

# **A Comparative Analysis of the Afghan Taliban and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan Ideologies Following the 2021 Takeover of Afghanistan**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research explored the differences in the ideology of the Afghan Taliban and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to examine whether the power shift in Afghanistan has affected either groups' ideology to better understand how future threats may manifest. For this study a qualitative research case study and content analysis were conducted using the iSTART framework to compare the two factions' ideologies. Ideology is the foundation of every terrorist group and determines the motives and actions the group takes. The ideology also informs other various aspects of a terrorist group. Despite the fact that before the takeover of Afghanistan the ideologies differed, the power shift was a catalyst that may have caused the two groups' ideologies to shift closer in alignment. The threat of the TTP has already begun to increase and requires additional examination to ensure that proper steps are taken to combat the developing risk. This research found that there has not been, and likely will not be an ideological change in either group following the takeover of Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Taliban, terrorism, GWOT, Pakistan, Enduring Freedom

## **Un análisis comparativo de las ideologías de los talibanes afganos y del Tehrik-e Talibán en Pakistán tras la toma de posesión de Afganistán en 2021**

## **RESUMEN**

Esta investigación exploró las diferencias en la ideología de los talibanes afganos y Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) para examinar si el cambio de poder en Afganistán ha afectado la ideología de cualquiera de los grupos para comprender mejor cómo se pueden manifestar

las amenazas futuras. Para este estudio, se realizó un estudio de caso de investigación cualitativa y un análisis de contenido utilizando el marco iSTART para comparar las ideologías de las dos facciones. La ideología es la base de todo grupo terrorista y determina los motivos y las acciones del grupo. Una ideología también informa otros diversos aspectos de un grupo terrorista. A pesar de que antes de la toma de Afganistán las ideologías diferían, el cambio de poder fue un catalizador que pudo haber causado que las ideologías de los dos grupos se alinearan más. La amenaza del TTP ya ha comenzado a aumentar y requiere un examen adicional para garantizar que se tomen las medidas adecuadas para combatir el riesgo en desarrollo. Esta investigación encontró que no ha habido y probablemente no habrá un cambio ideológico en ninguno de los grupos luego de la toma de Afganistán.

**Palabras clave:** Talibán, terrorismo, GWOT, Pakistán, Libertad Duradera

## 自2021年塔利班接管阿富汗后阿富汗塔利班 和巴基斯坦塔利班意识形态的比较分析

### 摘要

本研究探究了阿富汗塔利班和巴基斯坦塔利班运动 (TTP) 在意识形态上的差异, 以分析阿富汗的权力转移是否影响了这两个集团的意识形态, 以期更好地了解未来威胁可能的表现形式。本研究中, 使用iSTART框架进行了一项定性案例研究和内容分析, 以比较两个派系的意识形态。意识形态是每个恐怖组织的立身之本, 决定着恐怖组织的动机和行动。意识形态还影响恐怖组织的其他方面。尽管在塔利班接管阿富汗之前, 这两种意识形态就存在差异, 但权力转移作为一种催化剂, 可能导致这两个集团的意识形态更加一致。TTP的威胁已经开始增加, 并且需要进行额外的研究以确保采取适当的步骤来应对不断发展的风险。本研究发现, 在塔利班接管阿富汗之后, 这两个集团的意识形态都没有变化, 而且很可能不会发生变化。

**关键词:** 塔利班, 恐怖主义, 全球反恐战争, 巴基斯坦, 持久自由军事行动

## Introduction

### Background

A fundamental element of terrorist behavior is the ideology of the group (Moghadam 2008). Ideology can be defined as a framework in which a group operates (Drake 1998). Different groups vary heavily on the ideology they abide by and how it is interpreted. Within religious ideologies, many groups have different interpretations and sub-categories, such as Deobandism and Salafism within Islam. The ideology a group chooses to believe in and base their actions on helps guide all other aspects that define the group, for example, whom they target and the tactics they utilize. How the group operates determines who their enemies are, is an additional factor dictated by ideology. “The ideology of a terrorist group needs to be strong enough and motivating enough to inspire others” (Hess 2020). Therefore, to understand the Afghan Taliban and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for this research topic, their ideologies were a prime component that required an in-depth study to determine whether an ideological change occurred or will occur and understand possible future threats.

The Afghan Taliban first became known as an insurgent group during the Afghan Civil War in 1994, with only 30 *madrassa* (Islamic religious school) students in the entire group at the time, in reaction to crimes committed by a local warlord. Eventually, the group took over twelve of Afghanistan’s

provinces (Ibrahimi 2017). However, following the United States’ intervention as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Taliban lost control of Afghanistan and the support of the Pakistan government (Akhtar 2008). Years later, in 2021, they captured Kabul and gained control of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) following the withdrawal of United States forces (Krauss 2021). The ideology of the Afghan Taliban is based on Deobandi jurisprudence, with their main goal being to oust foreign forces in Afghanistan and reclaim the GIROA (Fair 2011). Although the group focuses on Afghanistan, they have garnered support from other terrorist groups within Pakistan (Siddiq 2011).

