

**THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS AND THE UNITED STATE'S
INTERVENTION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

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This is to Certify that the dissertation entitled, "THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS AND THE UNITED STATE'S INTERVENTION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA" submitted by **Deepti Singh**, in partial fulfillment of the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is her original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

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***Dedicated to my Late 'Bade Pa' &
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(Deepti Singh)

INTRODUCTION

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath have focused the world's attention on Islamic fundamentalism. It is being said that what the world is witnessing today is a 'clash of civilizations,' between a secular, modern 'West' and a fundamentalist, backward-looking 'Islam.' These attacks on the United States led to, by far, the most one-sided war ever to take place on Afghan soil.

One naturally questions here that why the former allies of the U.S., the 'Afghan Arabs,' now so averse to the United States that they consider it to be *dallaj* or the anti-Christ. And the answer is not very far if one really wishes to seek one. The U.S. government, since the 1950s, has drawn on various radical Islamic groups to undermine both the communist movement in west Asia and Africa, but also to demolish the legitimacy of the Arab socialist political parties.¹ What drive most of these movements are not the intricacies of Islam as faith, but the desire to create a theocratic state.

Land that boast the bulk of the world's Muslim population once had vibrant socialist and progressive movements, but the mendacity of the CIA ended their social sway. Indonesia, the nation state with the largest Muslim population in the world, once also had the largest Communist Party (the PKI) outside the socialist bloc, but with the assistance from the CIA the Indonesian right wing decimated the party. Sudan, with the largest Communist Party in Africa, faced the guns of President Numayri, backed by the CIA. Both African and Asian states with large Muslim populations, therefore, once lived within the progressive dynamic of Third World socialism and communism. U.S. alliances with the local right demolished these movements and opened the door for radical Islamic groups to organize among the newly deracinated working-class.

¹ Vijay Prashad (2002), War Against the Planet: The Fifth Afghan War, Imperialism, and other assorted Fundamentalisms, LeftWord Books, New Delhi, p. 3.

Those who are now called the 'Afghan Arabs' made an alliance with the U.S. at the urging of the Saudi royal family to destroy all these democratic forces that would undermine the authoritarian hold of the oil by an alliance of the U.S.-based oil companies and the vast and corrupt royal families of the oil lands. The 'Afghan Arabs,' having helped the US render a fatal blow to the left; have now turned against their paymasters. In the Gulf the main issue is protection of the oil-fields, and in Afghanistan the issue is both the protection of the Saudi regime and to smooth the way for the construction of oil and natural gas pipelines from Central Asia to South Asia. Here the issue is mainly oil, but other interests also motivate the United States which is all encompassing.

The failed state of Afghanistan, which has proved incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community is the product of that very community. International cooperation between imperial powers created the buffer state of Afghanistan. Foreign aid enabled a fractious dynasty to maintain precarious rule over a territory demarcated by Britain and Russia. The breakdown of cooperation between hegemonic powers during the end game of the Cold War turned that buffer state into an arena of regional conflict. New elites, created by the foreign funded schools and the bureaucracy, used international alliances to build armed organizations linked to different ethnic groups and regions of the country.

The dissolution of one superpower led to a precipitous disengagement by the other and left the guerilla organizations armed and in the field without global sponsors. In 1991-1992 the UN, with US and Soviet verbal support, failed to create an interim government from the leaders of those organizations. The regional states that supported the combatants had not evolved a cooperation agreement on the role of Afghanistan. They regulated their inter-state dealings through the cooperative rules of diplomacy, but the contending groups in Afghanistan obeyed only the rules of anarchy. What failed in Afghanistan was not just

the Afghan state, but the international system that had first sustained and then undermined its rulers. The independent action of a few UN officials and the Afghans who turned out to support their effort could not reverse these harsh realities.

