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Analyzing The Resurgence of TTP and ISKP: Pakistan's Threat Landscape and Securitization Theoretical Framework

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Abstract

This research paper aims to analyze the resurgence of the two prominent terrorist organizations – TTP and ISKP. Pakistan is already faced with immense challenges in the form of political polarization and socioeconomic instability. The resurgence of TTP and ISKP adds to the mounting security challenges. The recent expansion of militant activities across the country indicates an on-again nature of insurgency that TTP and ISKP have waged against Pakistan. The reintegration of the significant splinter groups expanded jihad against Pakistan. A thorough reassessment of the resurgence and its impact on Pakistan's national security is made by employing a securitization theory. The resurgence of TTP and ISKP and their attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist the rebuilding of the said terrorist organizations. This research intends to fill the literature gap that persists regarding the resurgence of the two aforementioned groups.

Keywords: TTP, ISKP, Resurgence, National Security, Pakistan, Securitization Theory

Authors:

Riaz Ahmed Kakar: (Corresponding Author)

Undergraduate, Department of International Relations, National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

(Email: riazokhan26@gmail.com)

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Analyzing The Resurgence of TTP and ISKP: Pakistan's Threat Landscape and Securitization Theoretical Framework

Abstract

This research paper aims to analyze the resurgence of the two prominent terrorist organizations – TTP and ISKP. Pakistan is already faced with immense challenges in the form of political polarization and socioeconomic instability. The resurgence of TTP and ISKP adds to the mounting security challenges. The recent expansion of militant activities across the country indicates an on-again nature of insurgency that TTP and ISKP have waged against Pakistan. The reintegration of the significant splinter groups expanded jihad against Pakistan. A thorough reassessment of the resurgence and its impact on Pakistan's national security is made by employing a securitization theory. The resurgence of TTP and ISKP and their attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist the rebuilding of the said terrorist organizations. This research intends to fill the literature gap that persists regarding the resurgence of the two aforementioned groups.

Authors:

Riaz Ahmed Kakar: (Corresponding Author)

Undergraduate, Department of International Relations,
National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

(Email: riazokhan26@gmail.com)

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Introduction

Pakistan is already faced with immense challenges in the form of political polarization and socioeconomic instability. The resurgence of TTP adds to the mounting security challenges that Pakistan is faced with. It is inevitable for Pakistan to review its counterterrorism strategies to cater to the significant national security threats such as the re-regrouping and resurgence of TTP and ISKP. TTP's recent expansion of militant activities across the country indicates an on-again nature of insurgency that TTP has waged against Pakistan for the last 15 years, exhibiting an upward trajectory in the number of attacks against law-enforcement officials and police forces. TTP's resurgence is evident from the fact

that they have carried out around 100 militant attacks since November (Humayun, [2023](#)).

According to the 15th Monitoring Team's report of the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaeda/Taliban submitted to the United Nations Security Council, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is now the second largest terrorist outfit in Afghanistan (Zaidi, [2024](#)). The report further accentuated that, the said banned terrorist organization enjoys logistical and operational support from factions of Al-Qaeda and most importantly, from the Afghan Taliban. The report highlighted the increased strength of the TTP which comprises 6,000-6,500 active fighters, making it the second-largest terrorist organization. The rise and resurgence of TTP and ISKP in Afghanistan

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under the oversight of the Afghan Taliban regime lends credence to Pakistan's standpoint that, Kabul is reluctant to act against the terrorist organizations – prominently the TTP and ISKP that serve as a potential threat to Pakistan's national security. Regarding the ISKP, the report underscored concerns over the displacement of ISKP personnel across borders by the Afghan Taliban. Such a displacement will have inevitable and drastic implications for Pakistan's national security.

Pakistan's response towards tackling the immense threats posed by TTP to Pakistan's national security and eliminating terrorism remains insufficient. The compounding of ethnic fault lines and disquieting socio-political circumstances further exacerbate the crumbling security situation. Although, Pakistan's kinetic counterterrorism efforts to counter the threats posed by TTP to the Pakistani landscape –notably in the form of operations 'Rad-ul-faced' and 'Zarb-e-Azab' precipitated the TTP's vertical decline. In the given scenario of continued attacks, its efforts remain inadequate. TTP which was barely functioning after these prominent military operations is yet again on the verge of strengthening. Their resurgence is evident from the consolidation of its base and the immense reinvigoration of the violent campaign. The revival of TTP and its attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist and fuel the rebuilding of TTP. It is significant to consider the prominent factors such as its linkages with other militant groups, and connections with the Afghan Taliban's leadership (Jadoon, [2021](#)).