One of the groups located within Pakistan is the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which did not exist in Pakistan until 2007, when several leaders announced they would operate under one banner. The TTP is made up of various groups, mainly anti-Pakistani Islamist militants, that fled Afghanistan after the invasion of the United States in 2001 (Fair 2011; Yusufzai 2008). The ideology of the TTP is comprised of a mixture of Deobandism and Salafism, which focuses on targeting the Pakistani government but not attacking other Islamic civilians (Fair 2011). The anglicized spelling of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan terrorist organization has many different interpretations with no explicit consent. In order to maintain uniformity throughout this research, the spelling of the group will be as follows: Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan.

## **Purpose**

This research explored the differences in the ideology of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP to determine whether the takeover of Afghanistan has affected or will affect either group's ideology in order to better understand how future threats from the Afghan Taliban and the TTP may develop.

For this research to produce adequate data on understanding the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, ideologies as a concept first needed to be understood. In the past, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP have differed in their history, ideologies, and goals. However, there was a possibility of a shift in their ideologies following the Afghan Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and a spike in attacks in Pakistan by the TTP (India.com News Desk 2021). Therefore, an examination was required on how the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP may have changed or will change following the takeover of Afghanistan.

The Afghan Taliban and the TTP are just two of the Taliban factions in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region. Others are the Punjabi Taliban and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Islami. With the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban, there was a gap in research on how it has affected or will affect both groups' ideology. Previously, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP had separate agendas with their own goals in mind. However, the recent takeover may have caused or could cause a shift in the threat of the Afghan Taliban or the TTP. Therefore, research was needed to fill in the gaps by

comparing the two faction's ideologies before the Afghanistan takeover, which has not previously been completed. In addition, an examination was required on the extent the takeover has changed or will change either groups' ideology.

The iSTART framework was utilized to properly understand each group's ideology to study ideological change. This consisted of examining the six iSTART framework categories including ideology, strategy, tactics, accounting, recruiting, and targets. This framework allowed for a deeper understanding on how a terrorist group operates (Hess 2020). In addition, the event-driven model created by Robert Higgs was implemented to comprehend what particular processes or steps would need to occur to prompt a group to change their ideology (2008).

The process used to research the ideologies of each group was to gain information on each group and use the iSTART framework to compare how ideology is used to inform the strategy and tactics of both groups prior to the takeover of Afghanistan. This included data taken from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) on the general areas of attack and style (START 2019). This information then allowed an analysis to be completed with events following the takeover to determine whether an ideological change has affected or will affect either group. Therefore, this research set out to answer the question: to what extent do the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP compare, and how has or will the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban affect either groups' ideology?

## Literature Review

To develop a synthesis on comparing the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, and whether the recent takeover of Afghanistan has had or will have any effect on either faction's ideology, previous knowledge on the ideology of each group was collected. The topics used in this paper to further develop the research are understanding terrorist ideologies, the Afghan Taliban, the TTP, and the takeover of Afghanistan. The subsequent sections discuss the theoretical framework chosen to examine this research, along with the gaps in the literature. A brief overview of the topics is first introduced, followed by a more in-depth examination into each topic.

Within Southern Asia, on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, two Taliban factions are housed: the Afghan Taliban and the TTP (Akhtar 2008). The Taliban originally developed as a political and military force which was initially supported by Pakistan following the collapse of Soviet Afghanistan. However, Pakistan's loyalties changed and began supporting the United States when the United States joined the 'War on Terror,' specifically against the Taliban (Akhtar 2008). When examining terrorist groups, understanding their ideology is a fundamental necessity (Strang 2015). Ideologies are a set of principles that a group uses to define itself (Drake 1998). However, understanding the ideologies of terrorist groups is difficult since terrorist groups are not readily accessible or easily surveyed (Strang 2015). Furthermore, in-

urgent movements are secretive about their organizations. Therefore, studies on terrorist groups only allow an external outlook since unclassified data is sparse (Farrell and Giustozzi 2013; Schricker 2017).

Generally speaking, the meaning of *taliban* is a group of people seeking knowledge. The origin of the name stems from the Persian word, *talib*, which means religious student. Similarly in Arabic *taliban* means student. However, the connotation has changed throughout the years to more commonly represent a terrorist group (Aneela 2009). The Taliban emerged during the Afghan Civil War in 1994. They only had 30 *talibs* who fought against local warlords at the time. As they progressed, they became known as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in 1996 until they were overthrown and later became an insurgency again in 2001 following 9/11 and the United States invasion (Ibrahimi 2017).

Prior to 2001, the Taliban was a monolithic movement that fell under a single banner, which diversified into different umbrella organizations resulting from the events of 9/11 (Johnson 2018). After the Taliban fled Afghanistan following the invasion of the United States into Afghanistan, different factions formed together, leading the Taliban, located in Afghanistan, to be more appropriately called the Afghan Taliban. During this time, there was constant conflict. In August 2021, the Afghan Taliban took over the GIROA and regained control of Afghanistan. In the 20-year period which began when

the United States removed the Taliban from power through the time when they took it back, over 40,000 Afghan civilians were killed, including 64,000 Afghan military and police and 3,500 foreign soldiers (Sadulski 2021). According to most scholars, the Afghan Taliban's overall ideology is to eliminate foreign forces within Afghanistan, mainly the United States forces (Fair 2011).