Was the breakdown of cooperation an inevitable result of vast historic change or might it have been averted? Two seemingly unreal hopes live on in the discourse of both the Afghans and the international community: the hope of Afghanistan as a unified state with a common past and a common future; and the hope of resolving conflict through negotiation and even, perhaps, elections. The absence of social and material resources to translate these discourses into the institutions produces the anarchy that is Afghanistan today. Elphinstone has aptly remarked regarding Afghanistan: "Principles of repulsion and disunion, too strong to be overcome, except by such a force as, while it united the whole into one solid body, would crush and obliterate the features of every one of the Parts."²

Religion and politics have greatly impacted the Afghan society. Afghanistan has not only been pulled into the Great Power Game, especially during the Cold War, but has also been subjected to regional power rivalry. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan marks the critical turning point in the history of this war ravaged country ever since its formation. The year 1979 was a dramatic year for Afghanistan. To rescue the weakened Marxist regime of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the Soviets had entered the Afghan territory. The Soviet armed intervention not only intensified resistance to the Marxist regime but also engendered the Cold War politics. The U.S., in its anti-communist drive, opposed the intervention and began aiding the resistance which was led by the *mujahiddins* or the holy warriors with the help of Pakistan. There ensued military and ideological struggles in

² Man Stuart Elphinstone (1972), An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India, Oxford University Press, Karachi.

which religion was invoked to legitimize the course of action of the combatants.

As religion is all pervasive in Afghan society, the role of Islam in this political struggle against the communist regime proved decisive. The holy warriors became fragmented in the course of the time as personal, regional, tribal and ethnic differences came to the fore. The traditional religious leaders like the *Ulema* formed networks with the Islamists and invoked jihad, holy war, against the Soviets. This also led to the struggle acquiring a pan-Islamic dimension, and volunteers from other Muslim countries joined the jihad to rescue their Islamic brethren. But these external actors-Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran-rather pursued their own national interests and advantages. This exacerbated the tribal, ethnic and religious differences as the potentially conflicting agendas further deteriorated Afghan unity. In Afghanistan the leadership was severely fractured and could hardly ever unite. Thus, Afghanistan could never emerge as a strong nation-state.

We further find that the new leaders in post communist Afghanistan confronted serious challenges to nation-building. The country was being controlled by separate groups along ethnic, tribal and sectarian lines. The political polarization and a bitter struggle for power among various mujahiddin leaders became manifest in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. Thus, the political conflict soon transformed into an ethnic conflict. The polarization has been between the Pashtun on the one hand and the other ethnic groups on the other hand.

It was against this background that we find the rise of the worst form of fundamentalism witnessed in the history of Afghanistan. The Taliban were created by Pakistan to act as a conduit for Central Asian oil and gas. U.S. too had a significant part to play in the exploitation of Afghanistan's natural resources and its geo-strategic location as it was also an era of Cold war rivalry.

The rise of the Taliban with its narrow and strict interpretation of Islam and the near-medievalist kind of authority imposed on the Afghan state raised many fears and anxiety on the regional as well as on the international arena. Their arrival on the Afghan stage marked the end of the period of inter-mujahiddin civil war and a new development in the ongoing Afghan war. Afghanistan drifted from one ideological extreme to the next, especially with the rise of the Pakistan – orchestrated medievalist Taliban militia, who instituted a reign of terror and turned Afghanistan into a source of international terrorism – all in the name of an Islam, historically alien to Afghans. But the rise of Taliban cannot be viewed merely in terms of tribal and ethnic conflicting interests as it involved the complex interplay of various other external actors, especially the role of Pakistan which was decisive and critical.

It is here that one begins to question the role of these very regional powers -Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, India, Central Asian Republics and even Turkey; and international actors-U.S., Russia, in Afghanistan. How far is this fear justified when there are evidences pointing to a different picture altogether. Therefore, Afghanistan has been constantly put to suffering owing to its possession of large energy resources and its geo-strategic location on the world map. The involvement of foreign powers in Afghanistan has further complicated the process of nation building. The situation is further aggravated by the foreign aid coming into the country which has thrown up new elites who have sought to out-manoeuvre their opponents in the power politics.

