**Terrorism and Public Safety Paper**

**Name**

**Affiliation**

**Date**

**Introduction**

One of the major terrorist organizations in the world is the Taliban Movement, which is a politico-military-religious regime and a fighting force in Afghanistan. It is considered a threat to the government, Afghan military forces, civilians, and neighboring countries. After the invasion of the Soviet Union on Afghan soil in 1979 and the subsequent defeat of Russian troops led to the formation of this terrorist organization in Afghanistan. This Pashtun organization was joined by thousands of followers from Afghanistan. These people were trained in Afghanistan and were brainwashed by its leadership. This research paper is aimed at exploring this terrorist organization, its leadership, funding, and impact on the world.

**Research Statement**

To explore one of the worst terrorist organization that is the Afghan Taliban by studying its activities, purpose, attacks, funding, counterterrorism efforts and impact on the World.

**Background**

Since the attacks of September 11 in New York, United States, the Taliban regime was attacked militarily by the United States and in 2002 it was overthrown. Afghanistan returned with an interim government governed by ethnic and political groups. In 2004, members of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban regrouped in Afghanistan and attacked forces of the new Afghan government and troops of the international coalition that occupies the territory of that country. Currently, the Taliban control the area of ​​Southeast Afghanistan and are in constant conflict with the government and US forces. This terrorist organization has around 60,000 soldiers (Scherer, 2013).

**Literature Review**

**Reason for terrorism by Taliban**

Taliban are the individuals with a supremely radical and violent vision. It is worth clarifying that, unlike other Islamic movements and organizations with an Arab, Persian or Kurdish majority, the Taliban are mostly Pashtuns. This is important since it explains why violence in Afghanistan is not only subordinated to religion, but also because of ethnic conflicts between Pashtuns, Arabs, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, among others. The institutional order of Afghanistan, as in many regions of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, is characterized by an important presence of tribes and communities that, apart from advocating for greater economic and political autonomy, claim their ethnic origin (Raqib & Barreto, 2013).

It is believed that the Taliban emerged in 1994, as a result of two movements that constituted the mujahideen: The Hizb-e-Islami and the Harakat-i-Inquilab-i-Islami. These two groups represent the ideological and fundamentalist formation of the Taliban, since their doctrine was based on a return to what they considered an original vision of Islam, in which Islamic law is strictly applied through punishments such as mutilation and stoning, the restriction of liberties for women, and the imposition of rigid codes of conduct and dress for men. Obviously, this type of laws and regulations, as pointed out by the British historian Karen Armstrong, are a kind of rejection of the advent of modernity and the intention of the secular establishment to eradicate religion. For this reason, the expansion of the Taliban was accompanied by a wave of repression and violence against certain economic and social progress achieved by previous regimes; for example, the incursion of women into work and education, and the spread of Western culture through television and radio (Scherer, 2013).

During the collapse of the PDPA government (1992), the rise of the Taliban in 1994 began, Afghanistan experienced a state of anarchy that was taken advantage of by different movements and organizations belonging to the mujahideen, who resoundingly established political enclaves throughout the country. From this fragmentation of the country, young radical Afghans educated in different madrassas began to shape and expand a military and political organization whose success could be explained by two factors: the rapid occupation of the gaps of power in the Afghan territory and the application of a strict code of justice that largely represented discontent with the corruption of the traditional political class.

The combination of these two factors led to the conquest of Kandahar in favor of the Taliban in 1994, making it the first political and military achievement of this movement. The geopolitical causes that explain why Kandahar was the starting point for the expansion of this group are based on the fact that this province, in the south of the country, borders with Pakistan and is considered the heart of the Pashtun ethnic group (Cole, 2009).

Due to the international support and some legitimacy towards the Taliban in certain rural areas of the country, this movement achieved a dizzying control of the same in a course of five years. For some researchers, the Taliban's political and military reach was the result of a convergence between the military expertise of leaders such as Mullah Mohammed Omar and the ideological support. The takings of cities like Kabul or Herat, where both the impact of Western culture and the presence of Shiite Muslims clashed with the beliefs of the Taliban, were, in short, evidence that this young movement controlled the country. This terrorist organization basically wants to take control of Afghanistan and implement its own generated rules. For this reason, they are fighting everyone who opposes them.

After taking control of almost the entire Afghan territory in 1996, the country began a new stage under the control of the Taliban, which, despite the limited political and economic projection, gradually achieved acceptance in the international context, explained in large part for the interest of different countries in reaching economic agreements that allowed to accede with greater ease to commercial routes or to have participation in the exploitation of the source of Afghan wealth: iron, copper, natural gas, oil, lithium, gold, coal, potassium, aluminum, uranium or precious stones; which contrasts with abundant poverty, corruption and violence (DI RATTALMA, 2003).

