



# Al-Azhār

Volume 8, Issue 1 (Jan-June, 2022)

ISSN (Print): 2519-6707



Issue: <http://www.al-azhaar.org/index.php/alazhar/issue/view/18>

URL <http://www.al-azhaar.org/index.php/alazhar/article/view/321>

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46896/alazhr.v8i01.321>

**Title** Afghanistan War, Its Consequences, and the Ways to Restore Peace in the Region

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**Received on:** 26 June, 2021

**Accepted on:** 27 May, 2022

**Published on:** 25 June, 2022

**Citation:** Dr. Shahla Tehseen and Dr. Mamnoon Ahmed Khan, "Construction: Afghanistan War, Its Consequences, and the Ways to Restore Peace in the Region," Al-Azhār: 8 no, 1 (2022): 26-39

**Publisher:** The University of Agriculture Peshawar



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## **Afghanistan War, Its Consequences, and the Ways to Restore Peace in the Region**

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### *Abstract*

*There is a drastic change seem to have occurred in a recent few decades that has completely redefined the global status of peace and conflict. It is important to analyze the public attitude against the inequality, depravity, ignorance, oppression, mental and physical assault, discrimination and other such calamities to understand the current picture of international peace and conflict. It is more necessary to pinpoint the flaws within the policies and diplomatic dogmas that is worsening the peace and conflict status in the world as a whole. One more important step to restore world peace order is that authorities must identify the role of the direct and indirect stakeholders, either in resolving or worsening the situation even more.*

*Today's world believe in hiding the facts, figures and actual reasons behind the specific kind of conflict developments. However, right to information must be ensured for all regarding all the issues that eventually become the reason of the massive peace crises both in short and long-term. It is the right of every person on earth to have a proper knowledge regarding the background of any event that takes place so that the citizens may help their respective countries to deal with such issues. In the world where false news propagate quicker than the infectious virus, it is mainly necessary to create the web platforms, guides and official channels that deny all the things based on lies and encourage what the true side of the story is.*

*The debate to restore world peace order has been going on since the crises had begun. This study is intended to focus on the impacts of terrorism on Pakistan and Afghanistan, hence, some general as well as the specific events that took place and that kept the astounding impacts on both the societies have been analyzed.*

*Key words: discrimination, Pakistan, Afghanistan, international peace, stakeholders*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article covers the barbaric events and developments which have rarely been observed previously in the world history. It will also review the existing literature, defining the terrorist activities and their impacts on both the Pakistani and Afghan societies. It will also attempt to figure out the loopholes in the policies of both the countries that have caused things to get worsen by the time. It will cover up the global socio-political efforts with reference to restoring the world peace order so far.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Before moving ahead, let's shed some light on what other researchers have to say on the pertinent issue.

The study (Hyder, Akram, & Padda, 2015), while discussing the impacts of terrorism on the development of Pakistan is highly inclined toward proposing an argument that says that it is not only Afghan war that is responsible for all the extremism and violence going on in Pakistan. The authors, while applying Solow Growth Model of development, have tried to claim that there are other things that have their adverse effects on the peace situation of the country and that eventually become the reason of the hampered economic development so far. They point out the inside conflicts based on ethnic and religious differences (Hyder, Akram, & Padda, 2015). Another article identifies the role of Afghan war to create all the instability in Pakistan. Authors of this study are of opinion that the table turning event like 9/11 has spurred the disturbance. After the 9/11 tragic attacks on World Trade Center, the US policy against Afghanistan has been quite aggressive. The war within the territory of Afghanistan could have been the main issue for Afghanistan but the things did not remain this way. Pakistan involved itself in this war by providing the logistic support to America to enter and fight in Afghanistan. As a reaction, Pakistan had to pay the huge cost as different radical groups emerged in Pakistan as well, supported by the Afghan Taliban. This quick emergence of radical forces helped the situation become worse and Pakistan turned a safe haven for terrorist organizations. Pakistan witnessed the worst ever peace crises since then and lost a lot of precious lives (Mohammad, 2016).