A territorial nation-state is the political form of modernity. To be viable, a state has to exercise effective control within its territory and has to remain free from outside control. All states in history, as classified by Anthony Giddens, included a core organization that fought and taxed³. The major characteristics of a state according to Max Weber can be

³ Anthony Giddens: Nation State and Violence.

identified as – ‘compulsory association on a territorial or legal basis’, ‘an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation’, and, ‘the claim to monopolize the use of force’.⁴ But the peculiarity of the Afghan state has been that at no time in recent history has the state been able to comprehensively penetrate the tribal society and put in place its system of controls. G.D. Bakshi, very aptly, points out that Afghanistan’s reliance on external aid has given the Afghan state the coercive means to weld the heterogeneous tribal society together by distributing the foreign largesse and paying one tribe off against the other.

We find that between 1994 and 1996 the US supported the Taliban politically through its allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, essentially because Washington viewed the Taliban as anti-Iranian, anti-Shia and pro western. The US conveniently ignored the Taliban’s Islamic fundamentalism, its suppression of women and the consternation they created in Central Asia, largely because they were not interested in the larger picture. Though US had repeatedly denied any support for the Taliban, it is highly implausible that Washington, given the close involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with Pakistan’s ISI throughout the 1980s, did not know of or give tacit approval for the Taliban. The change in US policy became evident only in the aftermath of the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the Clinton administration launched missiles attack against Osama’s training camps at Khost in Afghanistan. Ever since then the US has accused Osama of every act committed against the US from the beginning of the 1990s. What the administration failed to admit was its own role, mainly through the CIA, in creating this very threat not only for the US but also for many other countries. This was a heavy price which the US was paying for ignoring Afghanistan between 1992 and 1996, when the Taliban were providing sanctuary to the most hostile and

⁴ Max Weber: Theory of Social and Economic Organization; pp.156

militant Islamic fundamentalist movement the world faced in the post Cold War era. Had the horrendous event of 9/11 not occurred, the Taliban would still be ruling Afghanistan. The developments in Afghanistan, US and also at the international level ever since the US launched its War against terrorism, have rather led to the growth of identitarian conflicts. It has also confirmed the belief that the answer to terrorism is neither war nor counter or state terrorism but the growth of democracy and human hope and a pattern of socio-economic development based on an honest assessment of history. An important question which has been probed in this research work is whether the destruction of capital and human life and the suffering of the entire societies in the process is preferable to the distribution of capital and its attendant social benefits. The reliance on military means to solve socio-political problems poses a grave threat to political stability and human life across the world. Once the military process starts, the familiar cycle of attacks, invasions, occupation, and exodus of refugees, bombardment and violation of human rights repeats itself with familiar consequences and ultimately the ends and means become confused. The misery that war has brought to the Afghan people is beyond measure and their craving for peace overwhelming. The US, owing to its military, political and economic power, stands in an influential position to bring about peace and stability in Afghanistan. The US also has the capability and means to gather international support for the Afghan cause.

The main concern of this work has been to study the internal dynamics of Afghanistan and the complex interplay of external forces which have shaped the present Afghanistan. An attempt has been made to study how the foreign policy of a nation is subjected to various constraints. The principles and the purposes of a state is reflected in its foreign policy which is the overall result of the process by which a state translates its broadly conceived goals and interests into specific courses

of action in order to achieve its objective and preserve its interest. Therefore, the various aspects of the US and Afghanistan's foreign policy determined by various causes at different point of time and history have been studied. This work is an examination of the Afghan society, its ethnicity and nation building, various regional as well as international factors determining its policies and structure. Simultaneously, it is an attempt to understand various critical compulsions shaping the policies and principles of a powerful state over the years i.e. the United States of America. *This work has been divided into five chapters.*

The *first chapter* is the introduction of Afghanistan highlighting the geo-physical and geo-cultural diversity of the country also looking briefly at its history. The focus is on Afghanistan before the emergence of Islam as well as an Islamic Afghanistan. The related issue is regarding how the leadership used religion and politics to claim legitimacy over the Afghan people.