Following the United States' invasion into Afghanistan in 2001, many militant groups fled to adjacent areas, including Pakistan (Subhani, Khan, and Sultan 2015). Since 2004, Pakistan began to witness growth in clusters of militant groups that described themselves as the Pakistani Taliban. It was not until 2007 that several militant group leaders decided they would operate under one command, which formed the TTP (Fair 2011). The generally accepted ideology of the TTP is to attack government checkpoints and troops, as well as to enforce Sharia law (Islamic legal system) in Pakistan by fighting against Pakistani forces (Cole 2009; Shahab et al. 2021).

Days after the United States withdrew its troops in August 2021, the Afghan Taliban took over Afghanistan (Maizland 2021). Following the takeover, the TTP has increased their attacks in Pakistan and continuously pledged their allegiance to the Afghan Taliban. The Afghan Taliban's new control may have led to a collaboration with the TTP to help overthrow the Pakistani government (India.com News Desk 2021). Since the United States' removal of troops and the subsequent

takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban, it was probable that the ideologies of the two groups has been or would be affected going forward and shape the threat the Afghan Taliban and the TTP present.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Current literature on the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP previously lacked a comparative analysis and the effects the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan had or will have on their respective ideologies. The iSTART framework, created by James Hess was the model used based on its ability to understand how particular terrorist groups operate, their ideologies, and insight regarding the impact the recent takeover may have. iSTART—an acronym for Ideology, Strategy, Tactics, Accounting (Financing), Recruitment, and Targets—is an analytical framework that allows data to be analyzed efficiently (Hess 2020). For example, this type of framework can aid in understanding how groups operate and raise funds. Furthermore, the iSTART framework can be beneficial to help avoid underestimating the capabilities of terrorist groups (Zarate 2017). A terrorist group's ideology must be resilient enough to inspire others to join and act on its behalf. Therefore, ideology is the foundation of iSTART, which informs the other variables of the framework and motivates the group's members to kill or die for it (Hess 2020). Ideology can also help determine if a particular group will claim credit for an attack (Carter and Ahmed 2020).

Strategy is the method the terrorist group uses to carry out their ideology. The group's ideology also determines the types of tactics the terrorist group will implement which are used to meet their conscious intentions (Hess 2020). The tactics can also be decided by the essence of the group and the period they are active. Rapoport supports this concept by using the example that there was less robbery during the second wave since more resources were available (2008).

For terrorist groups to implement these measures, they must be financially stable. The accounting (financing) aspect of the framework is required in order for the terrorist group to function. This is also needed to ensure that a steady flow of recruits is being introduced. In addition, recruitment using technology was also used through social media and other internet sites. The last variable of the framework is targets. The avenue in which terrorist groups choose targets is one in which their strategy will be advanced (Hess 2020).

Throughout the world, many different ideologies coexist. Ideological change is a constant throughout time. However, a shift seldom changes abruptly; instead, it is generally slow and gradual. Therefore, it is standard to have an ideology vary throughout a group's existence. While irregular ideological changes can occur, they typically happen solely during great social upheaval (Higgs 2008). Higgs based his idea on the previous understanding of Karl Marx and created what he calls the event-driven model (2008). Marx ex-

plains that individuals' social existence defines their perception (1859). There are those that pose the idea of Jihadi Salafism being heavily rooted in Marxism (Schultz 2008). Events can drastically influence how specific ideologies are seen or interpreted and may cause an increase in doubts about an already decided ideology (Higgs 2008). Higgs calls this the "softening up" element of ideology which creates the potential for ideology to change (2008, 557).

This study hypothesizes that while the Afghan Taliban and the TTP had varying ideologies in the past, the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban will shift the ideologies of the two groups. Additionally, the takeover will alter the current threat the Afghan Taliban and the TTP pose. The independent variable this research utilized is the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban. The dependent variable was the effect the takeover has had or will have on the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP going forward.

### ***Gaps in Literature***

With the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, an examination was required to fill a gap in research on how it has affected or will affect the ideologies of the two groups. Previously, they each had separate agendas with their own goals in mind. However, the takeover may have likely caused or will cause a shift in the threats the Afghan Taliban and the TTP pose.

Previous comparative analysis on the two factions has not been conducted using their ideologies. Ideology

is an integral part of forming terrorist groups, determining how they operate. Therefore, research was needed to fill in the gaps of comparing the two factions' ideologies prior to the takeover of Afghanistan. In addition, the recent takeover of Afghanistan may likely have had or will have considerable implications going forward and affect many different regions in the area. As a result, an examination was required on the extent the takeover has changed or will change the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP and affect the threat of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP moving forward. Furthermore, this would provide insight into how other groups in the region have been or may be affected by the recent Afghanistan takeover and how the threat going forward in the Middle East may further develop.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

A qualitative case study was carried out using empirical and systematic analysis to conduct this research. In order to narrow the content down to its relevant factors, content analysis was implemented using specific words and phrases (Singleton and Straits 2010). This study utilized secondary sources and required archival methods. A qualitative case study allowed non-intrusive approaches to be utilized in conjunction with secondary data and better gain insight into the historical contexts. This information was sought using libraries and online search engines. Some of these keywords included each faction, their

ideology, strategy, tactics, accounting/financing, recruitment methods, and targets. The independent variable this research utilized was the recent takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban. The dependent variable for this research was the effect the takeover has had or will have on the Afghan Taliban's and the TTP's ideologies.

