

The Pashtuns use of Suicide Bombing as a Military Operation in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Rashid Ahmed¹, Muhammad Ali Baig^{2*}), Saif ur Rehman Malik²

¹Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University, E-9/3 E-9, Islamabad, Islamabad Capital Territory, 44000, Pakistan.

²Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, Sector F-5/2, Islamabad, 44000, Pakistan.

Received: 12 May 2020; Revised: 11 May 2021; Accepted: 21 October 2021

Abstract

This paper provided a new framework i.e., fifth-generation literature on suicide bombings. The latter have always been a central debate/value in warfare; however, they have taken a centre stage in asymmetric warfare. The lethality and commitment to the cause makes a suicide attacker a real danger. The Iraqi episode of Al-Qaeda used suicide bombings as a military operation, and it transferred the expertise to Taliban to fight against the U.S-led Allied Forces in Afghanistan. From there the same tactics proliferated to Pakistani Taliban who used it as a military operation against the security and civil establishments of Islamabad. Apart from the Pashtunwali Code and the strict adherence to the Deobandi School of thought, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan readily accepted to recruit and train suicide attackers and employed suicide bombings as a military operation. This analytical and explanatory study generally banked on secondary data, normally gathered from the academic sources; however, primary data was also used, and an interview of an anonymous security official was conducted as well. This paper is a concentrated effort to probe and investigate the advent of suicide bombings in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to examine that how and why the Pashtuns used it as a military operation to achieve their desired objectives. The article found that the selection and indoctrination of a suicide bomber involves almost eight stages.

Keywords: Terrorism; Taliban; Al-Qaeda; ISIS; Suicide Bombing; Military Operation

How to Cite: Ahmed, R., Baig, M. A., & Malik, S. R. (2021). The Pashtuns use Suicide Bombing as a Military Operation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. *Otoritas : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 11(2), 91-107.

Permalink/DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26618/ojip.v11i2.3469>

*Corresponding Author.
E-Mail : alibaig@issi.org.pk

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of suicide terrorism is not a new one. In the past, it was employed by the followers of Judaism known as Zealots or Sicarii in opposition to the Roman Empire during the period of 66-73 AD. Afterwards, it was imitated by Ismaili Assassins (also known as Hashhasheen since they, apparently, used to be addicted to cannabis) of Twelfth century. However, in the relatively modern era during the Twentieth century, the Imperial Japanese Forces used the same tactics of suicide attack as a military instrument during the Second World War. The Kamikaze pilots waged suicide aerial missions, whereas kaiten was human-borne torpedo to attack and destroy enemy naval assets (starting in October 1944 till August 1945). The especially trained pilots of Imperial Japanese Air Force aimed the Allied Pacific Naval Fleet by actually smashing their airplanes into naval vessels. The Kamikazes improvised their airplanes and loaded them with explosives instead of using them for dropping bombs (Syed, 2010). A considerable light was shed on the tactics of Kamikazes and a metaphor was used for hunting them down as 'Comets Ascending' (Hoyt, 1986). Apart from the suicide attacks from the air, the Kamikazes also used suicidal human boarded torpedoes known as kaiten to increase the kill probability of the torpedo (Hoyt, 1986).

During the Cold War, the War in Vietnam also witnessed the use of suicide attacks inflicted on the United States (U.S.) and Allied Forces. The Viet-Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (also known as People's Army of Vietnam) utilized suicide groups to attack the U.S. and Allied armour which was the main target of the suicide groups. The suicide groups primarily used Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) such as Soviet RPG-2 and RPG-7 (Tucker, 2011). During the January

1968 Tet Offensive led by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, an especially trained 19 member suicide squad took control of the U.S. Embassy located at Saigon for several hours until the squad was killed or captured by U.S. paratroopers (Willbanks, 2009). The Viet Cong also improvised ordinary boats and converted them into 'suicide attack boats' to hit the U.S. Marine Riverine Force as well (Tucker, 2011). On the other hand, the United States also utilized 'Wild Weasel flights in suicide missions' to locate surface to air missile (SAM) sites of the North Vietnamese Forces (Tucker, 2011).

Contemporarily, the suicide bombing was heavily improvised and operationalised in the Middle East by the Lebanese and Palestinians. The same was replicated by Al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia against Americans, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) employed it against the state of Sri Lanka (Pape, 2003). It was noted that "The LTTE was by far the most sophisticated non-state army in South Asia, perhaps in the world. It pioneered the technique of suicide bombing, successfully assassinating Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, and senior Sri Lankan general Parami Kulatunga in that manner" (Brass, 2010). The Hezbollah mastered the suicide attacks and on October 23, 1983, it executed a suicide bombing attack that took place at U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, and resulted in the deaths of 241 American soldiers, and it was flanked with a nearby co-ordinated second attack that killed 58 French soldiers (Pape & Feldman, 2010).

It was argued that it is a significant aspect in describing the general choice to warfare all through the globe; that is, since fighting erupted in a certain region, the tactics were imitated and improvised by other parties which wished to relate somehow similar tactics to help with their own troubles (Levy & Thompson, 2011).

Therefore, it is not ambitious to opine that the LTTE copied the tactics used by Hezbollah in July 1990. The LTTE orchestrated a co-ordinated sequence of suicidal attacks targeted on the political, civilian, and military targets in Sri Lanka. It also used a female minor suicide bomber to assassinate ex-Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Pape & Feldman, 2010). Without a doubt, the assailant of Rajiv Gandhi known as 'Dhanu' became the very first individual to wear a bomb-filled jacket to conduct a suicidal bombing to assassinate a person (Dharmawardhane, 2013). The attack was carried out on May 21, 1991 (Baig, 2019). However, it is to be noted here that Dhanu was a victim of repeated sexual abuse and carried out the attack as a reprisal for the war crimes committed by the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) deployed in Sri Lanka in 1987 – the latter unsuccessfully withdrew in 1990 (Santos, 2007).