A study by Nadia Mushtaq Abbasi is of the opinion that the escalation in instability on global arena that is observed in the recent decades is all because of the role Pakistan played as a Front-Line state in the Global War on Terrorism. This research quotes that Pakistan has lost approximately 52,000 people that include people from military, civilians, doctors, preachers and more during the years 2002 to 2013 in terrorist attacks. This study, reveals that there is almost no work done that points out the psychological impacts of terrorism on the Pakistani society. Adding to Abbasi's point, it can probably be stated that no such work is done even

with reference to Afghanistan. It is obvious that when people are killed for no reason and are insecure to the level that no places like schools are safe then it badly effects the mental state of the masses. It is because of the anger and the fire of revenge that have increased the number of terrorists to many folds. The brains turn automatically violent when they experience a lot of violence for so long (Abbasi, 2014).

Another interesting study based on the geo-referenced data and the US drone strikes and militant attacks in north western Pakistan focuses on the impact of drone strikes on the behavior of terrorist and their militant activities. This study creates the hypothesis that drone attacks have a positive impact on decreasing terrorist activities in the terror intensive societies. It analysis the data and applies some techniques upon it. Their findings reveal that the drone attacks have a positive impact on ebbing terrorist activities within the targeted areas. This study says that because of these attacks the terrorist try to attack the regions other than those where drones are least expected to be fired. Although the general opinion is that there is a huge role of US drone strikes in creating various terrorist organizations within Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is because of the fact that along with terrorists, there are several innocent people are died due to those attacks (Johnston & Sarbahi, 2016). And as previously quoted study by Nadia Mushtaq discusses that this factor causes psychological impacts and that eventually results in the formation of terrorist organizations.

There is one more empirical study available and that analyzes the very general idea according to which it is said that poverty is may be the cause behind a huge support of militancy. It is generally believed that poverty escalates the violence within the societies as people are unable to receive their basic rights to live a decent life. Contrary to this general opinion, the study conducted by a group of researchers suggests that in case of Pakistan, there is a very negative response seem to have been observed on this general view. It is, however, concluded through the survey conducted among the sample of 6000 persons from Pakistan. The poor respondents were in hate with the militant forces more than the middle-class group of people of the country. The dislike for militancy seemed highly active in the poor class from urban areas, those people are of opinion that due to this militancy and terrorist attacks, they had to bear a huge cost (Blair, Fair, Malhotra, & Shapiro, 2012). Adding my own opinion to this study, I also had a strong instinct of the fact that poverty and terrorism are strongly correlated. This study implodes this idea in my mind and there is a new dimension developing in my critical thinking about this fact.

Another study gives a deep analysis as in how the country lacks the gendered understanding of the terrorist activities and talibanization prevailing in the country. This study critically analyses the role of men and

women as individuals with reference to terrorism. The lack of data available on gender basis is the reason why this research suggests that a lot of research work needs to be conducted in this regard. Like the previous study, this one also concludes that there is hardly any role of illiteracy and poverty behind the spurring terrorism. This study in fact reveals that there is lack of government strategic approach due to which it prevails in the country like a cancer. As a policy suggestion, this study focuses on the point that government must give a priority to the most affected areas by extremism and radical thinking. In order to control the situation, all the policy makers, researchers, analysts and other such stake holders must be gathered up on one page and be united on one point agenda if they really want to get rid of this calamity (Bari, 2010).

### 3. THE POLITICAL DISPUTES VS RISING TREND OF TERRORISM

Politics and terrorism are correlated if we study the history in depth. The political difference, urge for power and greed for money has always influenced the rate of hatred that eventually promotes killings and intolerance (Borum). In the global picture, what is more probable is the religious difference that is all the root of the devastation of world peace order (UNDP, 2016).

Today, it seems as if there are two religions being practiced on earth; one is Islam and the other is Anti-Islam (Saeed, 2018). There is a clear division that can be easily observed like anything. Those forces who are Anti-Islam are set to eliminate the Muslim participation from all over the world. The false propaganda against Islam is affecting Muslim lives in a way that is resulting in a form of extremist and radical groups (RAND, 2013). It is however the effects of all the politics that is going on against Islam and its followers that is increasing the intolerance. The actual reason of terrorism is not Islam, it is those rogue elements, who are sponsored by different countries that use the name of Islam while creating all the chaos for the world peace order (Khan, 2005). Therefore it is pretty necessary to understand and make others also realize the fact that Islam or any other religion has nothing to do with terrorism. It is actually the politics and hunger of power that is mainly the reason why one human being kills the other.

