**Back to Afghan Policy**

**Many Taliban watchers outside Pakistan predicted this time around Afghan Taliban will act differently.**

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After the veteran politician turned defence minister Khawaja Asif’s recent statement that Afghanistan is the biggest source of anti-Pakistan terrorism, we are back to square one on our decades-old Afghan policy. The minister also added that contrary to the Doha Accord when the Afghan Taliban pledged that Afghan soil would not be used against any country, especially the neighbouring countries, the minister said categorically that the cooperation against terrorism by the Afghan interim government was simply not available. What are the options available with the Shehbaz Sharif government that took over just last month?

This is not the first time Pakistan has shared the border with Afghan Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The experiences of the first Taliban government that lasted around five years ending in 2001 are not etched in some distant past either. Sadly, both times, Pakistan was accused of facilitating them to power despite the fact that both times Pakistan suffered during their rule. Mullah Omar led the Afghan Taliban to host terrorists from around the world and protected them till they were ousted from power after they refused to hand Osama Bin Laden who boasted in a video how his Arab Kamikaze militants hijacked US commercial airliners and hit them with civilian and military buildings in New York and Washington. Former Interior Minister Gen ® Moinuddin Hyder is on record saying that each time Islamabad asked Kabul to rein in or hand over militants of different shades hiding in Afghanistan, the then government of Mullah Omar simply declined. Former General DG ISI Gen Mehmood when asked Mullah Omar to hand over Osama Bin Laden and save their government, Mullah got infuriated and preferred the end of their government than cooperating with Pakistan and the world.

[Govt bringing innovative projects for sustainable development in Punjab: CM](https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Apr-2024/govt-bringing-innovative-projects-for-sustainable-development-in-punjab-cm)

There was a euphoria both within and outside Afghanistan about how Taliban 2.0 will behave after they return to power after two decades in August of 2021. Many Taliban watchers outside Pakistan predicted this time around Afghan Taliban will act differently, especially concerning providing safe sanctuaries to terrorists of different hues, and might not repeat their past atrocities against women and particularly their access to education and jobs. The recent decree by the new head honcho of the Afghan Taliban Mullah Haibatullah that they will start publicly stoning to death women says clearly that the more Afghan Taliban change, the more they stay the same. The lessons of around 1000 days since the recent ascent to power by the Afghan Taliban testify to the fact that anti-people Taliban rule is essentially ingrained in the very DNA of the beasts. This period has also proved that all efforts to incentivize them to change their ways have ended up in massive failure. Hundreds of dollars provided to them by the world community have not helped the starving and ill Afghans but have helped Taliban murderers and stuffed their coffers.

[Pakistan facing 30 percent water shortage for sowing season](https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Apr-2024/pakistan-facing-30-percent-water-shortage-for-sowing-season)

Despite the fact that Pakistan provided crucial support to the Afghan Taliban during the Doha Accord, soon after they took over Afghanistan, they have gone their old ways. All those who believed in Pakistan that the Afghan Taliban would secure our western borders and will help Pakistan with ending the TTP menace had to eat humble pie. On the contrary, the Afghan Taliban even refused to mediate with the TTP and only offered facilitation to Pakistan to a truce on the terms of the TTP. Terrorism has spiked in Pakistan since the Afghan Taliban took over. Most terror attacks launched by TTP, IS-K and the separatist Baloch insurgents trace back to Afghanistan including the suicide attacks. Not just that but many suicide attackers have been identified as Afghan nationals.

Pakistan shares over 2,600 kilometer border with Afghanistan. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces that border Afghanistan have experienced operational and logistical support emanating from Afghanistan to terrorists of different shades, TTP and Baloch separatists included. There is enough evidence suggesting that Afghan Taliban are also helping terrorists targeting China, Russia, and other Central Asian countries. The recent UN publications also document how Afghanistan once again has become the safe haven of terrorists of the world threatening global security.

[Pakistan’s startups need strategic support for growth](https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Apr-2024/pakistan-s-startups-need-strategic-support-for-growth)

During the caretaker setup, Pakistan not only unleashed a major crackdown on the smuggling of several goods including dollars to Afghanistan and achieved the target of repatriation of more than half a million undocumented Afghans but also employed several methods to dial up the pain against Kabul government to give it a realisation that Pakistan will not tolerate the business as usual but the recent skirmishes and attacks originating from Afghan soil clearly indicate that Pakistan will not get any positive response. Now that the Shehbaz government intends to deport around 1.5 million Proof Of Registration (POR) card-holder Afghans after the month of Ramazan, we should expect more aggressive actions from the Kabul government. The new Islamabad government has work cut out for itself to deal with the emerging scenario. It can only handle it if it brings the best brains of the country to make the new Afghan policy, involving both houses of the parliament and a crucial set of negotiations with the policy and strategic planners in Pindi.

[US wants to see everyone is treated according to law in Pakistan, says Miller](https://www.nation.com.pk/04-Apr-2024/us-wants-to-see-everyone-is-treated-according-to-law-in-pakistan-says-miller)

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