The *second chapter* deals with Afghanistan caught in the power interests both at the regional and the international level. The Cold War rivalry between the two super powers- Soviet Union and the US- has been studied which ironically led to the deterioration of the Afghan state and society. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, US reactions and how the course of Afghanistan's history changed have been the major issues dealt with. The focus has also been on the New World Order professed by the West, how the Third World Countries assess this order and also how the US is viewed by these countries.

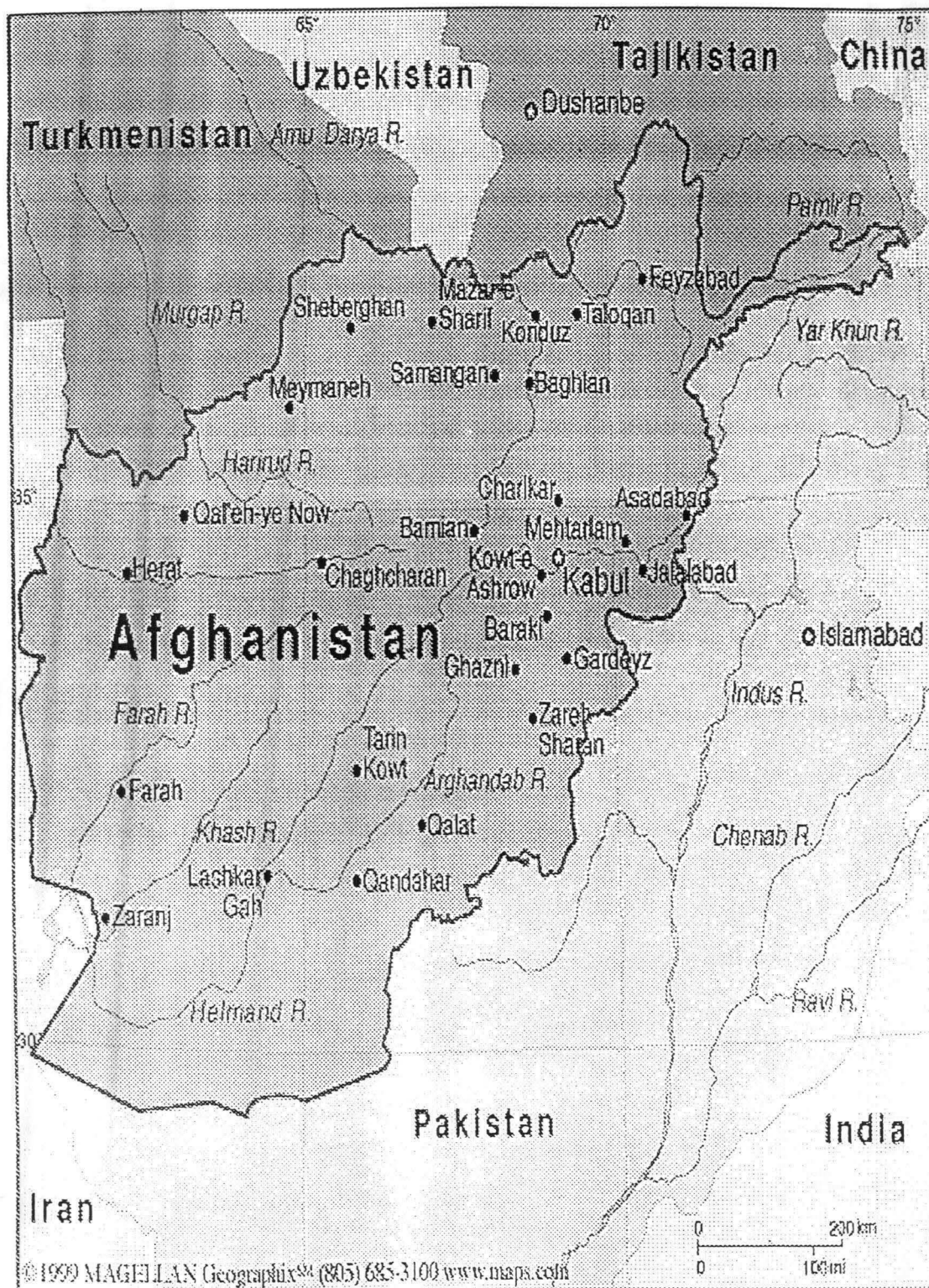
In the *third chapter*, an attempt has been made to examine the origins of Taliban and the nature of its leadership. The events that led to the fall of Kabul and the subsequent aftermath have been analyzed. The impact of the Taliban on the Afghan society and the state has been focused upon along with the critical assessment of the role of the United States in its creation.

