

By

**An Unnamed Afghan**

Afghanistan, under Taliban control, is a powder keg ready to erupt with consequences that will ripple throughout the region and the world. The driving forces of this impending disaster are deeply rooted in the Taliban's ideological, strategic, and operational maneuvers, which intensified after the American exit.

The brainwashing of youths, monopoly over illicit drug production, sheltering and supporting global terrorist groups, weaponization of poverty, and recruitment of refugees has brought Afghanistan to the verge of an imminent explosion, with consequences that may prove more consequential than those of September 11, 2001. Understanding what the Taliban is doing deserves further explanation.

## **Brainwashing the Youth**

The Taliban's focus on educating Afghan youth in religious schools (madrasa), which serve as training centers for militants and suicide bombers, poses an immediate and long-term threat to the region and the West. Through relentless brainwashing, these madrasas create a generation of children and teenagers steeped in radicalism. Young recruits are taught that martyrdom and suicide attacks are not only honorable but also necessary.

What makes this particularly worrisome is the sheer scale. Tens of thousands of young minds are being primed for violence, and this army of youths will be deployed somewhere. The consequences for neighboring countries and the West, which are already struggling with radicalization, could be catastrophic. As Roza Otenbayeva, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), [said](#) to the UN Security Council, "The Taliban do not allow any monitoring of these schools and we don't know what they teach there."

According to the Taliban Ministry of Education, at least [17,300 madrasas](#) are officially active across Afghanistan. Meanwhile, [according to an order](#) issued by the Taliban on June 20, 2022, three to 10 jihadi schools, with a capacity of 500–1,000 students each, are being built in every district of Afghanistan. Afghanistan has 408 districts, and the construction of three to 10 new jihadi schools per district could quickly turn the country into the center of global terrorism.

## **Safe Haven for Terrorist Groups**

Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, is once again a haven for international terrorist groups. The Taliban's victory emboldened and empowered extremist groups, providing them with the space to reorganize, train, and plan. Groups such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) now operate freely inside Afghanistan. Taliban ties with these terrorist groups are not superficial. They are rooted in common ideology, long-term political interests, and, most importantly, many Taliban leaders have long-standing family ties with the leaders of these groups.

According to a [report](#) in *Hasht-e-Subh*, the Taliban are building well-equipped bases with residential houses for the Al-Qaeda network and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan in Ghazni province. Likewise, UN reports, especially the July 2024 report, are proof of this claim. The United Nations says Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, is a "[safe haven](#)" for groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. This network of relationships ensures that the Taliban will continue to cooperate with these

groups in their collective efforts to destabilize the region, expand influence, and export terror globally, creating a security disaster with devastating global consequences.

## **Drug Monopoly**

Although the Taliban officially banned the cultivation and trafficking of narcotics, it has monopolized the industry. By limiting the supply, the Taliban is driving up the price of drugs, making the trade more profitable for themselves and their affiliates. As noted in the July 2024 UN Security Council report, it is still too early to assess the full impact of the poppy cultivation ban. However, senior Taliban officials oppose the ban. Poppy farmers lose while the Taliban profits. The report states, “Due to poppy stockpiles, the drug trade in Afghanistan remains significant.”

The world’s lack of attention to this development risks creating an underground drug economy, further empowering the Taliban and their allied terrorist groups—undermining security and stability in Afghanistan and the region. As the Taliban’s drug empire expands, terrorist groups will increasingly benefit.

## **Weaponization of Poverty**

One of the most dangerous strategies used by the Taliban is the deliberate impoverishment of the Afghan people. By doing this, they pursue two goals.

First, they plunge a large portion of the population into extreme poverty and eliminate opportunities for education, employment, and basic survival. This makes it easier to recruit people into their ranks and allied terrorist groups.

Second, the Taliban’s control over local resources and their monopoly on illicit trade provides ample financial incentives for those willing to fight for them. In this way, poverty becomes a weapon and fuels rebellion and radicalism.

## **Recruitment of Deported Asylum Seekers**

The Taliban encourages the deportation of Afghan refugees by secretly cooperating with some countries, particularly those in the region. This is a policy that is of strategic importance to the regime.

Many deported Afghans, returning to the land where they find no means of survival, are easily recruited by the Taliban and allied terrorist groups. Deportation is vital for the Taliban, as it ensures a steady stream of disillusioned and frustrated individuals who become pawns in their larger scheme.

Many countries fail to grasp the significance of this issue and view it superficially. Deporting immigrants, especially from Western countries, fuels anti-Western sentiments among the population, making them susceptible to serving terrorist groups.

## **Time Is Running Out**

If the world continues to ignore the dire situation in Afghanistan, the consequences will soon prove irreparable. The brainwashing of the nation’s youth, Taliban drug running, safe havens for terrorists, the weaponization of poverty, and the recruitment of refugees will soon

impact Afghanistan's neighbors and the West. Afghanistan's neighbors, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, and India, will suffer the most, but the impact will not be limited to the region. Countries far beyond, especially in the West, will be in the crosshairs of these repercussions.

The American withdrawal from Afghanistan was a serious miscalculation. The Biden administration, particularly Jake Sullivan, believes that drones and aerial surveillance can control the situation. This reflects a strategic mistake reminiscent of America's approach during the Cold War. Ultimately, that mistaken view contributed to the rise of international terrorism and the attacks of September 11, 2001. Abandoning the Afghan people once again will prove catastrophic, especially the West.

As an Afghan, I urge the West to pay attention and ensure that the Afghanistan that led to 9/11 does not become the same Afghanistan of the near future. It may be a landlocked country in Central Asia, but Afghanistan has already proved that it can cause great harm when left to its own devices.

*The author is an Afghan who, for reasons of safety, is unnamed.*