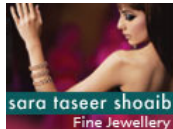


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## **Second Editorial:** Imran Khan on Talibanisation

During an interview with an American channel, Imran Khan stated that the Pakistan army's operation against the Taliban is suicidal. In his view the operation would fail because it would create more anarchy and do little to end Pakistan's problem with areas where it has lost control. He used the word "suicidal" because he claimed that Pakistanis were employing the term Talibanisation wrongly.

He said: "This term being used, that Pakistan is going to be Talibanised, is absolute nonsense, because the Taliban is not some ideology. It is a direct reaction to the US invasion of Afghanistan and the Pashtun nationalism kicking in. And on our side of the border, when the Pakistan army, under US pressure, went into the tribal areas, that's when the Taliban — Pakistani Taliban — emerged four-and-a-half years back. And so, with each operation, they have expanded."

To set the record straight, the Taliban were not moved by a remote-controlled emotion on seeing the Americans arrive in Afghanistan. The Taliban were the "non-state actors" used by Pakistan to help the Kabul regime of Mullah Umar survive in the face of internal opposition. Almost all the warlords now bedeviling Pakistan with their criminal activities are veterans of this war which later turned against the Americans when they attacked in 2001. That year also saw General Musharraf deciding that the Taliban would be covertly retained as a "strategic option" for Afghanistan.

We are suffering from the failure of our past strategy on Afghanistan. Talibanisation is an outcome of our embrace of an ideology that doesn't stop becoming more and more stringent as a part of a worldwide Muslim trend. Pakistan's ideology leans on the Constitution which proclaims the sharia. Talibanisation is an ideological extension which rejects the Constitution of Pakistan and seeks to implement a tougher version, something which the people of Pakistan have rejected.

Imran Khan doesn't know what he is talking about. He cannot run with the Taliban and disco in London at the same time. \*