

# China, Iran, Pakistan and Russia Statement Sharply Critical of the Taliban Regime. The Hosting of ISIS Terrorist Groups in Afghanistan

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*All four agree that it isn't doing enough to fight international terrorist groups inside Afghanistan.*

The Chinese, Iranian, Pakistani, and Russian Foreign Ministers gathered for their third quadrilateral meeting on Afghanistan on the sidelines of the UNGA last week. The [joint statement](#) that they produced was sharply critical of the Taliban on very sensitive issues, thus showing that they're becoming increasingly displeased with them. They confirmed that international terrorist groups are still active in Afghanistan despite the Taliban's claims and called on them to fulfill their obligation to fight them.

Those four's joint statement explicitly said that the Taliban should "eliminate all terrorist groups equally and non-discriminatory and prevent the use of Afghan territory against its neighbors, the region, and beyond", thus implying that it's only selectively targeting those like ISIS-K which it considers a threat. The innuendo is that some of them like the TTP and BLA, which readers can learn more about [here](#), are being sheltered by the Taliban and even exploited by them as proxies against Pakistan like Islamabad suspects.

It's for this reason why Pakistan's [Express Tribune](#), which is one of the country's most reliable outlets, described the inclusion of that language as a "major diplomatic victory". The other criticisms of the Taliban were comparatively milder and include a call for it to finally assemble the ethno-politically inclusive government that it promised to form a few years back, create the conditions for facilitating the return of refugees from Iran and Pakistan, and reconsider its policy towards women.

The rest of the document was perfunctory and also predictably blamed NATO for Afghanistan's plight, but it's the parts mentioned above that are the most important for observers to pay attention to. What they show is that those four countries' honeymoon with the Taliban has indisputably ended and they're no longer shy about drawing attention to its ties with international terrorist groups. They don't outright accuse it of complicity with them, but a reading between the lines reveals that this is what they think.

This is significant because it hints that they wouldn't politically oppose whatever military means Pakistan might ultimately resort to for defending its national security interests from Taliban-backed terrorists. China, Iran, and Russia aren't anywhere near as directly affected by this ignoble state of affairs as Pakistan is, and each has their respective reasons for not worsening their ties with it in spite of this, with Pakistan being the only one among them

that might do something tangible in response.

China wants Pakistan to improve its domestic security situation in order to protect BRI's CPEC flagship, Iran doesn't want Taliban-backed terrorists in Pakistan's Balochistan spilling over into its half of this transnational region, and Russia wants a stable environment in which to [possibly ramp up investments](#). The convergence of these three's interests in this respect inside of Pakistan in spite of their individual ties with the Taliban is why they agreed to so sharply criticize the group in their joint statement.

Seeing as how neither China, Iran, nor Russia will scale back their ties with the Taliban to pressure it into acting against those anti-Pakistani terrorist groups, which is due to them not wanting to lose out on Afghanistan's logistics and mineral opportunities, the Taliban has no reason to comply. Their implied lack of political opposition to whatever military means Pakistan might ultimately resort to won't change the military-strategic dynamics between Kabul and Islamabad.

Both conflicting parties know this, which is why the latest joint statement should only be seen as a symbolic declaration of their increasing displeasure with the Taliban and not anything more substantive. Pakistan would still carry out cross-border military action if it considered this necessary even if those other three countries didn't just signal that they wouldn't oppose it. In any case, they'll now better understand why it might do so, which suggests that [such a scenario](#) might actually be in the cards.

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