### ***Data Collection/Treatment***

Preliminary information was gathered on the Afghan Taliban and the TTP which assessed each ideological variable to ascertain whether there was a correlative connection between the independent and dependent variables. Information on the power shift in Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban was gathered in addition to data collected on trends that have started to form following the Afghan Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan.

### ***Data Analysis***

The iSTART framework was used to compare the two factions to understand each group's ideology (Hess 2020). This was the first step of the data analysis process which created a baseline of how the Afghan Taliban and the TTP compare. Furthermore, the GTD, part of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), was utilized to examine the various targets and types of attacks the two groups implemented (START 2019). The data was gathered using the GTD database from 1970 through 2019. However, there is a lack of data for the Taliban from 1996



through 2001 while they were in control of Kabul, Afghanistan.

The instances when one of the groups was mentioned were taken to analyze their attack types, weapon subtypes, and target types. This research examined every mention of the Taliban and the TTP from the data causing uncertainty that either group caused these events and may have affected the overall calculations. Following this, Higgs' event-driven model was used to examine the potential for either of the two factions' ideologies to change (2008). Once a cursory comparison was completed of the two groups and an understanding of why an ideological change may occur, actions executed by the TTP following the Afghanistan takeover were examined to explore any differences and ideological changes have occurred or will occur.

## **Findings & Analysis**

**T**he first purpose of this section was to compare the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban with the TTP prior to the takeover. Following that step, an examination was done on the effect the takeover of Afghanistan has had or will have on both groups. These components will grant a complete analysis to fully understand whether there was an ideological change and how future threats from the groups may develop.

### ***Comparison Using iSTART***

In order to first understand the ideology of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP

and determine how they compare with one another, the iSTART framework was implemented (Hess 2020). The various variables examined were ideology, strategy, tactics, accounting, recruitment, and targets.

### **Ideology**

The ideology of a terrorist group is the foundation on which the group is motivated (Moghadam 2008). This is why ideology is the keystone to understanding a terrorist group. While the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP would presumably be the same due to their overall religious beliefs and the period they are active in, leading them to be more anti-democratic, they differ in many ways. The overall goal of the Afghan Taliban is to restore peace to Afghanistan by enforcing their interpretation of Sharia law and ousting foreign forces from Afghanistan (Fair 2011). The Afghan Taliban is Deobandi and has been influenced by the Hanafi school of thought (Fair 2011; Aneela 2009). This is where the idea to follow a central leader stems from (Ruttig 2010). They describe themselves as wanting to fix society rather than gain power against other state actors (Rashid 2001; Wani 2021). The Afghan Taliban accomplishes this by using jihad to authorize these actions, even against other Muslims. However, this jihad is viewed as a defensive jihad, especially when other Muslims are involved. Hanafism and Deobandism don't advocate for an offensive jihad. The defensive nature of the Afghan Taliban's jihad is viewed as a defense of their homeland. The method they use to promote their actions is

teaching their members and children the *Pashtunwali* (Aneela 2009). In addition, the *Layeha* also provides strict adherences for members to follow for both genders and how their daily lives should look (Johnson 2013).

The TTP, while also at war against foreign forces, focuses on attacking the Pakistani state due to their alliance with the West (Shahab et al. 2021). However, they do not solely focus on ousting foreign forces but rather on taking control of Pakistan with their interpretation of Sharia law and uniting against NATO forces (Islam and Akbar 2016). The TTP follow a form of Salafism known as Salafi-Jihad, or Jihadi Salafism. The argument from Salafi-jihadists are that Islam is in a state of jahiliyyah, ignorance. They blame the secular nature of Islam for this ignorance, which has corrupted true Islam. Therefore, to remove jahiliyyah, the secularism, which they blame jurisprudence for corrupting true Islam, must be removed. Shari'a is based on the interpretations of Qur'an and Hadith, which is known as *ijtihad*. Salafi-jihadists reject *ijtihad* from the schools of *fiqh*, while allowing their own version of it. Scholars see the TTP's ideology as war against only non-Muslims. While they do not attack Muslims directly like the Afghan Taliban, they will if the Muslims aid non-Muslims (Siddiqi 2011). Furthermore, they focus on gaining the autonomy of the state.

The overall goal of the Afghan Taliban was to overthrow the current Afghan state and form an Islamic state governed according to its radicalized

Deobandi principles (Fair 2011; Aneela 2009). On the other hand, the goal of the TTP is to overthrow the secular Pakistani state and form an Islamic state in Pakistan alongside its radicalized Deobandi and Salafist principles (Kaltenthaler and Miller 2015). While the Pakistani state is not really secular, it is a play on words since Salafi-jihadists view those that follow *fiqh* to be secular due to the fact that they are in a state of jahiliyyah. Furthermore, while the Afghan Taliban is linked with the Pakistani military, the TTP is at war with the Pakistani state due to their alliance with the west (Shahab et al. 2021). This is mainly against non-Muslims and fighting Muslims who aid non-believers (Siddiqi 2011). Broadly, the TTP shares the radicalized Deobandi religious understanding of the Afghan Taliban, in addition to their largely Pashtun ethnicity and Salafist influences (Kaltenthaler and Miller 2015).