The use of suicide attacks imitated the spill over effect, and it reached Israel by 1994 through the Palestinians. Subsequently it reached to the region of Persian Gulf by 1995, when the Al-Qaeda operatives executed suicidal bombings against the U.S. Military instalments in the area. In 1996 the suicidal attack phenomenon reached Turkey while the PKK (also known as Kurdistan Workers Party) employed suicidal bombings targeted on military and civil establishments in Turkey. Suicidal attacks furthered to take the shape of organized suicide terrorism and stretched more during the early years of the Twenty-first century. In years 2000 and subsequently 2001, armed insurgent factions in Chechnya initiated suicidal bombings aimed at Russian military and civilian infrastructure, insurgents of Kashmir executed comparable assaults on the Indians, and the Al-Qaeda catalysed and exhibited its most extravagant suicidal assault in the history by directly attacking

the United States of America on September 11, 2001.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study is novel, as it aspires to examine the use of suicide bombing as a military operation by Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The majority of Pashtuns adhered to Deobandi school of thought and strictly followed Pashtunwali code are socio-politically conservative and religiously right-leaning. This analytical and explanatory study generally banked on secondary data, normally gathered from the academic sources; however, primary data was also used, and an interview of an anonymous security official was conducted as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pakistan and Suicide Terrorism

Although during the previous years, suicide attacks within Pakistan are mostly being executed by the organizations associated with Al-Qaeda e.g., Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), Jundullah, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) etc., however, the first ever suicide bombing in Pakistan was done by the organization called Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Abbas, 2008; Baig & Muhammad, 2020). It used a Vehicle-Bound Suicide Attack (VBSA) aimed at the Egyptian Embassy located in Islamabad on a cold morning of November 19, 1995. The attack resulted in the deaths of 19 innocent people and wounded an additional 80 (Chalk, 2013). It is interesting that exactly seven months prior to the latter incident, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols conducted Oklahoma Bombing in Oklahoma, United States on April 19, 1995; nevertheless, both attacks were different from the tactics involved (Combs & Slann, 2007). However, it can be argued that perhaps Ayman Al-Zawahiri – the mastermind of attack at

Egyptian Embassy was somehow encouraged by the attack perpetrated by McVeigh and Nichols.

After the initiation of U.S.-led War on Terrorism in October 2001 following the 9/11 Attacks, since the year 2002 to July 1, 2010, more than 3,719 people lost their lives in almost 257 suicidal bombings inside Pakistan, injuring more than 9,464 (Syed, 2010). It is worthy to note here that one of the perpetrators of 9/11 Attacks Mohammad Atta was an Egyptian national (Pape & Feldman, 2010). In other words, "in 2007, Pakistan entered into [a new] era of suicide bombing" (Brass, 2010). According to South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), from 2001 till 2021, a total of 595 suicide attacks were carried out in Pakistan which resulted in the deaths of 11,068 people and injured more than 14,312 (Yearly Suicide Attacks, 2021).

Phases of Suicide Terrorism in Pakistan

The suicide terrorism in Pakistan can be classified into 2 periods. The First

Period included the span from 2002-2005, while the Second Period spanned from 2006-June 2017. It was argued that, through the years 2002-2005, the curve of suicide bombings was at the lowest i.e., (0 attack in 2001 and 2002, only 1 in 2003, almost 9 in the year 2004, and nearly 2 in 2005) (Pape & Feldman, 2010). While the radical group known as LeJ participated frequently in most of the sectarian suicide bombings/attacks. Though, President General Pervez Musharraf declared LeJ to be a banned outfit in 2001; this provided Al-Qaeda a possibility to reach out the estranged militant organizations, thus, increasing the suicide attacks on Shiites'.

At some point during the Second Phase, the U.S. Administration started to stress Pakistan to carry out concrete anti-militants' military action. For this operation against the militants in the North-Western Pakistan, almost 100,000 Pakistani troops were to be transferred from the Eastern border with Islamabad's

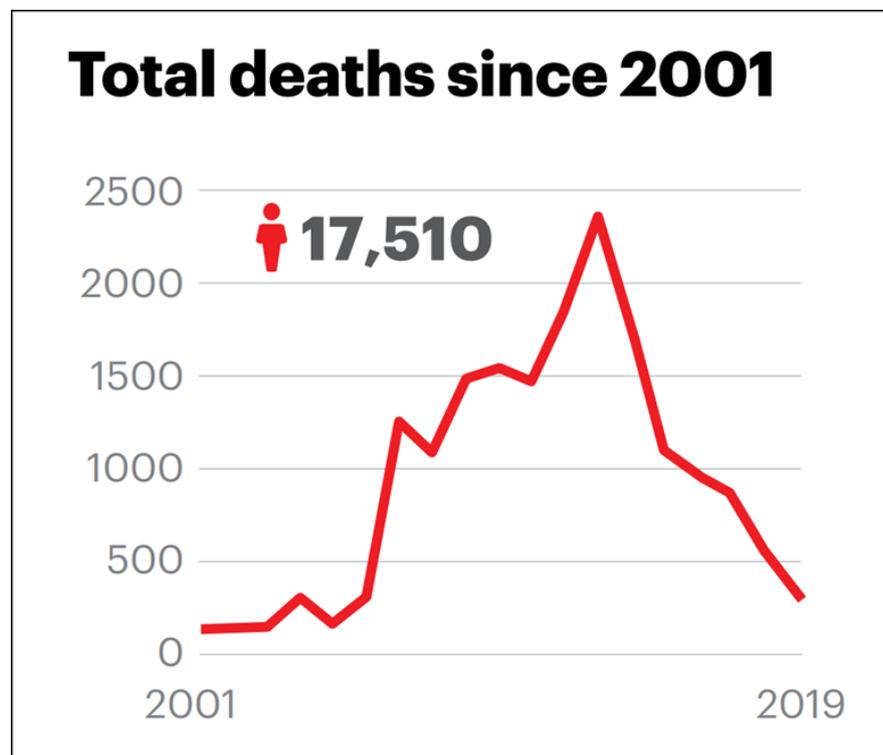


Figure 1. An Illustration of Human Loss to Terrorism in Pakistan
Source: Institute for Economics & Peace (2020)

antagonistic neighbour – India (Sokolski, 2009; Pape & Feldman, 2010). It could be inferred that Al-Qaeda left an indelible mark on the sectarian organizations in Pakistan especially the Taliban from Punjab known as PT or Punjabi Taliban; regarding the art of suicide bombings.

Whilst the years 2004-2005 were characterized by insurgent factions partially centred in Pakistan planning and attacking in to Afghanistan, however, through the last part of the year 2007, the rebels were steadily attacking the security establishment of Pakistan. The main incident that provided fuel and motivation for conducting suicidal attacks to the high command of militants in Pakistan was a drone attack aimed at a

Madrasa located in the Bajaur Agency in the mid-2006. Just afterwards the incident which resulted in the deaths of several including children, the militants went in full swing against the security forces of Pakistan across the state. After the Red Mosque Operation in Islamabad in July 2007, which was held by a group of Islamic radicals and was liberated by the security forces, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was attacked by the terrorists. The miscreants, together with the TTP, also harassed Shiites' community in FATA, particularly in the Kurram Agency during December 2007 (Kemp, 2008).