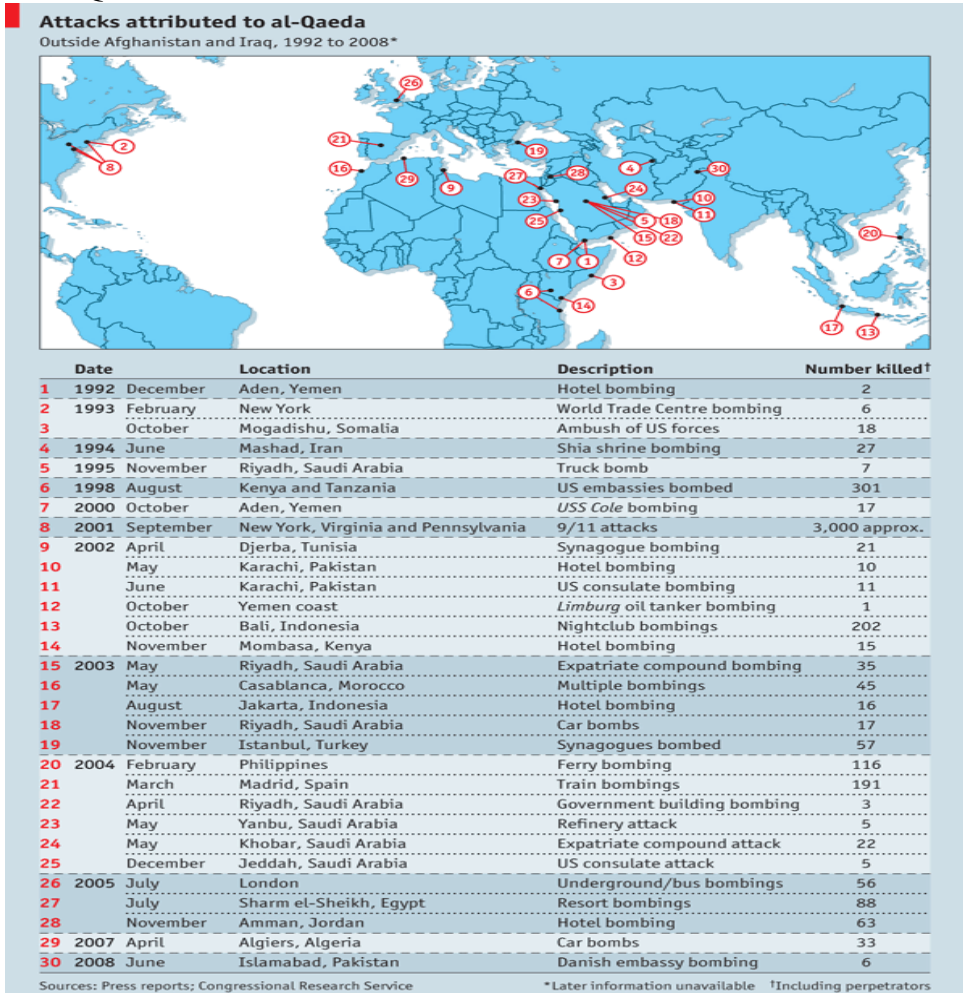
### 4. THE MINDSET OF AL-QAIDA

To deal with any group that is openly challenging the world peace order, it is necessary to figure out what exactly they think and to analyze their mindset. A terrorist organization, that claimed the responsibility of 9/11 attacks, the beginning of new war on terror, also has a sort of typical mindset that has to be carefully read. Their ideology is to kill the western thought from the world, especially when it prevails in the Muslim majority countries. In their view, West is against Muslims and Islam and thus

Muslims must not practice their norms. Following this mentality, they do not feel it unethical to even kill Muslims who are influenced by Western culture. There are several attacks that can be quoted as example to prove this fact (Chossudovsky, 2012)

This view point is strongly supported by the propaganda that is often propagated through the mainstream channels of Western media. It is although a reality that the freedom of speech laws are misused by both the Islamic and Anti-Islamic forces equally that is a major reason of this conflict so far.