The two groups, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, differ in their overall ideologies. Each group has their own religious beliefs. The Afghan Taliban is fully Deobandi and has no commitments to other beliefs (Fair 2011). Conversely, the TTP is a mix of Deobandi and Salafists. The TTP is fundamentally former Deobandi that has been influenced by Salafism from those around them (Kaltenthaler and Miller 2015). In addition, the group has been significantly influenced by Haqqani and al Qaeda. This has led the TTP to not accept the Hanafi idea of *fiqh*, like the Afghan Taliban (Shahab et al. 2021).

## **Strategy**

To further comprehend the essence of the two Taliban factions, the strategy on how they carry out their ideology was compared next. The Afghan Taliban utilizes the *Layeha* on how they should act to carry out their ideology. This includes how they interpret jihad compared to the GIRA and how it can be used to overthrow the government due to their differing beliefs (Johnson 2013). Rapoport describes this as using sacred texts to gain legitimacy (2008). They use the *Layeha* to permit their killings and are not concerned about breaking international human rights (Cole 2009). The Afghan Taliban takes their strategy a step further from the TTP because they use it to sanction the killing of other Muslims (Aneela 2009). However, this creates challenges with their recruiting efforts.

While the TTP does not utilize the *Layeha*, they impose their understanding of jihad to influence those around them (Islam and Akbar 2016). To do this most effectively, they operate primarily in FATA within Pakistan (Cole 2009). Due to the lack of economic development, this helped the insurgency as a whole (Kurtzman 2014). The TTP works to push the importance of freeing Pakistan from western influence. This was done similarly to the Afghan Taliban by their interpretation of jihad (Islam and Akbar 2016).

## **Tactics**

The tactics the Afghan Taliban and the TTP employ are very similar to each other since both groups are religious

and are fighting within the same period. However, the flexibility and innovation of new tactics can shed light on the two groups. According to Rapoport, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP fall under the religious wave (2008). During this wave, suicide bombings were the deadliest innovation which both the Afghan Taliban and the TTP utilize (Rapoport 2008; START 2019). In addition, the Afghan Taliban uses IEDs and assassinations. While most scholars saw suicide bombings as their primary tactic for attack, kidnappings are also highly implemented (Islam and Akbar 2016). These attacks are generally in close proximity and time to each other (Rieber-Mohn and Tripathi 2021).

One difference between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP is suicide bombings. The Afghan Taliban did not begin using this method until 2006 and did not use women and children from their origin. This new approach was developed due to the lowered scrutiny women and children have from security forces. This late implementation of using women and children was most likely because it went against their previous Taliban ideals. In comparison, the TTP utilized suicide bombings with women and children from their onset, which was not until 2007 (Johnson 2013).

The Afghan Taliban, on occasion, would use more unique methods such as disguising themselves as Afghan National Security Forces, using guerrilla-style warfare, indirect fighting, and aiming their attacks at softer targets (DuPee 2011; Johnson 2013). These new tactics were in response to the Af-

ghan Taliban realizing they were out-gunned (Johnson 2013).

One tactic used by the TTP is their reasoning for their location in a mountainous region, allowing them to use various areas for hideouts (Ali et al. 2020). The TTP has used similar tactics to the Afghan Taliban in addition to more modern ones. Furthermore, they also utilize gas, truck bombs, beheadings, and rockets as means of attack (Shahab et al. 2021). The TTP have also used assassinations to target elites on various occasions (Kaltenthaler and

Miller 2015). Both the Afghan Taliban and the TTP consistently innovate in the tactics they use for attack.

Using the data acquired from the GTD dataset, the two groups are relatively identical in their tactics they use to carry out their attacks (see table 1 below). For both groups, bombings/explosions were their primary method used for attacks followed by armed assault. Interestingly, there is a significant difference in unknown attack types between the two groups (START 2019).

TABLE 1. Attack Type by Group

	Taliban (%)	TTP (%)
Armed Assault	28.55	29.95
Assassination	6.03	8.84
Bombing/Explosion	31.91	44.26
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	3.91	4.03
Hijacking	0.21	0.24
Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)	0.29	0.66
Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)	9.49	9.38
Unarmed Assault	0.33	0.24
Unknown	19.28	2.41
<i>Source:</i> Data from START 2019		
<i>Note:</i> This table represents the percentage of the type of attacks carried out by the Afghan Taliban and the TTP.		

Some reports say the TTP has larger aspirations than the Afghan Taliban and that they want to attack nuclear facilities (Joshi 2020). The TTP's main tactic was bombings of various natures in order to deter behavior they found intolerable. Both groups have also used assassination in some circumstances (START 2019).

Next, the breakdown of attack types into the various specific weapons used to carry out the attacks was examined (see table 2 below). With the exception of unknown types, specifically unknown gun type, which are the highest percentages, there is a difference in weapon subtypes between the two groups. Suicide was the highest usage

for the TTP, with landmines being most used for the Afghan Taliban (START 2019). Interestingly, from the TTP's inception in 2007, they used suicide bombs utilizing women and children to deploy them (Johnson 2013).