During 2008, the figure of suicide attacks reached to 59 and then it climbed

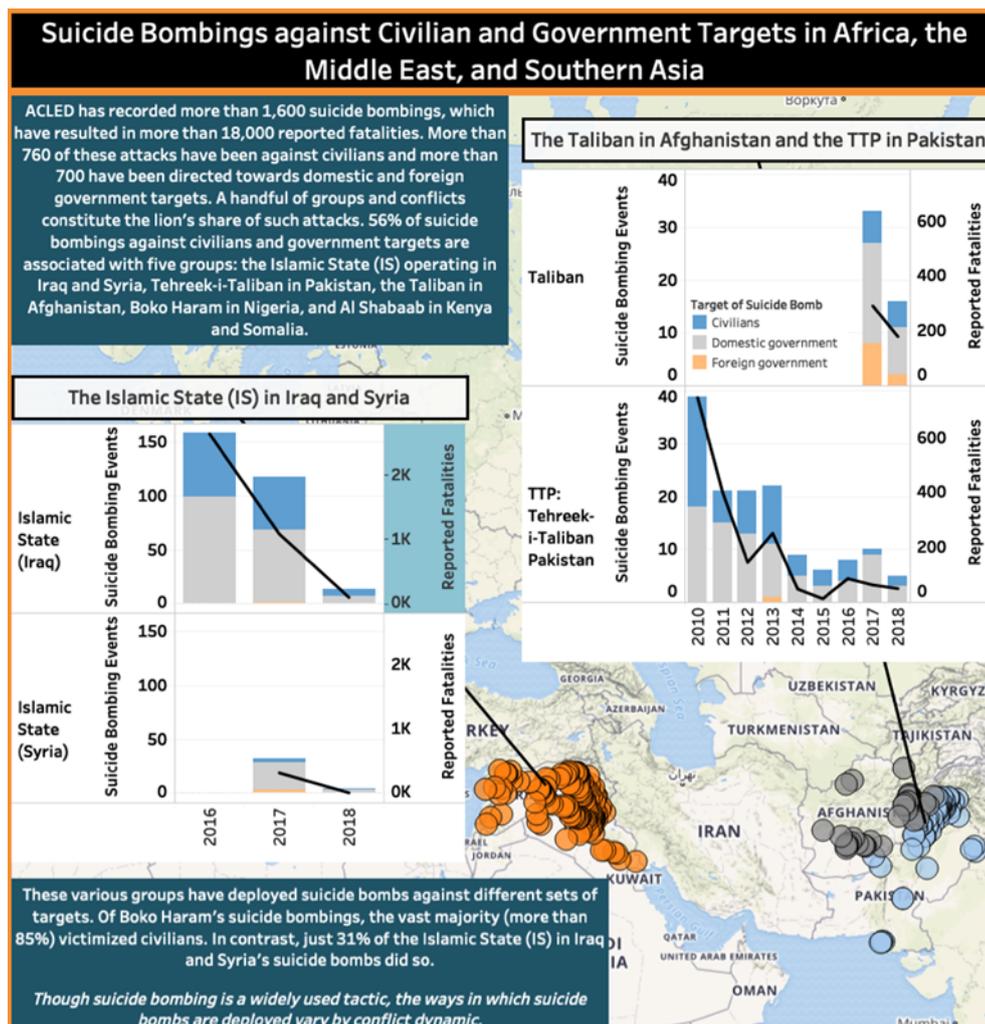


Figure 2. An illustration of Suicide Bombing in Pakistan
Source: The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2019)

to more than 84 in the year 2009, afterwards it dropped to 29 in 2010, the least number of attacks since 2005. However, in 2010, 556 people in Pakistan lost their lives to suicide bombings; these attacks were about 25 percent of all the suicide bombings in the world. Of all the attacks and resultant deaths, the majority took place in the region which is thickly populated by Pashtuns i.e. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA; in retrospect Pashtuns taking the lives of Pashtuns, while the self-professed Taliban of Punjab (comprising of LeJ, JeM and some others) mainly attacked the Shiites' community, people adhering to Barelvi school of thought, and Ahmadiyya non-Muslim minority as well as Christian community (Cohen, 2011). Rashid observed that in the year 2008, FATA the home of Pakistani tribal Pashtuns, the manufacturing of suicide vests took the shape of a local or cottage industry. One family prepared the detonator, the other stitched the vest, and another one would fit metal ball bearings and so on. Surely, the manufacturing of these vests were made upon the operational requirements of Taliban who received them and financed the entire industry (Hassan, 2014).

The Pashtuns and Suicide Bombing

As it is argued previously that suicide attacks were introduced and executed in Pakistan by Egyptians and not Pashtuns, though, the Pashtuns participated in large numbers later on. This unprecedented or perhaps unanticipated behaviour by the Pashtuns triggers one pivotal question that why Pashtuns as a nation (Afghanistan-Pakistan) resorted to suicide bombing and consequently used this tactic as a military operation? It was noted that "since the 1970s, Afghanistan has been in a state of nearly constant warfare" and arguably such a strategic environment greatly transformed Afghan strategic culture (Pape & Feldman, 2010). The

"constant warfare" and the ability to absorb casualties made the strategic culture strong and subsequently suicide bombing found its way into the Afghan way of war.

Brian Glyn has addressed this question and argued that Afghan Taliban fundamentally due their dominant Pashtun ethnicity never intended to employ suicide attacks against their opponents. Since Pashtuns strictly adhere to the Pashtunwali code and follow the Deobandi school of thought and subsequently believe suicidal attacks to be an act of lack of bravery and weakness. Similarly, they also consider suicide bombers to be a transgressor and immoral. However, it is obvious that the volunteers from Arab, as well as those 'Arab-Afghans' which soon after copied Al-Qaeda, were much more leaned towards employing suicide attack operations which led them to the path of heaven and to be called a martyr. 9 September 2001, marked a remarkable day in suicide operations, when Osama bin Laden exhibited the usefulness of suicidal attackers when he sent two suicidal bombers to assassinate the Taliban rival and the Commander of Northern Alliance – Ahmad Shah Massoud (Williams, 2012).