The *fourth chapter* analyses the terrorist attack on the US on September 11, 2001 that led to the declaration of US War against terrorism. The critical issues focused upon are the formulation of present foreign policy of the United States, the ideological underpinnings involved, the course of action followed by the US in combating terrorism endangering the lives of its citizens, the role of the various international organizations, especially the UN which has a significant role to play in the present scenario, and countries, and more importantly the precedence set by a powerful state like the US. The debate regarding preemption to prevention, mainly in the context of US policies, has been explored too. Overall, it has been a critical evaluation of US policies in Afghanistan over the years.

The final chapter is the conclusion summarizing the entire work.

CHAPTER I

AFGHANISTAN: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIETY AND HISTORY



Afghanistan far from being an unchanged traditional society living in a different time had been thoroughly shaped by its interaction with the modern state systems. In the 19th century, Afghanistan was the battleground of the Great Game- played by Russia and Great Britain. Both tried to extend their control over the Afghan territory, a land route that had tremendous strategic value. It was Afghanistan that became one of the worst victims of the cold war politics between the USA and USSR. We find that the Soviet intervention brought about a drastic change in Afghanistan. The coup d'état of April 1978 marked the end of Daud's regime and "a Soviet dominated Afghan state replaced a secular but weak, tribal-based regime."¹

With their ascent to power in Kabul, the left revolutionaries began to promote Marxism as a means to gather support for the state. These new development brought about significant changes in the political, social and religious identity of the Afghans and also changed the foreign policy of its neighboring countries like Pakistan and Iran. Opposition came from various groups of political Islamists who sought to create an Islamic state based upon a pan-Islamic ideology which, in reality, did not have a base in Afghanistan. Yet, they sought to rally the masses against the 'foreign-infidel' interventionists. However, a tribally and ethnically divided Afghan Society could not unite to fight this foreign aggression. These various groupings and ethnic communities rather pursued divergent agendas and remained mutually hostile.

None the less, these divergent and ever competing claims of various religious and political elites and far reaching repercussions profoundly in all the spheres. The complex interplay between the state power and the segmented opposition forces brought to fore the salience of religion and politics within the dominant discourse. Historically, we

¹ Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, "Introduction," in Ali Banuazizi and M. Weiner under (Eds.) (1987), The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, Vanguard, Lahore, p. 1.

find that the complications arose when ethnic identities began to compete with the, sadly, claims of religion for political mobilization. The religious and ethnic identities sought to either support or to undermine the authority and legitimacy of the State.² The state reacted by seeking to curb the power of the religious groups by extending its own authority in the social, economic and political institutions. The expansion of state authority was to check the control of the clergy over the various institutions. The new social reform programs were resisted by the masses in the countryside. The religiously inspired mujahiddin, holy warriors, in alliance with the Ulema, traditional Islamic scholars, invoked the principles of 'Islam' to use it as a potent political forces to rally their supporters.