**The leadership of the Taliban in Afghanistan**

After the death of Osama Bin Ladan and Mulla Umar, the current leader of the Taliban (Mawlawi Haibatulah Akhunzada) was selected in 2016. Almost fifteen years ago, the Taliban leadership council considered him a powerful spiritual and religious scholar and they respect him. He is a son of a local imam, Haibatulah was born more than 50 years ago in a town near Kandahar, in the south of the country. He fought against the Russians in his campaign to extend the Soviet Union to Afghanistan in the 1980s and migrated to adjoining Pakistan. He started what he considered a "holy war" against the Soviets and communist Afghans.

He joined the Taliban movement in the mid-1990s to fight with them to implement their rigorist version throughout Afghanistan. Upon conquering Kandahar, Haibatulah began to work as a judge in the courts who established there and went up the ranks. During the Taliban regime, he became deputy head of Justice, according to the Afghan news agency Pajhwok. After the invasion of the United States in 2001, he was promoted to head of the Taliban Justice. He was Mullah Omar's personal assistant after the fall of the Taliban regime and the group reorganized. When the founder died, Haibatulah became the head of the political and judicial committee of the Taliban. He has more experience in the judicial than in the war.

**Global Terrorism Database (GTD) for Afghan Taliban**

The Institute for Economics and Peace, a study center that is based in Sydney, Australia, releases its "Global Terrorism Index", a report on global terrorism. The report is based on the "Global Terrorism Database" (GTD), a database created by the University of Maryland, and is useful for understanding the state of terrorism in recent years and what is the general trend. In order to elaborate the "Global Terrorism Index", the Institute of Economy and Peace uses four different values, each with different importance: the total number of terrorist acts in each year; in a number of deaths; the wounded; and the damages caused (Maret, 2018).

According to its latest report, the five countries with the most victims were Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria. Afghanistan was badly affected by terrorist attacks in the last 15 years. According to the executive director of the institute, the reduction of deaths is a positive fact, although, on the other hand, he warned that its spread in Afghanistan by Taliban can generate serious concerns and underlines the fluid nature of modern terrorism. According to this index, the Taliban is considered one of the major violent groups in the World, specifically in Afghanistan and indicated the need to take measures for controlling its violent activities (COLE, 2009).

**Funding to the Taliban in Afghanistan**

The Taliban are heavily funded by different organizations. The private security companies working in Afghanistan hired by the US contribute to filling the coffers of the Taliban, according to a report by the US Senate. The document, made by the Senate Armed Services Committee, states that the Department of Defense is too dependent on Afghan "warlord services," which, in most cases, divert funds for criminal activities. There is significant evidence that some security contractors even worked against US coalition forces, creating the same threat that they had to fight and for which they were hired (GlobalPost, 2009).

According to the senator, these contractors threaten the safety of US troops and the success of the mission. Some 26,000 private security employees, mostly Afghans, operate in the country, of which nine out of 10 work for the US Government. Richard Fontaine, a member of the Center for a New American Security, said that taxpayers' money sometimes ends up in the hands of those they are fighting in Afghanistan. The private security firms in Afghanistan provide guards for different agencies, from embassies and humanitarian aid agencies to convoys of supplies and US military bases. The document denounces a worrisome panorama, since some of the hired ones have little formation or experience in armament, whereas other contractors are 'lords of the war' with well-known ties with Taliban (Marks, 2012).

In addition, the Senate reveals that despite the request of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, in which he urged these contractors to leave the country in four months, the security industry makes it difficult for the Afghan army to take command of the country and recruit to better soldiers. So it makes the goal of creating a safer Afghanistan more difficult, which is why senators have demanded "aggressive and immediate" actions to reduce the number of contractors and that supervisory work can improve. However, US officials have indicated that it would be very difficult to get rid of all security contractors because of the essential role they play (Campos & Pereira, 2018).

**Relationship with Media of Taliban**

The Afghan Taliban get the attention of media and delivers their message through it. They have a deep relation with the representatives of local media. The videos messages are often recorded by them and sent to the local media, the media broadcast it with the permission of the government. The media is threatened in case if their message is not broadcasted. This is how the Taliban delivers its message to the world (DI RATTALMA, 2003).

**Top attacks carried out by Taliban**

In addition to 9/11, the Taliban have carried out many attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. One of the major terrorist attacks was carried out by them on an Army School in Pakistan. In total, six Taliban disguised as soldiers stormed the school, located in the suburbs of the city of Peshawar. Nearly 500 students between the ages of 10 and 20 were present at the school, including children belonging to several senior officials, according to a Taliban spokesman. According to witnesses, the attackers went from class to class to shoot the children, and at least one of them blew up the bomb he was carrying. They went so far as to hunt down the children hidden beneath the benches to kill them, according to one survivor. The army quickly intervened and exchanges of fire continued until mid-afternoon on December 16, 2014. The casualties were heavy: 141 people, including 132 children, 124 people, including 121 children, were also injured (Qureshi, Gulraiz & Shahzad, 2016).