The researchers are sceptical of Brian Glyn's assertion that the Pashtuns were unwilling to accept suicide bombing as it is considered as sinful in the Deobandi school of thought of Islam. Without a doubt, suicide attacks were a common practice during the years from 2003 to 2005 for the Punjabi Taliban. It happened earlier, when the Pashtuns employed the same tactics of suicide attacks as a military operation, but it is noticeable that the Taliban from Punjab including LeJ, JeM, etc, also adhere to the Deobandi school of thought (Ahmed, 2012). The researchers are also sceptical of the author's argument that it was the Pashtunwali code which was an obstacle in accepting suicide attacks as military operations amongst the Pashtuns of Pakistan and Af-

ghanistan. The Pashtunwali code has had no jurisdiction in the approval of suicide attacks; however, the Pashtuns were full of zeal and passion during the war, while, suicide bombing is a cowardly act, and this might have been the reason of its condemnation as a military operation amongst the Pashtuns.

As a matter of truth, the Iraqi episode of Al-Qaeda was the keystone that ultimately triggered curiosity among the Taliban of Afghanistan to use the suicide attack operations targeting the multinational Forces stationed in Afghanistan. In relation to this, Mullah Dadullah was appointed as the focal person by Mullah Omar to educate, indoctrinate, and prepare the Pashtuns from Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was opined that in the year 2005, interactions of delegations occurred between the Taliban of Afghanistan and the Al-Qaeda-Iraq members to scrutinize and to evaluate their knowledge about the suicide attacks. Whilst the Afghan Taliban were conscious that other factions have used suicidal

bombings before, though, they were suffering from shortage of men who were ready to volunteer for suicidal actions and operations. Mullah Dadullah was successful in convincing the factions coming from the Central Asian Republics including people of Uzbek and Tajik origin, also people coming from Pakistani Waziristan, and other regions of Pakistan about the significance of suicidal bombings. Soon after that, almost 450 motivated suicidal attackers including some 70 women willfully volunteered for such suicidal operations, and consequently these people were transported from Waziristan towards Afghan province of Kunar by the Taliban for guidance and preparation. The women suicidal attackers mostly comprised of such fighters from the Arab region and the Central Asian Republics whose men and relatives were either killed, missing or still fighting in Afghan region or in the adjacent Waziristan. However, there also were some Pashtun women mostly from Waziristan, which came on free-will probably convinced and

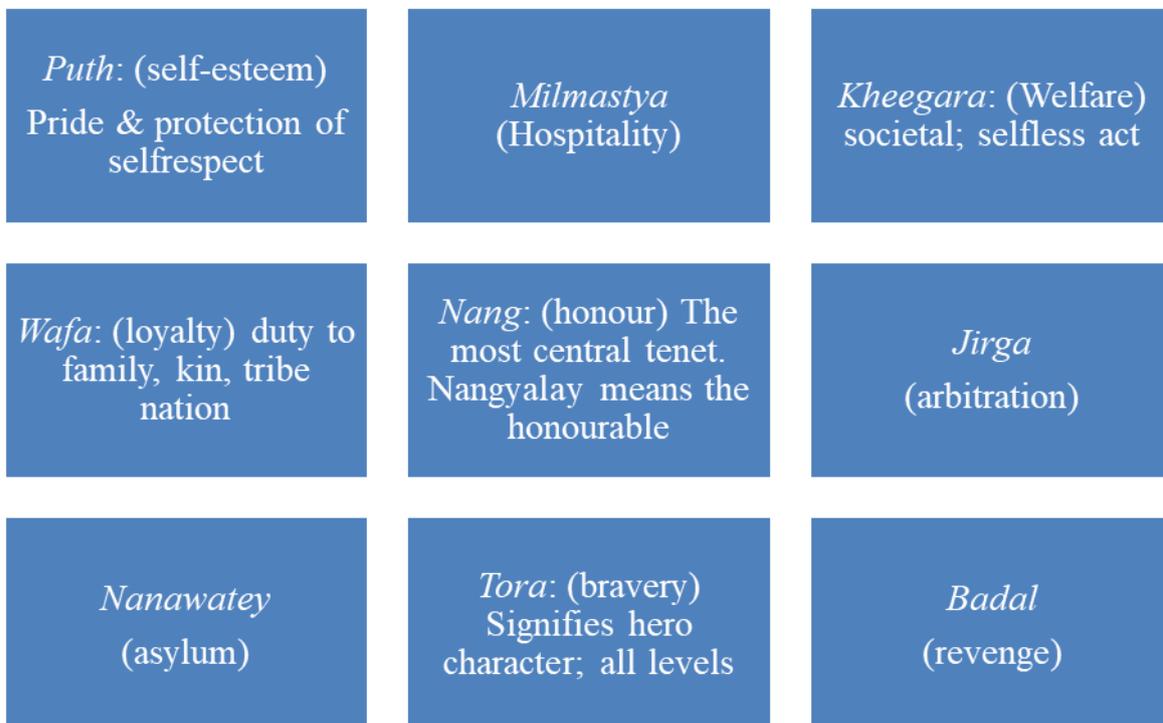


Figure 3. Constituent Elements of the Pashtunwali Code
 Source: Nocker & Junaid (2011)

motivated by their family elders to participate in the suicidal squadrons (Shahzad, 2011; Nagamine, 2015).

Apparently, the Iraqi Al-Qaeda assisted the Taliban in Afghanistan to increase skills and know how in suicidal bombings since they were aware that their expertise was to be utilized targeting the U.S. and Allied Forces in entire Afghanistan and overtly, America was the primary enemy of the Iraqi Sunnis. Hence, the famous notion of 'enemy of my enemy is my friend' dominated the entire exercise.

Williams whilst agreeing with Saleem Shahzad, opined that Dadullah brought the Iraqi suicidal attack preparing and videos containing training material to Waziristan region of Pakistan in the year 2005 along with him (Williams, 2012). Though, in 2003, the United Nations (UN) also pointed out regarding the horrible Iraqi suicidal bomber videos and films to incite and encourage the potential Taliban suicide bombers. The films and videos, which featured violent cutting of peoples' heads, 'Improvised Explosives Devices,' (IED) assaults on American Military, and photos of suicidal attackers hammering their respective target-cum-victims, were very much useful in the Pashtun regions of Afghanistan. Similarly, in Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan, security officials retrieved much data including such films and movies which were in Arabic language primarily used for inciting people especially Pashtuns for jihad during 2004-05. A video and graphical producing company by the name of 'The Sahab Productions' belonging to Al-Qaeda readily started working and produced Iraq-style films enticing Pashtuns for jihad. This production house mainly produced jihad-related video material for the Taliban of Afghanistan (Williams, 2012).