TABLE 2. Weapons Subtype by Group		
	Taliban (%)	TTP (%)
Arson/Fire	4.60	3.69
Automatic or Semi-Automatic Rifle	2.17	5.95
Blunt Object	0.06	0.06
Dynamite/TNT	0.02	0.36
Gasoline or Alcohol	0.08	0.06
Grenade	0.83	5.18
Handgun	0.27	2.44
Hands, Feet, Fists	0.14	0.06
Knife or Other Sharp Object	1.24	1.90
Landmine	9.07	2.44
Other Explosive Type	1.91	8.09
Other Gun Type	0.01	0.06
Poisoning	0.46	0.00
Pressure Trigger	0.25	0.00
Projectile (rockets, mortars, RPGs, etc.)	8.93	5.71
Remote Trigger	1.71	7.14
Rifle/Shotgun (non-automatic)	0.31	0.48
Rope or Other Strangling Device	0.34	0.30
Sticky Bomb	1.22	0.48
Suicide (carried bodily by human being)	4.90	8.80
Time Fuse	0.05	0.42
Unknown Explosive Type	11.93	8.45
Unknown Gun Type	42.26	30.34
Unknown Weapon Type	0.10	0.06
Vehicle	7.14	7.56
<i>Source:</i> Data from START 2019		
<i>Note:</i> This table represents the percentage of the type of weapons used to carry out attacks by the Afghan Taliban and the TTP.		

## **Accounting**

The means by which a group finances themselves can directly correlate with the effectiveness of how they carry out their ideology. The Afghan Taliban has a vast amount of wealth they obtain from various sources and utilize it in many ways. They are one of the wealthiest jihadists groups with around \$800 million in annual budgets (Zehorai 2018). A few methods they employ are charging fees at checkpoints, broadening taxes, selling drugs, and conducting illegal mining operations (Cowen 2021). Their taxes collected from checkpoints rivaled that of the GIRoA, which aided in promoting the Afghan Taliban and shed a more negative light on the GIRoA. The Afghan Taliban had fewer collection points and allowed a one-time payment for all checkpoints. Other taxes they collect include income tax and Islamic tithe from farmers (Nojumi 2002).

The Afghan Taliban has also used drugs to conduct sales for weapons, with the primary drug of use being opium grown in the Helmond province (D'Souza 2016; Ilene 2021). They have dictated the price of heroin and mandated when it can and cannot be grown (Johnson 2013). In addition to drugs, the Afghan Taliban also sells mining materials, including marble, iron ore, and gold (Ilene 2021).

The Afghan Taliban also obtains funding from various outside donors, including: Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China. Saudi Arabia is particularly helpful due to the amount of senior leadership that lives there and

can send money back (Ilene 2021; Robertson 2011). Iran has even supplied the group with armor-piercing bombs (Peikar 2015). Without this help, the group would not have survived this long (Coll 2018). Furthermore, the Afghan Taliban has support from Pakistan tribal areas, particularly North and South Waziristan (Siddiqi 2011). This helped the Afghan Taliban gain further support from other groups.

The funding of the TTP is immensely different from the Afghan Taliban. According to most sources, they do not have the support from outside state actors like the Afghan Taliban, possibly hinting at a lack of overall backing for the TTP. According to the opinions that do believe they have funding, it is a constant change with no steady source of revenue. This includes receiving funds from India, the Afghan security forces, and al Qaeda (Karachi 2021; Giustozzi 2021). However, with their recent attacks against Afghan forces, it is unlikely they receive funding from them anymore. This stark difference in funding compared to the Afghan Taliban may require the TTP to be more adaptive in their fundraising.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment is an essential part of any group to remain functional and relevant. Therefore, how a group recruits can tell a lot about their overall ideology. In order to recruit members and gain overall support, the Afghan Taliban uses anti-Islam propaganda against their oppressors. They utilize famous individuals and news networks as well as radio to spread their ideals (Gi-

ustozzi 2007). This generally involves statements about the United States illegally invading Islamic land, including displaying collateral damage caused by foreign forces' efforts against the Afghan Taliban (D'Souza 2016; Wani 2021). However, since their primary efforts are against foreign forces and pushing for their withdrawal, the Afghan Taliban has had a difficult time being effective with this method (Anonymous 2015).

Conversely, the TTP does not use propaganda to recruit members, instead uses their similarities to those around them to make it normal and enticing to join the group. They target Pashtun frequented areas, like FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, since they make up the majority of their foundation (Kaltenthaler and Miller 2015). Furthermore, since they are located in poverty areas, the allure of a better life allows for ease of recruitment by enticing individuals to join (Siddiq 2011).

### **Targets**

The last variable that ties into the ideology of a terrorist group is the targets the group chooses and why. This frames who their adversaries are and therefore are not selected by chance (Drake 1998; Silke 2010). Broadly, the two groups differ completely regarding the entity they target. However, when examining why they choose a specific group, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP are not that far apart. Religious groups generally cause casualties and choose civilian targets (Hou, Gaibullov, and Sandler 2020; Ahmed 2018). Fourth wave group attacks are rarely indiscriminate and lean more towards softer

targets (Rapoport 2008). The Afghan Taliban lines up with this perspective precisely. They target anyone that opposes them, including civilians, children, politicians, political workers, and minorities. However, they direct their attacks towards foreign forces within Afghanistan (Islam and Akbar 2016). However, some sources state that they do not attack civilians directly and provide information on where IEDs are placed (Farrell and Giustozzi 2013). This unfortunately does not stop them from being collateral damage. Due to their opposition to western education, they have also attacked school buildings, specifically girls' schools, since they believe girls should not be educated (Islam and Akbar 2016).

