evidently, the aims of New Delhi have always been to use Afghanistan as their strategic depth in the region in order to contain Pakistan and disrupt the ongoing economic development in the country. Pakistan has

presented documented evidences to several international authorities including the United Nations of the Indian involvement in Balochistan and other parts of the country. However, it is very unfortunate that Kabul has been overlooking the long term regional implications of this nexus with New Delhi.

### Recommendations

Afghanistan is in a dire need to strength its military and security forces which seem to be impossible under the prevailing situation. Following suggestive measures have been designed for the policymakers of the country to counter this issue:

- a. Afghanistan needs to get foreign assistance in training its current military and security force. For this the government needs to raise its concern in the international forums such as the United Nations so that a mutual plan of action can be designed to extend training support.
- b. The weaponry entering country must be regulated and monitored by a committee which must have a complete record and details. In case of any mishap, they government would know whom to trace for the loopholes.
- c. Afghanistan's government needs to assess between its friends and foes. Extensive reliance on India, where it has emerged as a violator of human rights in Kashmir and have antagonist views, this may not be the best decision made by the government officials.
- d. Taliban is once against escalating its progress towards Kabul and this time it's not the only force to be fought. Other factions of terrorist groups have also

emerged where Daesh is now one of the biggest threats. Afghanistan cannot certainly fight these organizations, therefore, a plan of action must be designed in collaboration with other forces of the region to counter them.

- e. The State of Afghanistan should take comprehensive measures in the training and recruiting process of its security forces.
- f. The living conditions of the soldiers must be improved in order to have them ready and well-prepared for action.
- g. Afghanistan should revise its foreign policy vis-à-vis India and should have a strict accountability of the Indian weapons flow inside the country.
- h. Political and military leadership of Afghanistan must revise its narrative against Pakistan to prevent hatred and also to promote peaceful atmosphere in the region.
- i. The youth of Afghanistan must be provided with quality education and employment opportunity in order to prevent them from joining the terrorist organization.
- j. The overall economic conditions of the country should be improved as a measure to financially empower the population in order to prevent them from joining terrorist organizations and criminal groups.
- k. Afghanistan should not allow India or any other country to use its soil against its neighboring countries such as Pakistan or China.

## Conclusion

Even if the claim of Taliban killing 500 soldiers in the recent attack on the military base is overlooked, the official figure released by the Afghan Defense Ministry i.e. 140 is also devastating. The increasing gains of Taliban in terms of political and territorial influence are more concerning now than ever because of the increasing hold of Daesh in the neighboring region of the Middle East. The United States of America led NATO coalition in 2001 but was not able to achieve all of its goals in Afghanistan. However, in the wake of 2016 US Presidential Elections, the scenario has changed in the region and apparently, US is systematically pulling its forces out of the country. With US being absent from the scene and India gaining influence in Afghanistan, the ground realities and recent events have been seriously disturbing. Moreover, the overwhelming number of Indian supplied arms in Afghanistan have also begun to fall in the wrong hands. This Indian weaponry is being excessively used against the state of Afghanistan by the terrorists who are now claiming themselves to be the freedom fighters of the country. More disturbingly, these terrorist groups, particularly Taliban are gaining public support in the country. As a result, the recruitment rates are increasingly dropping for the Afghan security forces and the strength of Taliban is massively increasing in several regions of the country. Moreover, corruption and poorly managed administrations in the country are also leading it to such events.