Coghlan too verified that in the October 2005, intelligence information suspected that 2 commanders of Abu

Musab al-Zarqawi – the Al-Qaeda leader within Iraq, travelled towards Afghanistan with the intent assist in organizing the Taliban resistance. Subsequently, powerful military grade C4 explosive, earlier unfamiliar in Afghanistan, had begun to emerge in attacks in the Eastern parts of Afghanistan. Coghlan give details further that Pashtuns were the first to define and interpret the meanings of the term *Istihadiyeen* (suicidal Attackers) as the martyr and fighter for the protection and preservation of faith. The Taliban culture did not utterly adhere to Pashtunwali code and consequently it started to follow the suicidal bombing practice. The Taliban accepted that was previously considered as an act of a coward, and is comparable to devoted Catholics unexpectedly starting to accept abortion (Coghlan, 2006).

Mir also agreed with Saleem Shahzad while saying that the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban associated Pakistani terrorists gained knowledge of their lethal expertise from the Afghan Taliban. As pointed out previously that while Mullah Dadullah Akhund – the Taliban commander in Afghanistan was seen as the chief designer at the rear of the growing magnitude of suicidal attacks targeted at the American and the Allies in Afghanistan, Qari Hussain Mehsud was the man who had motivated *fidayeen*-style suicidal attacks inside Pakistan just after the 'Operation Silence' (The Red Mosque Operation in 2007). Prior to being eliminated in an American drone missile attack in North Waziristan Agency in October 2010, Hussain was notorious in the security establishments of Pakistan as the chief instructor of young suicidal attackers and therefore called as the *Ustad-e-Fidayeen*, or the instructor of the suicidal attackers. Taught and educated by his Afghan counterparts, Qari Hussain had set up a *fidayeen* camp at NWA, which he utilized to induct, instruct, and programme young

potential suicide bombers with the aim to proliferate the figure of suicidal attacks (Mir, 2009).

While maintaining the previously narrated details in perspective, the researchers opine that while the suicide attacks in Pakistan were a common practice in 2003-2005 due to the anti-Shiite' Taliban in Punjab who became skilled at this talent from the Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, however, it was the Taliban in Afghanistan who provided the art to the Pashtun Taliban in Pakistan. But, the Taliban of Afghanistan was taught this tactic by the Iraq episode of Al-Qaeda. The previous facts also make us to aver that while the Pakistani and the Taliban appeared that they were entirely two different entities, yet, the study pointed to that they assisted one and another in tactics, training, and operations.

Preparation of a Suicide Bomber

It is incorrectly believed that a suicidal bomber is deeply religious, emotional, and a motivated person who carries out a suicidal bombing aimed at any objective to fulfil a reason that he envisages to be moral. The researchers find that the question is not easy as it is suspected. A suicidal bomber is an individual who is cautiously chosen by some militant organization following the instructions of its high command which possess specific aims for using the suicidal attackers in fulfilling its political and doctrinal motives. Under this part, we wish in describing the process that begins with choosing of a person to conduct a suicidal bombing according to the capacity of its mental and emotional programming by the handler, till the time when a person carries out the suicidal bombing and while ending its own life while inflicting as much damage as one can.

Having worked together with many officials of the concerned Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) which have the knowledge and experience of

arresting and managing such suicidal attackers, and taking actions aimed at the terrorist organizations, it is averred and inferred by the researchers that a suicidal attack is not designed and carried out in a day or even in a week or so. Talking precisely, a sensible but thorough process is followed in selection of the attacker, indoctrinating it, preparing it for the attacks and carrying out the bombing.

Pakistani potential suicide attackers are in contrast with the Western or even the Arab attackers. The terrorist organizations and groups in Pakistan try to focus such individuals which are mainly from the deprived and unfortunate background, least educated or even not educated at all, most of the times students from *Madrassa* is an ideal choice, or even such individuals who voluntarily offer to sacrifice their lives since their loved ones were victims of a local or foreign military strike.

The basic motivation of such individuals is to seek revenge from the state for their loss. The American drone strikes especially in FATA garnered much help and sympathy for terrorists and helped in recruiting suicidal attackers. In this perspective, Pape and Feldman averred that the American drone strikes engender rage within the people while giving an opportunity for the leaders of the Al-Qaeda and the TTP to enlist new recruits for suicidal bombings. In addition to that, air strikes made by drones resulted in a difficult situation for the political leaders of Pakistan to justify an unpopular and detested War on Terror (Pape & Feldman, 2010).

The researchers noted that the entire process chosen for employment till the carrying out of the bombing, the value and significance of a suicidal attacker is similar to a rat that is utilized for experimentation, though, induction of a suicidal attacker by its inductor or handler is complex and not as simple as this is believed. In order to clarify the

subject matter, the researchers did an interview of a specialist who previously has had experience of dealing the arrested suicidal attackers. The concerned official person on the condition of secrecy argued that there are almost 9 steps or constituent elements behind the execution of a suicidal bombing.

Tiers of Suicide Bombing

Inspirational Leadership: Al-Qaeda has spearheaded in using religious fervour in encouraging suicidal bombings aimed at U.S, Pakistan, and the Allies. It is stated before that Al-Qaeda due to its experience in Iraq enlightened the Taliban of Afghanistan regarding the suicide bombings and later it was taught to Pakistani Taliban as well. While employing new tactics and making use of social media like Facebook and Twitter, the Taliban and its associates and Al-Qaeda propagated their ideology especially targeting the young people in an unprecedented manner not like the years 1996-2001. They specifically targeted the less-educated young people and those who knew little about computer and also the students of *Madrassa* as well. For example, the Deputy Commander of Al-Qaeda in South Asia known as 'Ustad Ahmed Farooq' published online lectures high lighting the jihad ("Great Words of Shaheed Ustad Ahmed Farooq Rahimaullah," 2015). **Mastermind:** The mastermind is an individual that designs the action including the selection of objective as well. **Networker:** The networker is responsible for setting up the network and also coordinates with other factions in case the objective of the suicidal bomber is not within the range of the initiating place. **Cell Managers:** The cell manager is responsible in managing the place or establishment where potential suicide bombers get education and preparation. Qari Hussain Mehsud is one of the examples of a cell manager and was

called as the *Ustad-e-Fidayeen* (teacher of martyrs). Brain Glyn said that Hussain utilized abducted children of little age and then majority of the children were indoctrinated for the suicidal attacks (Williams, 2013).