Keeping in view the significant security voids in the region, coupled with the Taliban's inadequate capabilities to deal with terrorism and ISKP, the threats are further intensified for Pakistan in the form of anti-government militancy and resurgent sectarianism. ISKP, considering its previous track record is likely to cash on the security gaps that persist in Pakistan's counterterrorism strategies and make its inward expansion to Pakistan, signaling its resurgence. This paper aims to analyze the resurgence of TTP and ISKP in Pakistan and its resultant implications on Pakistan's national security, providing the readers with the latest dimension of the overall picture.

ISKP has shown unmatched and tremendous resilience in the form of organizational learning and adaptability in Pakistan. It has effectively carved out the space for the Jihadist-Salafist brand through a commonsensical appeal to the educated youth of the upper-middle class and urban middle class (Abdul Basit, [2021](#)). What makes ISKP a major threat to Pakistan's national security as compared to other terrorist and militant organizations is the qualitative edge that ISKP has over its rivals in Pakistan in the form of communication and recruitment, employment of social media, and propaganda dissemination. The Islamic State

has been involved in a three-way rivalry to which it has adapted effectively by developing its well-organized, organizational structures as well as cell structures which provide the organization with leverage over other terrorist organizations.

Pakistan, at present, finds itself in a fragile security situation marked by instability and uncertainty. The situation is further exacerbated by the rise of increased radicalization and resurgence of militant organizations such as the TTP and Islamic State, also termed as 'ISKP'. Pakistan has long had fears of ideological spillover that could strengthen the already existing domestic terrorists and result in destabilization of the states through guerrilla warfare.

Signs of TTP's Resurgence

As remarked by Ehsanullah Ehsan, an earlier spokesperson of the TTP in an interview with Al Jazeera in 2020,

“We cannot say that the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar [a TTP splinter group], or other anti-Pakistan groups are finished. They have a set-up and perhaps they have gone silent as part of a plan” (Hashim, [2020](#)),

Their indication of a set-up plan is evident considering the sharp increase in the militant activities conducted by the TTP, recently. For instance, on January 30, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device inside a packed mosque, killing at least 100 people and injuring more than 225 in the city of Peshawar, in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the border with Afghanistan (Humayun, [2023](#)). This deadliest attack indicates the upward trajectory in the number of terrorist activities conducted by TTP reflecting its resurgence.

TTP's re-inclusion and reintegration of the significant splinter groups expanded jihad against Pakistan, and continuous and intensified propaganda campaigns are the major signs of the resurgence of TTP and its commitment to reinvigorating itself. This poses an immense threat to Pakistan's national security. It also significantly adds to the already fragile and crumbling national security situation in Pakistan. Addressing the internal conflicts and tensions, the reabsorption of the splinter groups indicates the intensification of its terrorism campaign in Pakistan.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan traditionally has remained fragmented. The current TTP leadership has been making efforts to reduce the internal tensions inside the TTP. This indicates a more serious nature of the threat in the form of reinvigoration and rebuilding of the militant organization leading to its resurgence. Internal reconciliation at the national (Supreme Shura), regional (regulatory Shura), and local levels is being worked on to manage internal rifts. This reconciliation process aimed at

preventing the organization from further segregation and fragmentation adds to the national security challenge for Pakistan (Abdul Sayed T. R., [2023](#)).

After facing an enormous blow and ramped-up crackdown as a result of the heavy kinetic approach used by Pakistan against TTP which led to disintegration in exhaustion TTP. The group faced significant weakening in 2014 in the form of defections, public disgust, infighting, and operations against it. Its retreatment is witnessed yet again in Afghanistan in the form of safe heavens, provided by the Afghan Taliban, rather inexplicitly. Despite the promises made by the Afghan Taliban to not allow any militant organization to use its soil for conducting militant activities against any other state, the ground reality remains quite contradictory to that.

TTP's Alliances and Rivalries

TTP's alliances with other militant organizations regionally are significantly influencing its goals of re-energizing. Its intricate relationship with other prominent militant organizations such as ISK, al-Qaeda, and notably with Afghan Taliban remains indistinguishable and fluid. Therefore, Pakistan's counterterrorism framework must be focused on taking into account these alliances and the relationship of TTP with other regional militant organizations to counter its resurgence effectively. The inter-group mergers, considering the asymmetric warfare and the context of insurgency, add immensely to the longevity and lethality of the non-state militant actors and groups such as TTP. As per the latest figures, around 22 splinter factions have reunited in the past two years resulting in the expansion of geographical outreach of TTP in Pakistan and increasing its operational capabilities.