Below is the image that shows some statistical figures of attacks attributed to Al-Qaida:



Source: [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

**5. THE FRUSTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES ABOUT FAILURE IN AFGHANISTAN**

Despite the great-war that was led by US in Afghanistan, the phenomenon of Talibanization has grown up many folds. This is a big failure of American troops who have invested a lot of time, money and lost so many lives in this war. There is a role of lack of strategic approach from the then Bush led government. The number of attacks seemed to be increased on a significant level during the war. This has led US to turn frustrated and it is demanding from other European countries to share the losses. The Europe is therefore skeptical about all this situation.

**6. HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED DURING THIS WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN?**

The chart below shows some statistics of the major attacks planted by terrorist organizations due to which a number of people have lost their lives:

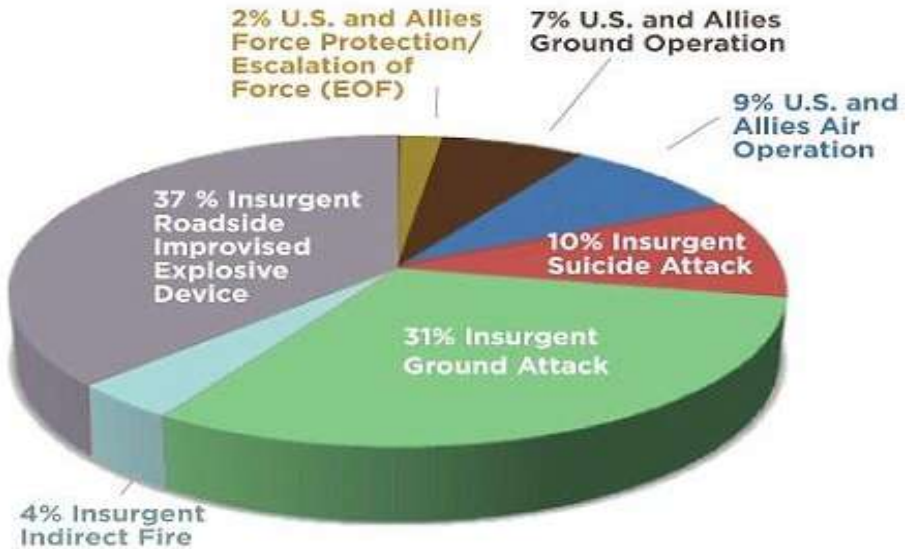
<b>Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2003-2016</b>				
	<b>Civilians</b>	<b>Security Force Personnel</b>	<b>Terrorists/Insurgents</b>	<b>Total</b>
2003	140	24	25	189
2004	435	184	244	863
2005	430	81	137	648
2006	608	325	538	1471
2007	1522	597	1479	3598
2008	2155	654	3906	6715
2009	2324	991	8389	11704
2010	1796	469	5170	7435
2011	2738	765	2800	6303
2012	3007	732	2472	6211
2013	3001	676	1702	5379
2014	1781	533	3182	5496
2015	940	339	2403	3682
2016	337	155	658	1150
<b>Total*</b>	<b>21214</b>	<b>6525</b>	<b>33105</b>	<b>60844</b>

\*Data till August 7, 2016

**Source: Defence.pk**

According to the above data, 60,844 people died due to the terrorist attacks which is itself a huge number. If we talk about the death toll of Afghanistan then following pie-chart shows the figures about that:

## How Afghan Civilians Died in War Violence in 2010



**Source: Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, 2011**

### 7. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON TERRORISM

There held a round table conference in Moscow in 2004 in which it was discussed that how the world peace order can be ensured by the cooperation of the Eastern and Western countries. This international meet-up argued that nothing is possible without the complete cooperation and support from all the corners of the world for the matter of world peace restoration (Tkachenko, 2006). To ensure the world peace order, it is necessary that all the people of the world act like a family as human beings. All the countries, apart from all the religious, ethnic, political differences must come forward and play their respective roles to save humanity. The people from all the corners will keep dying if the measures are not taken timely in that regard. This is also the conclusion of almost all the literature that I reviewed for this article that all the countries of the world need to gather on one point agenda if they really want to save the humanity and innocent people to live with peace.