Local Agitators: The local campaigner generally comprised of the clergymen who encourages the possible suicide attackers by giving religious examples often spoken out of the context to achieve the desired objective. For example, Moulana Nasib Khan Wazir was a local agitator. Khurram Iqbal opines that Nasib Khan was educated at Darul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak, but originally, he was from Birmal Paktika of Afghanistan. He was a follower of Taliban of Pakistan; though, he did not orchestrate a terrorist bombing by himself. Nasib Khan was among those clergy who issued a religious decree or *Fatwa* declaring that while on Islamic grounds it was right and justified to kill the security forces of Pakistan. **Local Members:** Local members organize temporary housing and accommodation for the attackers previous before the bombing. **Fund Raisers:** The fund raisers gather monetary and financial support for the bombings. **Technicians:** Technicians help in technical issues and provide necessary help for the successful bombing. **Rat or Fodder:** The suicidal attacker is completely expendable and has the least value during the entire operation. It is easy to deduce that it is just like an animal used for sacrifice or a rat employed for experimentation.

It is wrongly believed by many that the masculine teenage suicidal attackers are occasionally psychologically deceived either by putting them into guiltiness or in a frightening situation. By guiltiness, the researcher means by sexually assaulting the boy, making his movie, and later on using this movie as a bargaining chip to force him do that otherwise he would never do, while threatening him of

leaking the video to others in case he fails to do the job. The potential bomber – the boy left with no choice but to comply with the demands to safeguard his reputation. The assertion regarding the film as a bargaining chip could not be validated. To probe this assertion, one did interview Muthahida Qabail Movement's (Joint Tribal Movement) head and President of Pakistan International Human Rights Organization Mr. Habid Malik Orakzai. He is sceptical of these observations and assertions but said that 'the bombers are religiously motivated by their handlers but not sexually abused before launching'. Likewise, Khurram Iqbal also opined that molesting of the potential suicide bomber has no evidence; though, the religious beliefs and emotions of an attacker are carefully stimulated. The researchers challenge that, by triggering the spiritual and religious beliefs of the attacker, the handler decisively constructs the religious distinctiveness of an individual.

Hussain Nadim partly agreed to the previously narrated assertions while he challenged that in an interview with arrested suicidal attackers by LEAs during June 2012, the captured teenager suicidal attackers exposed that they were encouraged by their handlers and trainers by presenting many destructions of drone strikes by the Americans in FATA which resulted in the deaths innocent of women and children. The arrested bomber also stated that their handlers showed them graphic videos in which White men were raping women, and many other videos which pointed out to the violence orchestrated by White men against women. The possible suicidal attackers were then educated in light of the shown videos that their women would be subjected to same magnitude of violence if they don't fight against the Americans (Nadim, 2012). In some interview with a captured suicidal attacker, he revealed that his handler declared that he didn't have to offer prayers because after his

attack and subsequent martyrdom, all of his sins and wrongdoings would be forgiven (Lakhani, 2010).

The narrated facts reveal that the trainers and handlers of suicidal attackers inspire the attackers while keeping in view their capacity to digest and grasp. While in the Arab world most of the Muslim suicidal attackers are not from the deprived background or are sometimes educated. Nonetheless, in Pakistan and particularly in FATA or in Southern areas of Punjab, the higher education proportion is less because of poor living conditions. Certainly, the instructors of suicide attackers look for teenagers from Madrassas or from lower social class of the society so that they do not have to make much of attempt since the soil of that stratum of society is already very productive for such operations. Saleem Safi, a renowned journalist of a Pakistani News Channel (Geo television) did interview an arrested suicide attacker in January 2014. The radical was a member of the Punjabi Taliban, who was trained at Miran Shah and was sent from Miran Shah to Lahore to transport a suicidal vest to somebody but was captured in the way. At some point in the interview, the attacker was inquired if he had any regret on his act, the attacker did not show any lament about its connection with the group of suicide attackers, rather it was so encouraged and charged and was ready to execute suicidal bombing if freed to go. In addition to that, the person demonstrated abhorrence for the Pakistani social order and intellectuals who were not being helpful to the militants in their cause. Upon asking by the anchor, whether the attacker would feel repentance if children were killed as the result of its suicidal attack; the attacker replied that the entire society of Pakistan comprised of non-believers and sinners and was not innocent at all; therefore, killing them was warranted and maintainable even if they were children

(Under Arrest Suicide Bomber Interview, 2014). A scholar cited somehow a similar interview with a would-be suicide bomber or martyrdom seeker (Atran, 2006).

Analysis and Afterthought

History is a witness that military necessity is a dominating doctrine that keeps on resonating its enduring relevance with that of warfare and war. For instance, German General Erwin Rommel used Flak-88 anti-air artillery against armour and gained inextinguishable fame for its battlefield adaptations and improvisations during the Second World War (Messenger, 2009; Battistelli, 2010; Samuels, 2017). Likewise, driven by military necessity, the U.S. waged armed drone warfare and committed “extrajudicial killings” of hundreds, if not thousands, of Taliban (Shaw, 2013). On the same pattern, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan adapted and improvised suicide bombing as a military operation to fulfil the military necessity of their respective operational environment (Johnson, 2013). It is pertinent to mention that the Pashtunwali Code and adherence to the Deobandi school of thought was greatly overcome by the Taliban doctrine of Layeha (Johnson & DuPee, 2012; Lia, 2008). Alternatively, it can be argued that the latter doctrine greatly helped Pashtun adaptations and improvisations on the battlefield and served as an instrument to fulfil the military necessity of Pashtuns. For a Muslim “suicide is prohibited in Islam;” however, the Pashtuns adapted and improvised (Schmid, 2004). There is another aspect which encouraged the adoption of suicide bombing that the “bomber might expect as reward for his ‘martyrdom’ to wake up in paradise with 72 black-eyed virgins waiting to be married to him” (Schmid, 2004). Besides Layeha, the strength of Afghan strategic culture permitted such use of humans as

bombs, and somehow reminisced the employment of infantry in stopping tanks by the Soviet Red Army during the Second World War and Pakistan Army during the Indo-Pak War of 1965 (Baig & Muhammad, 2020).