Afghan Taliban's Rejuvenating Effect on TTP

The Taliban's takeover in 2021 of Kabul, and the reluctance from the Afghan Taliban to act against TTP have further exacerbated the security challenges that Pakistan is faced with. Afghan Taliban's support of the TTP stems from their idea of using TTP against Pakistan and asserting strategic autonomy against Pakistan's security establishment. After facing an enormous blow and ramped-up crackdown as a result of the heavy kinetic approach used by Pakistan against TTP which led to disintegration in exhaustion TTP.

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conducting militant activities against any other state, the ground reality remains quite contradictory to that. In August 2021, since the Afghan Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, there has been around 55 percent sharp increase in terrorist activities and attacks in Pakistan (Abdul Basit, [2021](#)). Tehrik-i-Taliban's launching of attacks against Pakistan with an evident possibility of receiving support from the government in Kabul not only poses a serious threat to Pakistan but also places the entire region at immense security risk.

Pakistan's Counterterrorism Efforts: Carrot-and-stick policy

Pakistan's response towards tackling the immense threats posed by TTP to Pakistan's national security and eliminating terrorism remains insufficient. The compounding of ethnic fault lines and disquieting socio-political circumstances further exacerbate the crumbling security situation. The Carrot-and-stick policy employed by Pakistan to counter the immense security threats posed by the resurgence of TTP to Pakistan's national security hasn't paid off well. This counterterrorism approach only indicates a failed security strategy that needs a comprehensive review.

On June 23, the Shehbaz Sharif government announced a novel military operation, Azam e Istehkam, with resolve to deal with a rising surge in militancy from Afghanistan and the Resurgence of prominent terrorist organizations – TTP and ISKP. However, Azm e Istehkam is not a fully kinetic operation like other military operations such as Zarb e Azab, conducted in the past. Operation Azm e Istehkam is an amalgamation of both kinetic and non-kinetic counterterrorism efforts. The non-kinetic, diplomatic aspect of the operation is significant owing to the polarization and domestic discontent that persists at the national level. The mainstream parties have opposed the operation fearing large-scale displacement. Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts comprised of several military operations based on a kinetic approach looked immensely comprehensive on paper, but their efficacy has remained significantly undermined owing to the poor implementation of the policies.

The resurgence of TTP and its attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist and fuel the rebuilding of TTP. It is significant to consider the prominent factors such as its linkages with other militant groups, and connections with the Afghan Taliban's leadership.

Negotiations with TTP

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), since its resurgence has been indulged in negotiations with the Pakistani government. These negotiations have yielded nothing for

Pakistan other than temporary rounds of ceasefires, making TTP even stronger as Pakistan negotiated evidently, with a position of weakness. On the part of the TTP, it is evident that it has only used these negotiations to gain legitimacy and strength. This gave them the much-needed space and time to rebuild the militant organization and recuperate its networks in Pakistan. Pakistan's engagement with the TTP recently in the form of negotiations was ineffective contributing immensely to TTP's revival.

Implications for Pakistan's National Security

The evolving nature of TTP, its revival and immersion within the militant landscape, and its commonsensical appeal to aggrieved populations are the primary attributes that remain most dangerous for Pakistan's national security. TTP's expansion in Pakistan is resulting in security deterioration in Pakistan, causing other armed groups and separatist movements to regain influence in the country. A destabilized and cash-strapped Pakistan faces the risk of vertical and horizontal proliferation of armed activities in general and those by the TTP in particular (Instability in Pakistan, 2023). In August 2021, since the Afghan Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, there has been around 55 percent sharp increase in terrorist activities and attacks in Pakistan (Abdul Basit, 2021).

TTP's actions and militant attacks are inspired by their demands of releasing dozens of its apprehended members, reinstatement of seven border regions of FATA, and withdrawal of the Pakistani army from the earlier no-go areas to create this Islamic caliphate as propagated by the TTP. Tehrik-i-Taliban's launching of attacks against Pakistan with an evident possibility of receiving support from the government in Kabul not only poses a serious threat to Pakistan but also places the entire region at immense security risk. Pakistan's significant counterterrorism gains are prone to fragility as a result of the resurgence of terrorism in general and that of TTP's in particular.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan has declared a long-haul struggle against Pakistan and has been making efforts to broaden its space and support base. In this regard, cashing on the grievances of the Baloch and Pashtun ethnic groups supplements their set-up plan of broadening their support base. TTP has also expanded its militant activities to the urban centers, indicating its increased operational capacity. Their primary targets remain law-enforcement agencies and police officials. This sudden rise in terrorist activities reflects the wave of terror that TTP previously inflicted upon Pakistan a few years ago.