## DISCUSSION

It is an unhidden reality that the Islam and terrorism were officially connected after the 9/11 tragedy when an Islamic extremist organization Al-Qaida claimed the responsibility for attacking the world's safest spot, the World-Trade Center. Al-Qaida is a banned terrorist organization having its roots in Afghanistan but later on took asylum in Pakistan. The Pakistan oriented Al-Qaida named itself the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. They occupied the Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) at beginning from where they strengthen themselves to become one of the most dangerous and barbaric militant organizations on earth.

FATA holds a strong significance as it lies just between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Along with the whole world, United States of America and Afghanistan take an immense level of interest to seek for the solution of all the conflict. Adding to that, FATA is one of the most dangerous spots on globe because of the existence of world's most terrifying militant organization like TTP.

The rogue elements like TTP have challenged the law enforcement agencies of the country by their continuous attacks on civilians as well as armed men. They are of opinion that Pakistan military provide logistical support to the United States so that they continue their barbaric operation on the territory of Afghanistan.

Due to this war between military and these rogue elements, the innocent civilians had to lose a lot. They lost their loved ones, territory, their assets and much more. Due to this, there is a massive socioeconomic and psychological crises seemed to have occurred. The society turned xenophobic during all this conflict. People who once used to be innocent ones turned criminals out of frustration because of losing their personal assets and loved ones for no reason. The wave of terror within the country made the situation worse as everyone seemed afraid of going outside the home. Anything could happen anytime for no one knows about the next target of militants.

The history of FATA reveals that it granted opportunities to the Jihadi groups to gain training on its ground in 1980's against Soviet Union. The statistics of the suicide attacks that occurred from 2002 till 2016 reveal that there were 438 suicide attacks reported during this whole period that killed around 6584 people. 13735 persons were found injured in those 438 suicide attacks which itself is a huge number so far.

The organizational structures of different militant organizations operating within the country are strong enough that there was a master plan needed to vanish their setup. Each organization has its own different origin and the sort of training. They keep their respective ideologies and also have different ways of attacking innocent civilians of the country in the name of

religion. Many of them demand the implementation of Shariah based laws in the country or to face the consequences.

Exploring statistics about some of the deadliest attacks that were recorded since 2007 till 2016, it was found that the most terrifying attack was found to be the one that occurred in Karachi on the arrival of the former prime minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. It was a suicide bomb attack that immediately took 139 people's lives. The other disgusting attack was the one when the armed men of the extremist radical group entered into the Army Public School Peshawar and opened fire on the innocent kids. This attack killed around 150 persons, the depressing fact is that most of them were kids. This was the turning point for Pakistan and it drove Pakistan Army to the conclusion to take direct action against militant terrorist organizations. The biggest military operation was started after this attack named as 'Operation Zarb-e-Azb' led by the then Chief of Army Staff, General (Rtd) Raheel Sharif.

The people of Pakistan had to face the nasty socioeconomic impacts of this war on terrorism. People lost their businesses, jobs, homes and most importantly their loved ones during all the peace crises. This socioeconomic crises led the country to become highly frustrated and psychologically upset. It encouraged people to get involved in different criminal activities. The street crimes surged higher and also the suicide rate grew many folds up. This indicates that the country had to face two types of consequences. First, the direct consequences and secondly there were indirect consequences. All the consequences collectively made the country's position weaker, thus the socioeconomic indicators seemed alarming. This alarming socioeconomic status made the country incompetent for the economic and socioeconomic race with other third world countries. Although, things seem to have occurred in a better form after the great response of Pakistan Army in the shape of the Operation Zarb-e-Azb.

It is again necessary to make the deep analysis on how and why the politics was introduced with reference to Islam. We can also call it the Islam with reference to politics. The review of literature is given in the second chapter of this article shares what other researchers and authors have to conclude about this. The point is therefore established on the concluding note that the over suppression and discrimination with Muslims around the globe have provoked people to raise their voice for their rights of practicing their religion freely and also of getting all the basic necessities of life with no discrimination.

The unjust amalgamation of Islam and politics by a specific group of people have hijacked the true spirit of the religion. These people try to introduce the Islam in politics which is not acceptable for the society as the society is composed of different minorities as well. These people use violence as a

tool to get their opinions and motives accepted. The world has suffered irrecoverable losses due to this fundamentalism.