Likewise, the terrorists and various Actors Other Than State (AOTSS) are thoroughly rational actors, adopt a “calculated course of action,” and their actions are pivoted upon the considerations of cost and benefit analysis (McCormick, 2003). Because of their rationality, scholars argued that they can be deterred (Trager & Zagorcheva, 2005). They heavily learn from regular armed forces and try and recruit their fighters following the same procedure. For instance, organizations like LTTE, Hezbollah, and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) employed flags, insignia, uniforms, and even hierarchy/ranks just like regular armed forces. Even today, Hezbollah continues to exist and operate as a highly-structured and well-disciplined organization (Arkin, 2007).

A number of frameworks were put forward to understand terrorism and suicide bombing including as a form of warfare, organizational tool, and ideological struggle (Schmid, 2004; Zaidi, 2009; Feyyaz, 2013). This study provided a new framework i.e., fifth-generation literature on suicide bombings. As it considered suicide bombings as a military operation and added value to the existing four-generation works (Singh, 2011; Ward, 2018). Nonetheless being a rational actor, the Pashtuns (Taliban) of Afghanistan and Pakistan learned a lot from both Al-Qaeda and the ISIS. Arguably, the Taliban pivoted their strategy on the teachings of Abu Musab al-Suri, who advocated a strategy of leaderless struggle, where every aspiring individual could wage jihad against infidels all around the globe (Joose, 2017; Michael, 2012). It is to be remembered here that “strategy is, above all else,

a pragmatic subject and activity” (Gray, 2007). Suri’s “individual terrorism” enabled ideologically charged, yet geographically scattered individuals to conduct independent attacks and perhaps suicide bombing was the manifestation “by conducting the attack – in a decentralised manner” (Cruickshank & Ali, 2007; Moghadam, 2006; Baig & Muhammad, 2020). Alternatively, it is safe to assume that such a strategy of suicide bombing was adopted as a military operation and executed with military traits including zeal and zest, and the determination to inflict as much damage as one could.

In other words, it can be argued that such a military operation was flanked by a strategy that was based upon military principles. It was advocated that military strategy was the sum of ends, ways, and means (Lykke Jr., 1989) and the Pashtuns employed suicide bombing as “ways and means;” however, perhaps they could not synthesise “ends, ways, and means” into a coherent strategy. Though, such an exploration is well beyond the scope of the paper; nevertheless, it can serve as a new horizon for the researchers to come.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted by mainly focusing on two questions which revolved around the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan. In hindsight, the Prussian (German) war theorist and military commander Clausewitz rightly argued that “Blood is the price of victory” (Clausewitz, 1989) and the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan effectively put this axiom to test by sacrificing their own blood to achieve their objectives. It was argued that “war is the most important thing in the world” (Creveld, 2017) and to address that “important” thing under the conceivable objective of fulfilling the military necessity, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan waged suicide bombing as a successful military

operation. Moreover, in this regard, their strong strategic culture was also instrumental. While keeping in view the historical yet effective use of suicide bombing, the study argued that it has readily been employed as a military operation and can be characterized as one of the most potent form of asymmetric warfare. The paper has demonstrated that suicide bombing is neither an abstract act nor an irrational way of inflicting damage on the perceived enemy; nevertheless, it has the potential to be utilized on a much larger scale that reminisces military operations. It was put to test under diverse conditions in Iraq and got refined in Pashtun-dominated society of Afghanistan which predominantly adheres to the Deobandi school of thought and the Pashtunwali code. However, its efficacy made the Afghans to readily accept it and make it an overshadowing aspect of their operations. Later, suicide bombing proliferated into Pakistan and its encroachment yielded unprecedented results.

This study provided a new framework i.e., fifth-generation literature on suicide bombings. As it considered suicide bombings as a military operation and added value to the existing four-generation works. History can be referred to as a witness that whenever a tactic is fielded and operationalised, the military strategists and tacticians closely observe its efficacy, and regardless of the outcome, they tend to adapt and improvise it. If the tactic works, then it gains strategic value, and almost immediately becomes a permanent aspect of doctrine and strategy. Likewise, when a terrorist organization tries and replicates the same, it receives almost equal output and such nuances encourage their overall efforts (Kydd & Walter, 2006). However, there exists contending views as well (Abrahms, 2006).

The study has drawn novel dimensions in exploring and explaining

complex tiers of suicide bombing which have acted as the building blocks of the Pashtun suicide bomber squads. Such an intertwined structural approach greatly turned abstract thinking into sheer reality and made suicide bombing a worthy strategy. It is not ambitious to conclude that suicide attacks and bombings have always been a central debate/value in warfare. However, such a strategy has taken a centre stage in asymmetric warfare. The lethality and commitment to the cause makes a suicide attacker a real danger. The Iraqi episode of Al-Qaeda used suicide bombings as a military operation, and it transferred the expertise and skills to the Afghan Taliban to fight against the U.S.-led Allied Forces in Afghanistan. From there the same tactics proliferated to Pakistani Taliban who used it as a military operation against the security and civil establishments of Islamabad. Apart from the Pashtunwali Code and the strict adherence to the Deobandi School of thought, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and Pakistan readily accepted to recruit and train suicide attackers and employed suicide bombings as a military operation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Authors would like to thank our colleagues at the National Defense University, Pakistan and the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad for supporting the work.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, H. (2008). A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. *CTC Sentinel*, 1(2), 1–4.
- Abrahms, M. (2006). Why Terrorism Does Not Work. *International Security*, 31(2), 42–78.
- Abrahms, M. (2008). What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy. *International Security*, 32(4), 78–105.
- Ahmed, K. (2012). *Sectarian War: Pakistan's Sunni-Shia Violence and its Links to the Middle East*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- Arkin, W. M. (2007). *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press.
- Atran, S. (2006). The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism. *The Washington Quarterly*, 29(2), 127–147.
- Baig, M. A. (2019, October 30). Who killed Indira Gandhi? Retrieved November 21, 2021, from Daily Times website: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/491655/who-killed-indira-gandhi/>
- Baig, M. A., & Muhammad, S. S. (2020). Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy. *IPRI Journal*, 20(1), 44–71.
- Battistelli, P. P. (2010). *Erwin Rommel*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing.
- Brass, P. R. (Ed.). (2010). *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Chalk, P. (Ed.). (2013). *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- Clausewitz, C. von. (1989). *On War* (M. Howard & P. Paret, Eds. & Trans.). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Coghlan, T. (2006, February 3). British