Overlooking the modest growth of TTP in terms of its operational capacity indicating that it's not a toothless

force would haunt Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy. TTP's resurgence is evident from the sharp increase in the number of militant activities and attacks conducted particularly in KP, recently. The use of the media wing (Umar Media) along with violent operations in propagating its goals and ideology further necessitates Pakistan to review its counter-TTP strategy in particular to cater to the notion that the TTP has embraced such as the "Globalization of Jihad" (Jadoon, 2021)

Reassessing the Rise of ISKP and Its Implications on the National Security of Pakistan:

Historical Context

ISKP was formulated in 2015 and it has remained actively involved in the insurgent activities throughout South Asia in general and Pakistan in Particular. Pakistan became the ground for the most lethal and dangerous terrorist organization, ISKP back then.

It was able to achieve rapid prominence and allegiance of other militant organizations and groups during the second wave of expansion by the Islamic State exterior to the Levant. Initially, ISKP received allegiance from nine al-Qaeda commanders in Afghanistan and Pakistan followed by more pledges from the key commanders of TTP, including Hafiz Saeed Khan, who became its first leader (Wali) for its self-proclaimed Caliphate. ISKP's rise was immensely supplemented by the already existent jihadist outfits in Pakistan and Afghanistan coupled with increased progression of the notion of 'Salafization'.

Khorasan historically refers to the central Asian States, including Pakistan, eastern Iran, Afghanistan, and western India. This particular region has remained central to ISKP's global aspirations. ISKP, despite the massive loss of its members to the Taliban, has remained flexible in the core –Pakistan and Afghanistan. ISKP's military strategies and its organizational trajectory could be divided into two prominent phases. Initially, from 2015 to 2019, its primary motive was the consolidation of control and acquisition of territory. From 2020 onwards, the ISKP has been more focused on urban warfare.

ISKP's Linkages with Other Non-State Actors

ISKP's network in Pakistan is dominated by two significant factions. Former TTP fighters, predominantly Salafis form KPK form the first faction whereas, anti-Shia elements form the second faction which is active dominantly in southern Baluchistan. A special unit by the leadership of ISKP was announced which was termed 'Wilayat Pakistan'.

ISKP's relations with the Taliban, particularly with TTP have been marked by severe tensions owing to the large scale and massive recruitment of the TTP cadres

and leaders. The rifts between the two organizations came forth in 2021 when TTP accused ISKP to be a stooge of intelligence agencies that were created to damage and malign the Jihadi movement. Over recent years, such verbal exchanges and confrontations have turned into violent confrontations.

ISKP's Role in Regional Instability

ISKP's organizational and operational outreach was initially limited to Islamic State activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its outreach increased in 2016 to Bangladesh. Along with expanding its extremist networks in the regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, considered as its 'core', ISKP has been making rigorous efforts to increase its extremist networks in Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Maldives, what could be termed as 'periphery'.

Recruitment and Radicalization Strategies

The major chunk of recruits for the ISKP comprises recruits from Pakistan who have immensely helped the Islamic State to strengthen and establish itself in Pakistan and Afghanistan during 2015-2016. After the downward trajectory witnessed in the form of declining recruits as a result of intra-jihadi bloodshed between ISKP and with Taliban in Afghanistan, the primary recruitment focus of the Islamic State was TTP cadres and foot soldiers in Pakistan, which comprised of the young Salafi community and Pashtuns from KPK. The massive support networks in the form of anti-Shia militants also provided ISKP with grounds for propaganda to establish itself in Pakistan and intensify the expansion of its radical activities.

Along with the recruitment process and operational activities, the ISKP has immensely prioritized its propaganda outlets in Pakistan. The prominent al-Azaim Media Foundation runs the propaganda and media operations for the ISKP, particularly after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan (Abdul Sayed T. R., [2023](#)). As per the latest estimates, the said media outlet released around 108 videos, 750 audio, and over 175 books as part of its propaganda campaign in various languages such as Arabic, Pashto, and Persian to accumulate support for its activities and address its supporters playing a central role in its overall mobilization and recruitment.