The inequality, discrimination, political instability, socioeconomic crises and economic downfall are collectively responsible in propagating this enigma of the abnormal surge in religious extremism. The problem is that there are fights within fights going on. Muslim extremists fight with Non-Muslims especially those associated with America or Europe. It somehow makes sense that a religion is fighting with another religion because there might be something that is irresistible. The actual problem is that there is also a sectarian war going on. At the beginning, it was only Shia VS Sunni sects, fighting for their survival. But today, there are sub-groups formed within Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims fighting and killing each other which is nauseating to the level next. It is though, another debate that there is a role of foreign intervention and state sponsorship to create horrible division within Muslims to weaken the religion as a whole.

If we look into some statistical figures about the most terrifying attacks during this war on terrorism, the top among them remains the 9/11 attacks in which 2,996 people died and 6000+ wounded.

There is also a role of media in making the case complex and has caused a huge impact in provoking the terrorism. It has been observed for long that Arab media channels incite violence by broadcasting the hate speech against other religions especially Jews and Christianity. Some channels have also been found provoking the sectarian hatred through the hate speech. There is no such laws and legislations to control this hatred. Likewise, the Western media is also heavily involved in judging the religion Islam just because of the act of some individuals. These direct and indirect attacks against religions spread hatred and anger among the masses who are emotionally and spiritually attached to their religions. This has caused those forces to take advantage of the situation who are always looking forward to have some loose point so that they can come out and create chaos. It is therefore suggested that the individual states take responsibility for this and all of them need to look into their media and broadcasting policies.

The trend of state sponsorship has also been observed to rise high during this war on terrorism. State sponsorship is basically an idea to support a group of people as a pressure group within the different states so that those groups become the main reason for the instability of their own country. This phenomenon seems common in the states where instability is higher than others. To make those states weaker, the other external forces play this as a card to demolish their setup. The brief analysis about the forms of state sponsorship with examples of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, United States and Syria is discussed.

The terrifying activities and the funding and training setups of the terrorist organizations like ISIS, Boko Haram, Islamic-Revolutionary Guards Corps-Quds Force, Haqqani Network and Hezbollah caused the world to incur huge cost. These five are considered as the world's most petrifying terrorist organizations in the world.

The data from 2000 to 2014 suggests that the countries that have suffered the most during this time slot are found to be Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Nigeria and Iraq.

Extremism, its types, reasons and its role in disrupting the world peace order on large scale is also important for the discussion. The brief definition of extremism says, extremism is what when something crosses its limits. It is generally assumed that the societies with worsening socioeconomic indicators are caught by this enigma that causes the societies to destabilize on massive level. With reference to Pakistan, it is observed that the country has suffered a lot because of this. The all types of extremism prevails in this country either it is political extremism or religious extremism. Other countries have also had to suffer a lot for that matter.

The three major forms of extremism are mainly the cause of the disrupted world peace order today. First, the ethnic extremism which is because of the linguistic, cultural and regional differences. The second type is political extremism which is because of the political differences. The third type is religious extremism which is on the basis of religious differences. All three forms have caused the division with in the world and even within the specific countries and regions.

It is though, an important question that needs answer that how and why the religious extremism has spread all over the world and the huge negative impact that it has caused on the world peace order today. The classic quotation by the author of many books, Reza Aslan relates well with the scenario that no religion is peaceful or violent, these are the people or individuals who are either peaceful or violent. It is though unfortunate that some of the most terrifying terrorist organizations are using the name of Islam and calling the barbaric acts of killing masses as Jihad. This is, what they are doing, is not by any standards a Jihad as it does not fulfill even the basic conditions of Jihad. This chapter emphasizes on the fact that no Prophets or The Messengers of God, from Adam (Peace be Upon Him) and Muhammad (Peace and mercy be always upon Him) have taught to kill anyone for no reason. Islam, as a matter of fact does not even allow to force anyone to practice Islam. Islam is the only religion that has described the proper rights of minorities and freedom to practice their religion in its actual form.