- troops may face al-Qa'eda fighters sent from Iraq to Afghanistan. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from The Telegraph website: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1509556/British-troops-may-face-al-Qaeda-fighters-sent-from-Iraq-to-Afghanistan.html>
- Cohen, S. P. (2011). *The Future of Pakistan*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Combs, C. C., & Slann, M. (2007). *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (Revised Edition). New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc.
- Creveld, M. van. (2017). *More on War*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cruickshank, P., & Ali, M. H. (2007). Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30(1), 1–14.
- Dharmawardhane, I. (2013). Sri Lanka's Post-Conflict Strategy: Restorative Justice for Rebels and Rebuilding of Conflict-affected Communities. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 7(6), 27–57.
- Feyyaz, M. (2013). Conceptualising Terrorism Trend Patterns in Pakistan—An Empirical Perspective. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 7(1), 73–102.
- Gray, C. S. (2007). *The Implications of Preemptive and Preventive War Doctrines: A Reconsideration*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.
- Great Words of Shaheed Ustad Ahmed Farooq Rahimaullah. (2015, December 4). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from Dailymotion website: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3gran8>
- Hassan, R. (2014). *Suicide Bombings in Afghanistan*. National University of Singapore, Singapore. Retrieved from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/181076/ISAS_Working_Paper_No._191_-_Suicide_Bombings_in_Afghanistan_17062014100159.pdf
- Hoyt, E. P. (1986). *The Kamikazes*. Lahore, Pakistan: Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd. for PAF Book Club.
- Institute for Economics & Peace. (2020). *Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. Sydney, Australia.
- Johnson, T. H. (2013). Taliban Adaptations and Innovations. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 24(1), 3–27.
- Johnson, T. H., & DuPee, M. C. (2012). Analysing the new Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban. *Central Asian Survey*, 31(1), 77–91.
- Joose, P. (2017). Leaderless Resistance and the Loneliness of Lone Wolves: Exploring the Rhetorical Dynamics of Lone Actor Violence. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 29(1), 52–78.
- Kemp, R. (2008). Religious Extremism and Militancy in the Pashtun Areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. *Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs*, 11, 57–67.
- Kydd, A. H., & Walter, B. F. (2006). The Strategies of Terrorism. *International Security*, 31(1), 49–80.

- Lakhani, K. (2010). Indoctrinating Children: The Making of Pakistan's Suicide Bombers. *CTC Sentinel*, 3(6), 11-13.
- Levy, J. S., & Thompson, W. R. (2011). *The Arc of War: Origins, Escalation, and Transformation*. Chicago, Illinois, USA: University of Chicago Press.
- Lia, B. (2008). Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20(4), 518-542.
- Lykke Jr., C. (Retired) A. F. (1989). Defining Military Strategy. *Military Review*, 69(5), 2-8.
- McCormick, G. H. (2003). Terrorist Decision Making. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6, 473-507.
- Messenger, C. (2009). *Rommel: Leadership Lessons from the Desert Fox*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Michael, G. (2012). Leaderless Resistance: The New Face of Terrorism. *Defence Studies*, 12(2), 257-282.
- Mir, A. (2009). *Talibanization of Pakistan: From 9/11 to 26/11 and Beyond*. New Delhi: Pentagon Press.
- Moghadam, A. (2006). Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of Dying to Win. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(8), 707-729.
- Nadim, H. (2012, October 9). Pakistan's almost-suicide-bombers. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from Foreign Policy website: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/10/09/pakistans-almost-suicide-bombers/>
- Nagamine, Y. (2015). *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct: Through the One-Way Mirror*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nocker, M., & Junaid, M. (2011). Poetics of Identity: On Entrepreneurial Selves of Afghan Migrants in Pakistan. *Tamara - Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*, 9(1-2), 39-49.
- Pape, R. A. (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review*, 97(3), 1-19.
- Pape, R. A., & Feldman, J. K. (2010). *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Samuels, M. (2017). Erwin Rommel and German Military Doctrine, 1912-1940. *War in History*, 24(3), 308-335.
- Santos, A. N. D. (2007). *Military Intervention and Secession in South Asia: The Cases of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and Punjab*. Westport, Connecticut, United States of America: Praeger Security International.
- Schmid, A. P. (2004). Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16(2), 197-221.
- Shahzad, S. S. (2011). *Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban: Beyond Bin Laden and 9/11*. London: Pluto Press - Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shaw, I. G. R. (2013). Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare. *Geopolitics*, 18(3), 536-559.

- Singh, R. (2011). *Hamas and Suicide Terrorism: Multi-causal and Multi-level Approaches*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Sokolski, H. (Ed.). (2009). *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Reining in the Risk*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.
- Suicide Bombings Against Civilians and Government Targets in Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia. (2019, March 20). Retrieved December 7, 2021, from The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project website: <https://acleddata.com/2019/03/20/suicide-bombings-against-civilians-and-government-targets-in-africa-the-middle-east-and-southern-asia/>
- Syed, A. A. (2010). Recent Trends in Suicide Attacks. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 8(2), 73–90.
- Trager, R. F., & Zagorcheva, D. P. (2005). Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done. *International Security*, 30(3), 87–123.
- Tucker, S. C. (Ed.). (2011). *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Social, Political and Military History* (Second Edition). Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- Under Arrest Suicide Bomber Interview. (2014, October 24). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from Dailymotion website: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x28jwu3>
- Ward, V. (2018). What do we know about suicide bombing? *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 37(1), 88–112.
- Willbanks, J. H. (2009). *Vietnam War Almanac*. New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc.
- Williams, B. G. (2012). *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Williams, B. G. (2013). *Predators: The CIA's Drone War on al Qaeda*. Nebraska, United States of America: Potomac Books - University of Nebraska Press.
- Yearly Suicide Attacks. (2021). Retrieved November 24, 2021, from South Asia Terrorism Portal website: <https://www.satp.org/datasheet-terrorist-attack/suicide-attacks/pakistan>
- Zaidi, S. M. A. (2009). Organizational Profiling of Suicide Terrorism: A Pakistani Case Study. *Defence Studies*, 9(3), 409–453.