From the very beginning the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan promoted global reactions. Tom Rogers has remarked, "The Americans criticized expansionist policies, reinforced Pakistan, firm relations with China and enjoyed political, reinforced Pakistan, firm relations with China and enjoyed political mileage as the soviets suffered international criticism."³ Regional Politics underwent profound changes as Pakistan, china and United States criticized the Soviet policy and consolidated relations with one another. To maintain a balance India grew closer to the Soviet Union and together supported the embryonic regime in Kabul. The United States which has traumatic experiences in Vietnam was reluctant to engage its forces in the region where its policy and interests were not clearly defined. The ambivalent attitude of the Carter administration was borne out by the fact that in the West, initially, many felt that the soviets would defeat the rebels and control Afghanistan as the satellite.⁴ As not many in the Carter administration could foresee the

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ Tom Rogers, (1991), The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan: Analysis and Chronology, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, p. 9.

⁴ William Maley, "Political Legitimation in Contemporary Afghanistan," Asian Survey, Vol. 27, no. 6, June 1987, p. 705.

nature and strength of Afghan resistance, the Americans has been hesitant, in the beginning, to back the resistance against the formidable Soviet Army. But the hardy Afghan rebels were willing to engage the Soviets and succeed, if they could.

In the United States in November 1980, Ronald Reagan's Republican party has replaced Carter's Democratic regime. "The new President", writes Rogers "had campaigned on a promise to check Soviet expansion, was determined on the issue of Afghanistan and had established anti-communist credentials."⁵ But in Afghanistan the resistance to the Soviets had not been potent enough to threaten the Communist regime. Therefore the new American administration sought to invest in the resistance to oppose the Red Army. The intention was to force the Soviets to invest enormously in fighting the rebels, which would have resulted in international disdain and condemnation. To force the Soviets to pull out the United States used the resistance in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives and to regain international prestige.⁶ Thus by arming the resistance the United States confronted the Soviets without committing troops in the region.

Events in Afghanistan was used by Zia ul Haq, the Pakistani military dictator, as an opportunity to benefit from the Afghan crisis. Taking advantage of Washington's containment policy Pakistan became the principal American ally. It received considerable aid thereby bolstering its image among the committee of nation's and heightening its own powers. These events heralded a new era in the Afghanistan conundrum.

Significantly, Afghan observers were reminded of the late-nineteenth-century web of intrigue commonly known as the Great

⁵ Tom Rogers, n. 3, p. 11.

⁶ Radek Sikorski (1987), Moscow's Afghan War: Soviet Motives and Western Interests, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, London.

Game.⁷ The Afghan romantics were reminded of the exotic people, awe-inspiring mountains and deserts of the country and the death-defying feat of the hardy fighters of the region. The prominence of the events unfolding in the territory of Afghanistan attracted world opinion and international conference were held which either supported or criticized the soviet policy in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's geo-strategic location and topography has subjected it to a combination of influences-form marauding and restless monadic people to Silk Road travellers and the religious traditions spread along the confluence of old trade routes. With the appearance the religious came new ideas that changed culture and civilization of the Afghans.

THE AFGHANISTAN EMPIRE:

When Ahmad shah Abdali began the process of creation and consolidation of the great Afghan empire, he faced much opposition form among the members of the Abdali tribe. The initial challenge to his leadership came form Hajji Jamal Khan of the Mohammadzai clan. But the members of the Saddozai clan firmly backed the young and charismatic warrior Ahmad shah. Mohammad Sabir Khan, a venerated darwish, holy man, intervned and reputedly crowned him Badshah, Durr-I-Dauran, shah, Pearl of the Age.⁸ Soon after a dream, Ahmad shah Abdali changed the title to Ahmad Shah Durr-I-Durran (Pearl of Pearls) and since 1747 ad the Abdali lineage of the Pashtuns have come to be known ad Durrani,⁹ writes Dupree, quoting Ghubar.

During the initial phase of consolidation Ahmad Shah met with severla dissidents and potential usurpers whom he executed. He even executed one of his maternal uncles; Abdul Ghani Khan. The Durrani

⁷ Peter Hopkirk (1992), The Great Game, Kodansha International, Tokyo.

⁸ M. Nazif Shahrani, "State Building and social fragmentation in Afghani," in Banuazizi and Weiner, n. 38, p. 33.