Impacts of ISKP's Activities on Pakistan

The Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), has remained one of the primary concerns for counterterrorism experts and policymakers in Pakistan. Following the consolidation of power in Afghanistan in 2021, these concerns have further intensified. Keeping in view the immense threats in the form of violence,

resilience, and regional ambitions, the ISKP poses significant threats to Pakistan's national security.

As a result of TTP's ascent, ISKP has witnessed a sharp decline in Pakistan. The reintegration campaign by the TTP to gather the splinter groups has caused a massive blow to ISKP in Pakistan. This is being witnessed in the taking away of the recruits by the TTP from ISKP (Khan, January [2019](#)). However, ISKP's ideology remains a significant point of attraction for the masses due to its ideology. On the other hand, ISKP has associated its comparatively slow operational activities with its process of reorganization denying any sort of decline.

ISKP's Resurgence and Re-Expansion in Pakistan

ISKP's resurgence and re-expansion in Pakistan's KPK is noteworthy. After the reconsolidation of ISPP into ISK, the terrorist attacks and activities have witnessed an upward trajectory since then. The recent attack is prime evidence of that. The total number of claimed attacks by the ISKP in the KP province of Pakistan has increased to 55 percent in the first half of 2023 (Jadoon, [2021](#)). The Islamic State has received comparatively less attention in Pakistan as compared to other terrorist organizations. To gauge the resurgence of ISKP in Pakistan, the rate of attacks conducted by IS would serve as the primary indicator for the growing threat and group reorganization.

Implications for Pakistan's National Security

The ultimate goal of the Islamic State in Pakistan is their motivation to overthrow Pakistan's government as well as that of its neighbors and replace it with a desired transnational Caliphate. The primary agenda of ISKP is international and sectarian. The non-Sunni Muslims, particularly the Shias remain the primary target. Additionally, ISKP has launched an anti-China propaganda campaign to attack Pakistan's national interests.

The employment of propaganda techniques by the ISKP against the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative to malign the BRI project also remains a primary security concern for Pakistan and China. It has inflicted targeted attacks on projects funded by China in Baluchistan to threaten and malign the connectivity projects such as the prominent project of Trans-Afghan Railway which is aimed at connecting Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan to Pakistan (Schulz, [2022](#)).

In July 2023, ISK perpetrated one of its deadliest attacks since its official formation in 2015, which left over 100 casualties in Bajaur, Pakistan (Jadoon, [2021](#)). This indicates that despite the counterterrorism operations launched by the Afghan Taliban against the ISKP, it would be naïve to assume that it has been defeated.

Moreover, the Islamic State's activities in the form of recruitment operations, ISK attacks, and media output have immensely diversified and expanded posing serious threats to Pakistan's national security. ISKP's confrontation with the Taliban makes it evident that the organization still possesses the capability of strategic adaptation as it is significantly broadening its influence in Pakistan reflecting its resurgence.

The significant challenges in the form of intersecting socio-economic turmoil and political instability already mark Pakistan. The resurgence of ISKP further exacerbates the already crumbling security situation in Pakistan. ISKP's resurgence is evident from the recent devastating and violent attack that it carried out targeting Fazal-Ur-Rehman's JUI(F) political party. The suicide bombing struck an election rally in Pakistan's Bajaur district on July 30, 2023, killing over 60 and wounding well over 100 people (Goldbaum, 2023). This attack exposed the persisting vulnerabilities in Pakistan's broader security framework in terms of intelligence gathering, and detecting the movements of militants in Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

To analyze the resurgence of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and its resultant implications for Pakistan's national security, a Securitization theoretical framework is employed for an efficacious analysis. Considering Pakistan's approach towards terrorist organizations in general and TTP in particular, declaring them as a prominent existential threat to Pakistan, it has immensely securitized the issue. Securitization theory primarily accentuates the process of 'speech act', through which the dominant or power elite use the language as a rhetorical device to gain public legitimacy and commonsensical appeal. In Pakistan, considering the massive waves of terrorism in the past and the current upward trajectory of terrorist activities and extremist violence, the public at large has legitimized the military actions aimed at tackling and dismantling TTP and curbing the violent activities performed by the violent, non-state, militant group. Pakistan has employed a 'carrot-and-stick' policy which is a combination of a kinetic approach as well as the use of negotiations to deal with TTP's resurgence and its drastic implications for Pakistan's national security. To gain wider public legitimacy, the language of securitization is effectively employed by the state, particularly by the power elite.