The assault was quickly claimed by the Taliban. It took place because the Pakistan army has for several months been carrying out a massive offensive against this rebel movement in its strongholds in the northwestern tribal areas, near Peshawar and bordering Afghanistan. Taliban told that they targeted this school because the army attacked their families. Several international organizations and heads of state around the world also condemned this terrorist attack, the deadliest in Pakistan. In the evening, the army reaffirmed its determination to continue its ongoing operations against the Taliban until their total elimination (Campos & Pereira, 2018).

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Another recent attack occurred on the base of the main Afghan security agency on 28th February 2019. It left at least a hundred dead, all of the members of the armed forces, although it is not ruled out that there are more fatalities and could have killed building personnel, according to local sources. The attack occurred at the headquarters of the National Directorate Security (NDS), which had recently been built in the central province of Maidan Wardak. According to the information, the death toll rose to almost one hundred people. The attackers built a stolen military SUV full of explosives against the NDS training center. After that, at least two shooters fired at the premises for three hours before being shot. According to the spokesman of the governor of the region, Muhibullah Sharifzai, four terrorists died in that attack, one in the explosion and the other three, dejected. As a result, 126 people died in the explosion.

**Role of US in Afghanistan for fighting Taliban**

The efforts are still being undertaken against this organization by different countries of the World. The United States has allied with a proven record of loyalty in the struggles in the country along with its troops, including Pakistan, Qatar, Saudia Arab and particularly the United Arab Emirates, which have played a calm but effective role in the fight against jihadism in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia has also shown a willingness to fight against an ideology that supports terrorism in foreign territory and help others to do the same. The Saudi and Pakistani leadership considers these terrorists as their mortal enemies.

In this sense, Saudia Arab has announced the creation of a "Muslim coalition against terrorism" to fight against them, as well as the implementation of tools that serve to limit the reach of extremists and to fight against their ideas. Saudi Arabia also helps its Pakistani ally on a similar mission in Afghanistan. The "Muslim coalition" is already well positioned to do so, as a Pakistani general, Raheel Sharif, was appointed in 2017 as the leader to command it. Pakistan has carried out a successful operation against the Taliban and have completely wiped out their presence in the country.

Additionally, Morocco, although it is as far from Afghanistan as one can be in the Muslim world, has been a bridge between the several Gulf States, and can play a fundamental support role. Four decades after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the nature of the war has changed in such a way that geographical proximity is not the only determining factor to assume a relevant role in this conflict

The role of the US against the Taliban is of vital significance. Washington talks about progress in negotiations that include the radicals' commitment to remove terrorist groups from the country. The USA and the Taliban have recently approached a peace agreement in Afghanistan. The six days of talks between Taliban and representatives of the United States in Qatar have led the parties to be close to reaching an agreement on the framework for a peace pact aimed at ending the war of 18 years in Afghanistan. The key and most delicate element of dialogue topics including a commitment from the Taliban is to prevent Afghanistan from being used by terrorist groups, the withdrawal of troops overseas a ceasefire and direct talks of the Taliban with the Afghan government. There is still no agreement on the ceasefire or withdrawal of troops (Baczko, 2016).

According to Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghan reconciliation who led the negotiations, there is still no agreement on the ceasefire or withdrawal of troops. In an interview with the New York Times, Khalilzad announced that a compromise principle had been reached for the framework of a peace pact, including a commitment to keep Al Qaeda and the Islamic State out of Afghanistan. The president of the United States, Donald Trump, seems in a hurry to withdraw his troops: announced late last year his intention to withdraw half of the 14,000 soldiers deployed in Afghanistan in a coalition led by NATO. The United States leads the longest war in Afghanistan since its intervention in 2001 to overthrow the Taliban regime. But it is the Afghans, civilians and the military, who pay the highest price for the conflict. Approximately, 45,000 Afghan security forces have been killed since the election in September 2014, with an average of more than 28 deaths per day (Phillips & Kamen, 2014).

**Conclusion**

To recapitulate, Taliban violence in Afghanistan has evolved and is a serious threat to political stability, the maintenance of social cohesion or the integrity of multinational military contingents that carry out missions in the country. Their insurgency activities in the form of terrorism are very common every day and it has spread throughout much of Afghanistan. This is how things have been since, after the attacks of September 11, Operation Enduring Freedom, launched by the United States and the United Kingdom, to which some countries formally joined and in fact collaborated with each other, put an end to the use of military means to the totalitarian theocracy that those radical individuals had managed to establish by the mid-nineties and whose leaders were in open connivance with Al Qaeda. Although, the action has been taken against them by the US and other countries and the peace agreement is also a consideration, its increasing influence needs to be controlled as early as possible. This requires the collaboration of all the involved countries in this conflict.

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