⁹ Louis Dupree (1973), Afghanistan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 333.

Empire then began to expand. Ghazni, the final important Ghilzai stronghold, and Kabul were conquered; with a little effort Peshawar was annexed. Foreign wars of conquest proved an effective strategy for consolidating his power and it led to his eastern campaigns. The obvious attraction was booty.

Ahmad shah has risen to greatness because he could mobilize kinship factor to fuse with his charismatic leadership qualities. As the primus-inter pares he consulted his *Jirga*, a loose form of the modern day parliament. The political structure was developed in which kinship and ethnic loyalties were used to consolidate the various administrative units. By the time of his death in June 1773, his great empire that stretched from Khurasan to Kashmir and Punjab and from Oxus to the Indian Ocean was quite secured.¹⁰ But his successors could not deal effectively with the internal threats and it led to the escalation of conflicts and completions.

Timur Shah (1773-1793), his successor lost political control over much of the empire that resulted in the weakening of central authority. Dupree has aptly remarked that the “never-ending round robin of blood-letting and blindings” Ultimately led to the “final dismemberment of the Durrani Empire”.¹¹ In 1880, during Zaman shah’s rule, the alliance between the two powerful Saddozai and Barakzai clans of the Durrani tribes and shattered by the execution of Sardar Payindra Khan, the leader of the Barakzai. The destructive and debilitating internal wars enabled British Indian authorities to intervene in Afghanistan.¹² A critical evaluation of the two Anglo-Afghans wars (1839-1842 and 1871-1880) reveals that the British were myopic and impatient and could not grasp the “fundamentals of the Afghan problems or to understand the

¹⁰ Shahrani, n. 40, p. 31.

¹¹ Dupree, n. 20, p. 343.

¹² Shahrani, n. 40, p. 33.

mentality of the Afghan ruler.”¹³ The external events drastically affected internal politics of the Afghans.

But one of the earliest and most significant legacies of the conflict surrounding succession to the Afghan throne was politicization of Islam in the form of Shia-Sunn conflicts in the internal national politics¹⁴ of Afghanistan, asserts Shahrani.

Another significant impact was that instability generated civil wars that led to many particularistic conflicts. As Kabul government’s political control over the major revenue-producing provinces of Punjab, Kashmir and Sind diminished and many local and independent Khanates emerged. Afghans Turhestan, Badakhshan and Hazarajat came to be ruled by local chieftains who remained outside the control of Kabul authorities, except for brief periods, until will into the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan. Destructive inter-ethnic wars ensured that involved the Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik and Jamshidi groups. Intra tribal conflicts involved the Uzbek, Hazara, Aimak, Taimani and Jamshidi tribes.¹⁵ The emergence of multiple power centres intensified political rivalry among the various contending parties and many towns and countryside were destroyed. Trade decline and cumbersome taxes were imposed that led to the emigration of merchants and artisans from the region, heightening the chaos and anarchy.

Western colonial powers in particular, the British and Russians encourage and instigated attacks against the Afghans. To create a unite platform against foreign threats Jihad, (holy war) was invoked. Furthermore, Kin-based particularistic political conflicts sought to be overcome by the universal appeal of Islamic Jihad. During the First Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842) the British tried to re-establish the Sadozai ruler Shah Shuja in Kabul. But they were frustrated in their

¹³ Dupree, n. 20, p. 370.

¹⁴ Shahrani, n. 40, p. 33.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34 -35.

efforts, the unpredictability of tribal politics of the Afghans deferred external intervention. The hazardous Afghan terrain, geographically and politically speaking, precluded foreign domination.