The resurgence of TTP and its attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist and fuel the rebuilding of TTP. It is significant to consider the prominent factors such as its linkages with other militant groups, and connections with the Afghan Taliban's leadership. Securitizing the resurgence of TTP is a significant step in Pakistan's

counterterrorism strategy to create a situation of emergency that demands drastic actions to deal with the immense security challenges as a result of TTP's that Pakistan is faced with. As argued by Shuja Nawaz, a prominent Pakistani scholar, Pakistan cannot afford complacency in the wake of mounting terrorism threats (Nawaz, 2023). Pakistan's efforts in dismantling TTP have remained inadequate which is evident from its resurgence and reinvigoration. This accentuates the need for an all-encompassing and comprehensive approach to TTP's resurgence to effectively cater to the security of the state in particular and that of the region in general.

The Case of ISKP: Securitization Theoretical Framework

Keeping in view the nature of the aforementioned topic, the employment and application of the 'Securitization theory' seems most relevant to analyze the rise of ISKP and its implications on Pakistan's national security. Pakistan, as part of its counterterrorism strategy, has declared the militant non-state actors such as the ISKP as an existential threat and a primary source of insecurity for the state. To effectively deal with the issue of terrorism at hand, Pakistan has securitized the issue. The primary focus of the securitization theory lies in deploying the rhetoric of national interest by the power of the elite of the state, responsible for shaping the national interest of the state to attain public legitimacy for their actions. Pakistan has used a kinetic approach against terrorist and militant organizations such as the ISKP. Pakistan's efforts to counter the threats posed by ISKP to the Pakistani landscape –notably in the form of major military operations such as 'Rad-ul-fasad' and 'Zarb-e-Azab' hastened the ISKP's decline. ISKP is yet again on the verge of strengthening evident from its consolidation of its base and the immense reinvigoration of the violent campaign. The resurgence of ISKP and its attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist and fuel the rebuilding of ISKP.

Public support and legitimacy come from fighting against the terrorist activities that have been haunting the public in Pakistan, where thousands of Pakistanis have fallen victim to the ever-evolving menace of terrorism. ISKP has posed immense threats to Pakistan's national security in the form of conducting militancy operations and using the means of sectarian violence leading to a crumbling security situation in Pakistan. The resurgence of ISKP would directly multiply the aforementioned threats. Its rise and on-again nature of activities poses drastic implications for Pakistan's national security. Therefore, in such a given situation of emergency, the need to take proactive actions and securitization of the issue at hand, which is the resurgence of the ISKP, is significant.

Conclusion

The resurgence of TTP and its attempted comeback demands a more rigorous examination of the plethora of factors that might assist and fuel the rebuilding of TTP. It is significant to consider the prominent factors such as its linkages with other militant groups, connections with the Afghan Taliban's leadership, etc. The re-inclusion and reintegration of the significant splinter groups into TTP's core group such as 'Hizbul Ahrar' and 'Jamaat-Ul-Ahrar' as part of its resurgence plan cannot be overlooked. Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy primarily focused on using a 'kinetic approach' needs a paradigm shift in the form of adopting measures beyond such a kinetic approach. The immense challenge for Pakistan lies in tackling TTP's ideology and narrative and preventing its rebounding with splinter groups and regional allies. The tenuous sense of victory against the TTP resulting in complacency has contributed to the recent reemergence and resurgence of TTP. A revisit of the persistent myopic policy relating to Terrorism in general and TTP, in particular, is inevitable for Pakistan's counterterrorism

strategy and campaign to deal with the resurgence of TTP and terrorism.

For the ISKP, the political landscape of Pakistan remains uncertain as a result of the rise and resurgence of militant organizations such as the TTP and ISKP. The Islamic State has inflicted high casualties and brutal attacks on Pakistan. In the wake of significant military pressure, ISKP will most likely make efforts to inflict high-casualty attacks in Pakistan in the coming time, which further necessitates Pakistan to act rapidly to curb the expected threats and the resurgence of ISKP in the country. Pakistan's military, however, may try to target and eliminate TTP before ISKP considering that the TTP poses a much greater threat to Pakistan's national security as compared to the ISKP. Pakistan has long had fears of ideological spillover that could strengthen the already existing domestic terrorists and result in destabilization of the states through guerrilla warfare. It is, therefore, inevitable for Pakistan to act proactively to deal with the rise and resurgence of ISKP which is evident from its recent terrorist activities to cater for the immense national security challenges that Pakistan is faced with.

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