Again it is pointed out the role of media in propagating the hatred and extremism. There is the need of the legislations and laws about hate speech

that can promote the violent ideas and encourage extremism. The hypocrisy of West on the hate speech and the freedom of speech laws needs to be ended. They are hypocrite to the extent that when they speak off beam about other religions, they call it the “freedom of speech” and when others discuss their religion, they call it “hate speech”. It is thus the dire need of time that all the states must end their hypocrisy and stop propagating hatred through their mainstream media.

It is of course very obvious that the extremism and the terrorism affect the society as a whole. The societies with these perplexities do not only suffer economically but also socially. As an economic loss, people loss their business, unemployment rate gets higher, per capita income falls, the access to necessities becomes difficult or almost impossible. As an adverse effect of economic downfall, people become exasperated for their economic survival. On the other hand, the fear of being targeted by any attack creates huge psychological disturbance. People get involved in fierce activities due to losing their loved ones and belongings for no reason. Today’s world is suffering the situation where, neither the killer knows why is he killing and nor the victim knows why is he being the target. This has caused the people to act in an abnormal way.

With the classic examples from Nigeria, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, this matter can be concluded on the note that if any disease is not treated or controlled on time, it becomes fatal and deadly that happened with the case of extremism as well.

In order to evaluate the circumstances of terrorism and spurring radicalism, one must look in to the details of how the public responses against the inequality, lack of justice, discrimination, economic depravity, socio-economic crises and so and so for. It is a general fact that the over suppression, ignorance and injustice hamper the stability within societies. The research focuses on the fact that we must point out the existing flaws with in the policies that are implemented today. It also stresses on the fact that the diplomatic response of the state also matters against this enigma.

There is the trend of hiding the actual facts and figures in today’s world due to which, those who can identify the loopholes are unable to do their work efficiently. The propagation of NEWS based on false facts or exaggeration is common like anything. There is no such platform that could correct, accept or deny the things whether they are based on truth or falsehood.

The nexus between the political disputes and the rising trend of terrorism is observed to become stronger with the time. The greed for power, money and status have made the race difficult to win for the one who is honest and wants to serve the state. Due to this political instability, frustration spurred high and that frustration gave birth to the terrorism oriented brains.

There is a clear division in the world with reference to religion that are only two religions being practiced, one is Islam and the other is Anti-Islam. This clear division provoked the war of words, at first and then with weapons. This is mainly because why this war maligned the image of religion Islam so bad.

This war between Islam and Anti-Islam brought up the terrorist organizations with the mindset like that of the Al-Qaida, having its roots in Afghanistan and offshoots in Pakistan.

In the war of terrorism in Afghanistan, the major loser is found to be the United States of America. The failure of United States in Afghanistan, despite all the time that US gave in Afghanistan, lost lives and paid huge cost, the phenomenon of Talabanization grew faster than before. This failure caused America to get frustrated and the sudden and rapid changes in its policies is the proof of this.

According to the statistics, there were around 60844 people died during 2003 and 2016 for the sake of this war on terror, only in Pakistan. The maximum number of deaths were recorded in 2008 when 3906 people died in the country due to the terrorist attacks. Apart from Pakistan, it also reveals how the Afghani people suffered the losses of lives during the war. Around 37% of the people died due to the advanced technology based explosive devices.

If we look into the global perspective on terrorism the round table conference that held in Moscow in 2004 holds a great significance, when the countries from all over the world planned the strategy to restore the world peace order and emphasized on the mutual cooperation to deal with the peace crises.

In my opinion, the only solution to deal with the current situation is to be united for the sake of humanity. The differences cause nothing but conflicts and those conflicts lead to wars. Wars are not the solution of the problem but itself it is a problem. To avoid the war and its collateral damage, the world need to stand on one point agenda to completely restore the world peace order.

## CONCLUSION

There is no second opinion on the fact that the world has experienced the barbaric militant attacks and worst ever state in conflict and peace scenario. Specifically, Afghanistan and Pakistan, that have been in a state of war for the last decade, just after 9/11 tragedy, have caused both the countries to pay huge cost by means of the collateral damage. The literature discussed just above views some of the reasons, facts and solutions to deal strategically with this crises to restore the peace order so that both the countries come out of this crises soon. Otherwise, if it is not controlled on

time, it will worsen the situation and may be Pakistan will eventually turn the battle ground like that of Syria or Iraq.

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