On the other hand, the TTP does not aim to kill civilians with their attacks. They focus on particular areas within Pakistan, with their primary targets being government officials, including law enforcement, military personnel, police officers, military installations, and government checkpoints (Cole 2009; Ghufraan 2009). However, there are instances where civilians have been collateral, including a girls' school and schools that house army families (Anonymous 2015). Interestingly, their targeting against civilians has dropped since 2014 (Sayed and Hamming 2021). They have also set their sights on attacking nuclear facilities (Joshi 2020). This goes against the idea that fourth wave groups target softer targets according to Rapoport (2008).

This aligns with the data that shows the Afghan Taliban conducted

the majority of their attacks within Afghanistan, with 99% of their attacks occurring locally. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the TTP focused 98% of their attacks within Pakistan, with 33% in the FATA region and 29% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (START 2019). This is interesting since the TTP mainly focuses their recruitment efforts within the FATA on Pashtuns. Other reports show their attacks being located in NWFP and other tribal regions (Ghufran 2009)

While there are variations between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP regarding whom they attack, overall, they focus on similar targets based on the data (see table 3 below). The Afghan Taliban's main target was against police, followed by private citizens & property (START 2019). This is interesting since their overall ideology focuses only on foreign forces and not police. The TTP primarily focuses on private citizens & property with military targets following close behind (START 2019). Targeting the military is a common goal among the two groups, but the data contradicts the idea that the TTP generally does not target civilians.

### ***Effects of the Takeover of Afghanistan***

The takeover of Afghanistan was a significant enough of an event that Higgs' event-driven model was used to explain why there may have been or will be a change in ideology (2008). An event like the takeover of Afghanistan can affect how others see ideologies and cause them to change their beliefs. Prior to the takeover, there were different in-

stances where the two groups attempted to work in unison but fell short. There were previous peace talks where some went well and others negatively (Subhani, Khan, and Sultan 2015). The direct relationship of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP prior to the takeover is debated, specifically on the extent the two groups worked with or against each other. Since the takeover, there has already been an increase in attacks by the TTP within Pakistan against security forces. Furthermore, the TTP sending congratulations to the Afghan Taliban regarding the takeover of Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban releasing TTP prisoners has led some to believe they may work more closely together than previously thought (India.com News Desk 2021). On a similar note, a cease-fire for a limited time was reached between the TTP and Pakistan, with the Afghan Taliban being the mediator (Ayoob 2021). This development can indicate different possible outcomes. First, it may indicate a deeper connection between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP as they may push for the TTP to gain more legislative control. Second, the Afghan Taliban being the mediator may be a tactic they implemented to appear more legitimate as a government.

### ***Analysis***

When comparing the Afghan Taliban and the TTP, overall, while the ideologies of the two groups seem similar, they differ in many aspects. Both groups want to enforce their understanding of Sharia law in their respective countries. However, the comparison begins to



	Taliban (%)	TTP (%)
Airports & Aircraft	0.30	0.23
Business	2.61	4.86
Educational Institution	1.57	9.77
Food or Water Supply	0.09	0.12
Government (Diplomatic)	0.66	1.17
Government (General)	10.85	6.09
Journalists & Media	0.29	1.11
Maritime	0.03	0.06
Military	20.33	20.54
NGO	0.83	0.88
Other	0.05	0.23
Police	32.26	17.61
Private Citizens & Property	21.99	26.04
Religious Figures/Institutions	0.90	2.87
Telecommunication	0.41	0.12
Terrorists/Non-State Militia	2.56	4.74
Tourists	0.04	0.18
Transportation	1.09	0.82
Unknown	2.76	0.88
Utilities	0.31	0.41
Violent Political Party	0.07	1.29
<i>Source:</i> Data from START 2019		
<i>Note:</i> This table represents the percentage of the target type by the Afghan Taliban and the TTP.		

differ from this point on regarding their prevailing ideologies. The Afghan Taliban strictly follows Deobandism, while the TTP has a mixture of Deobandism and Salafism. The Afghan Taliban and the TTP both use jihad to authorize their actions. However, the Afghan Taliban attacks Muslims, whereas the TTP restrains from directly attacking Muslims. Furthermore, while both groups have waged war against western influence, the Afghan Taliban directs their

attacks towards foreign forces. This may be due to the higher presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan over Pakistan.

Additionally, how each group carries out their attacks is similar overall. Based on various source, both groups lean highly on using suicide bombers, especially using women and children, to carry out attacks. However, the data shows that the Afghan Taliban and the TTP used unknown gun types more.

To obtain the resources to carry out these attacks, each group is vastly different in their means of fundraising and gaining funding. The Afghan Taliban is an enormously wealthy group with help from various outside states. Furthermore, they have other methods for collecting funding, including drugs and taxes. The TTP, on the other hand, is not as well off. While they gain support from outside states and groups, it is not as concrete as the Afghan Taliban.

The two groups also differ in how they gain followers to carry out their attacks. Due to the size of the Afghan Taliban, they generally obtain more followers along with increased use of propaganda. The TTP, however, does not use propaganda and recruits solely from specific areas where Pashtuns are located.

