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Iran Condemns Kabul Terrorist Attack

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2022/10/01/2781823/iran-condemns-kabul-terrorist-attack>

India Saturday strongly condemned the terror attack on an educational institution in Dasht-e-Barchi area of Kabul that left more than 20 people dead and dozens wounded. The suicide attack at Kaaj Educational Centre took place on Friday and most of the victims were female students, according to reports from Kabul.

Comments

As expected, the Iranian Ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the UN, Zahra Ershadi, expressed concerns on increasing violence which not only threatens international peace but also regional stability, pointing towards the loss of over 35 Shia Hazaras. Iran's response echoes series of violence against Shia Hazaras and other Shia communities in Afghanistan which continues to face 'systematic' attacks, not only by Taliban but also IS-KP which considers them heretics. Since it took Kabul, ISKP has been credited with 13 attacks against the Hazaras and has been linked to a few more, totalling the casualty to over 700.

New Delhi expressed its condolences to the families of victims killed in the attack at the Kaaj Educational Center in Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul. India's condemnation to systematic violence induced against students at educational institutions was echoed with the UN Secretary General who also extended his condolences to the families of victims and wished for speedy recovery of those injured. Education is a fundamental right and an essential driver for sustainable peace and development to which India must remind Taliban to strengthen security apparatus in educational institutions in an effort to prevent violence induced by actors against minority communities.

Most residents in Dasht-e-Barchi hailing from the Shia Hazaras, the largest ethnic group after Pashtuns and Tajiks. The Hazaras have faced persecution from the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), the regional affiliate of the Islamic State, and the Taliban for years, to which India must rally international communities in the international forums and regional economic groupings to openly condemn Taliban's policy of ethnic persecution.

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China wooed Taliban with investment promises that haven't panned out

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/09/27/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/china-taliban-investment-promises/>

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan after two decades of war opened up an opportunity for China to expand its influence and lock down access to the country's vast mineral deposits. It hasn't worked out that way. More than a year after U.S. troops left, Afghanistan's economy is collapsing, 19 million people are at risk of acute hunger and the investment the Taliban were counting on from Beijing hasn't arrived. Both sides blame the other.



Source: Reuters

"There has not even been a penny of investment by China," Khan Jan Alokozay, vice president of Afghanistan's Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said in an interview. "Many of their companies came, met with us, conducted research and then left and vanished, which is frustrating."

Comments

China and Afghanistan share a 76-kilometer border. Beijing is playing slow to the constant threat of separatists (such as ETIM) operating in its far western Xinjiang region, in spite of Taliban promising to deny terror groups operating within its soil. China on multiple occasions has implored the group to act against the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, a Muslim separatist group seeking to establish an Islamic state overlapping with China's vast Xinjiang region. But ETIM is not just a thorn in Taliban's backyard, rather an active partner which shared relationship dating back to the early 1990s, when they jointly ruled Afghanistan before being ousted by US and their allies in the early 2000s

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Quite frankly, for the Taliban, ETIM are more than just guests in the region, who shared sweat and blood jointly in their offensives against US and the NATO forces, over the past two decades, which makes it even more difficult for Taliban to shred its link.

On the contrary, independent experts and military analysts report ETIM to have expanded its area of operations in Afghanistan by forming alliances with local Taliban commanders and purchasing weapons, especially the left over from US military's arsenal, with an intent to improve offensive capabilities through terror actions. This further challenges Taliban who are trying to restrain ETIM movements within Afghanistan, in an effort to woo Beijing – such as prohibiting them from crossing the border – but any hard measure against the ETIM, may create defiance within the members and result in defection to Islamic State, one of the Taliban's biggest threats in the region. Even with series of assurances made by the Mufti Esmatullah Burhan acting Deputy Minister for Mines and Petroleum, downplaying any risk to China, and explaining overarching measures on security parameters to ensure a suitable business environment, China will continue to hold its investment until situation becomes formidable.



Source: Reuters

It is safe to say that the Taliban haven't managed to transition from insurgents to rulers. The government is primarily run by instructions and directions from the spiritual leader Haibatullah Akhundzada, who rules from the Kandahar seat. This gives an image of one man rule instead of a stable governing parameter in play, which may have further deepened the sense of insecurity in Beijing in the light of Taliban's no to limited experience in governance, and absolutely no capability to deliver the assurances.

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Taliban Blasts Pakistan For Harming Afghanistan; 'Our FM Should Go To India And..'

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/pakistan-news/taliban-blasts-pakistan-for-harming-afghanistan-our-fm-should-go-to-india-and-dot-articleshow.html>

As clashes erupted at the border between Taliban forces and the Pakistani military in the Durand Line, Taliban's official Mubeen Khan on Thursday blasted Pakistan for always "harming Afghanistan" and tarnishing the country's reputation whilst also sponsoring methods of hampering the country's economy and welfare. "Pakistan deliberately delays our fruit exports at border crossing," Taliban's official Mubeen Khan said in an interview with the South Asian think tank South Asia Media Research Institute (SAMRI). The Taliban official continued, that Afghanistan no longer needs Karachi or Gwadar ports anymore for trade.

Comments

The statement from Mubeen Khan, the head of Taliban' social media team during an interview with the South Asia Media Research Institute (SAMRI), comes after the border clashes between Taliban forces and the Pakistani military in the Durand Line. His response is also to the comments made by Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto, who stated that Masood Azar had sought a safe haven in Afghanistan.

The tension between the two parties seems to be escalating as both TTP & Afghan Taliban are Pashtuns and the constant rejection of Durand Line by Taliban results in frequent skirmishes at the border.



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In addition to this the TTP has sought certain demands which includes reversal to the policy of a merger between the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), putting the peace deal with Islamabad in a limbo. This creates a challenge to Islamabad's national security as these efforts will instigate the idea of a Pashtun-inhabited/dominated tribal borderland attracting likeminded militant groups. It seems that Bilawal Bhutto's frustration further points towards Taliban's duplicity by bringing TTP on the table with Islamabad during negotiation and instigating TTP for direct action with an intent to maintain leverage over Pakistan.

The Taliban's repeated interest in strengthening ties with India could also raise the levels of frustration in Islamabad. Taliban's request to train its troops in New Delhi delivers a major blow to Pakistan's rigorous efforts in culminating a reliable partner in the region. The Pakistan FM's frustration further reflects a failure in its Afghanistan's policy especially in the context of maintaining a strategic depth in Kabul. However, with a new Pakistani Ambassador in Afghanistan, Islamabad may look towards Washington's guidance with an intent to influence US foreign policy, especially after the killing of Ayman Al Zawahiri.

PREPARED BY
ANANT MISHRA
ASSOCIATE FELLOW, CENJOWS