The last variable compared was each groups' targets. This is where the two groups align closely in targeting military targets and private citizens & property. However, they did vary in their attacks against police.

While the two groups' ideologies overlap in the means and methods implemented to carry out their strategy and both ideologies focus on forcing their understanding of Sharia law, each group does not cross into the domain of the other. Additionally, the Afghan Taliban focuses on Deobandism while the TTP includes aspects of Salafism within their ideology. Each focuses on their country and their specific enemies, even if they may be the same. Furthermore, while the Afghan Taliban states they are working towards peace, the TTP wants

power. Therefore, their overall ideologies and goals and what each group would do with their control are vastly different. The analysis completed to this point used data prior to the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban.

Based on Higgs' event-driven model, the events that formulated the takeover of Afghanistan can easily explain why an ideological change has occurred or may occur. However, based on the information available following the takeover, it is unlikely that an ideological change has occurred or will occur in either the Afghan Taliban or the TTP. Since the takeover, the TTP has ramped up their attacks against Pakistan. While they may have gained this push for attacks from seeing the Afghan Taliban's positive outcome within Afghanistan, there has yet to be any change in their overall goals and methods. Similarly, for the Afghan Taliban, their ideology was to drive foreign forces out of Afghanistan and take control of the government. Even though they are now aiding the TTP in procuring peace between themselves and Pakistan, it is likely a strategy to help increase the Afghan Taliban's overall image and legitimize their role in Afghanistan. The TTP's actions also continue to prioritize their ideology of gaining power by focusing on gaining legislative influence within Pakistan. Another interesting point that reinforces this idea is that the Afghan Taliban has halted drug sales which produces revenue to presumably gain more legitimacy.

Based on this analysis with the information gathered in this research, the

ideologies of both the Afghan Taliban and the TTP have not and are unlikely to be overly affected by the takeover of Afghanistan. These findings contradict the hypothesis of this research that an ideological change in either the Afghan Taliban or TTP has occurred or would occur following the events of the takeover of Afghanistan. That being said, there does is a shift in the threat of the TTP from other variables not examined in this research.

## **Conclusion**

**T**he threats of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP are continuously being analyzed to better understand their threats. However, there had never been an analysis done comparing these two factions to comprehend how the two groups may work in unison to obtain a common goal. This analysis became increasingly necessary with the takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban based on the ideas behind the event-driven model. Therefore, this research was designed to gain a prior understanding of the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP and how they compared to each other. This was accomplished using the iSTART framework to thoroughly examine the different elements that make up an ideology. This was then analyzed against events following the takeover of Afghanistan to determine whether there has been or was likely to be an ideological change in either group.

This case study provided a more in-depth analysis of the two groups and the likelihood of their ideologies shift-

ing. This analysis included examining the six iSTART components: ideology, strategy, tactics, accounting, recruitment, and targets. Overall, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP compared dissimilarly in the variables used to study ideology. For example, they differed in their means of raising funds and recruitment efforts. This may explain the Afghan Taliban's success thus far in Afghanistan compared to the TTP's success in Pakistan. Having the personnel and resources to carry out one's ideology are significant aspects of a group's functionality. However, each group has stayed within their bounds to achieve their ideology and not branched out to other factions.

Using this information allowed for an examination of how the takeover of Afghanistan has affected or may affect each group. This study concluded that it is unlikely that the takeover of Afghanistan has affected or will affect either groups ideology going forward. While the spirit of the TTP may have been invigorated after seeing the Afghan Taliban's success, it has not changed their overall ideology and how they plan to achieve their goals.

Based on the above research, this study found many vital takeaways. While the ideologies of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP are different, their means to achieve their goals are similar. Furthermore, their adversaries differ, which affects the strategy they implement. While both groups use suicide bombers as a primary means of attack and generally target military personnel, the effectiveness in which this is accomplished differs and is likely based on the

variation in funding and recruitment efforts. Furthermore, the takeover has not and is unlikely to affect the ideology of either the Afghan Taliban or the TTP, and therefore the threats each pose is unlikely to shift due to the takeover.

This study provides a baseline and model in which other terrorist groups ideologies can be analyzed and compared to gain a deeper understanding into the threats they pose. First, this research provides the format in which other groups can be compared to better understand their ideologies and how they are implemented through the iSTART framework. Second, further analysis on both groups can be used to examine their ideologies with additional data. This may include using additional information from the GTD on the specific location and where each group generally attacks. Lastly, this research can help create proper counterterrorism tactics to use against each groups' ideology.

By breaking down their ideologies into the different variables, one can counter each aspect, ensure that no information is omitted, and that proper and complete countermeasures are taken.

This research should not be taken as a sole source on the comparison of the Afghan Taliban and the TTP and whether the takeover has affected or will affect their ideologies. Further studies should be carried out on other events that may lead to an ideological change in either group following the takeover of Afghanistan. Additionally, other terrorist groups should be studied to gain more comprehensive knowledge on ideology and how groups cooperate with one another. Lastly, this research concentrated on how an outside event may cause an ideological change in a terrorist group. Additional research should be conducted on why a terrorist group may internally decide to alter their ideology.

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