But “lacking in financial resources, necessary technology and sufficient weapons and ammunition to achieve centralization of power, the Barakzai dynasty became increasingly dependent of British financial and military assistance”,¹⁶ remarks Shahrani. The conspicuous role of the British cannot be discounted in supporting the rule of Dost Mohammad (1842-1863) and Amir Sher Ali (1868-1873) with generous financial and military assistance. However, with the inauguration of the ‘Great Game’ played out on the territory of Afghanistan and Central Asian region, the survival of the Afghan monarchy became a prime concern of British foreign policy interests.¹⁷

FORMATION OF A MODERN AFGHAN STATE:

The British, did not incorporate Afghanistan within British-Indian territories. However at the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880), they controlled Afghanistan’s foreign relation and helped Dost’s grandson Abdur Rahman to become the Amir of the Country. The new Amir zealously sought to safeguard the political integrity of his territories from external threats. Therefore, he firmly believed that his mission was ‘to relieve Afghanistan from foreign aggressions and internal disturbances.’ Thereafter, he invoked Islamic principles for the furtherance of political legitimacy.

In the 1880s and 1890s the Pashtun-dominated government came down heavily upon the Hazars in Hazarajat, a mountainous region coinciding with the central Hindu Kush Mountain and stretching along the central-eastern Afghanistan. Being isolated, the political and economic development taking place in Kabul and its vicinity has not

¹⁶ Shahrani, n. 40, p. 36.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 36 – 40.

affected the region and it has remained marginalized. The Hazaras, descendents of Eastern Turkic and Mongal ruler are Shiite. They were targeted for submission on the basis of their physiognomy and religion. Their tribal institutions were destroyed; significant portions of their land confiscated and distributed amongst and Pashtuns settlers. Much of their populations was pauperized and forced into slavery.¹⁸

Habibullah succeeded Abdur Rahman, when the latter died in 1901, but there was no fratricidal war over succession. Although the new Amir followed his father's policies, he withdrew many harsher policies. He made peace with local leaders, resolved the local problems and amnestied many of the exiled Afghan families. The religious leaders regained much by their political power.

At the beginning of World War I the political ideals linked to constitutionalism, nationalism, reformism and Islamic modernism has crept into Afghanistan, This discourse was new to the political culture of the country, Kabul had become the meeting place for numerous delegations, an important one being the Turco-German Von Henting/Niedermayer Mission, With Kazim Bey representing the Ottoman Turks. Indian revolutionaries Raja Mahendra Pratap and Maulana Barkatullah too participated.¹⁹ They were later joined by "Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, representing Shaykh al-Hind, in setting up; a Provisional government of India in Kabul, and sending missions to Tashkent, Samarkand, Constantinople and Berlin to enlist support", says Olesen.²⁰

The modernist ideas were also brought by Mahmud Beg Tarzi and his group the 'groups Afghans'. Tarzi was associated with Sayyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and had been acquainted with Islamic modernist

¹⁸ Barnett R. Rubin (1995), Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 31.

¹⁹ Asta Olesen (1996), Islam and Politics in Afghanistan, Curzon Press, Surrey, p. 105.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 105 - 106.

writings.²¹ He was the principal advocate of Afghan nationalism on territorial, historical and cultural bases.

Subsequently, different school of thought emerged with each contesting the other's argument. On 21 February 1919 the Amir was shot to death and after a brief struggle his son Amanullah succeeded him.²² Within a short period of time the new Amir launched a series of reforms. In his first proclamation he declared to gain 'total independence' of Afghanistan. Jihad was invoked to provide unity for his fight against the British. Troops were mobilized and the Third Anglo-Afghan War took place in 1919. The Treaty of Rawalpindi of 1919 brought about Afghanistan's complete independence and the young king's popularity was enhanced.²³ But the Afghans had to recognize the Durand Line, which was a blow to the prestige of the tribal. A majority of the tribals were the followers of the Hazrat of Shor Bazaar, who was one of the few leaders to have mobilized his supporters for the cause of Jihad to oust the British from Afghanistan.

It was in the 1920s that Mahmud Tarzi's idea gained ground. Tarzi stressed that the survival of Muslim nations was "contingent upon a return to the true spirit and character of Islam, free from the corrupting influence of despotic rulers and ignorant Ulema which, together with the widening gulf between secular interests and ethical standards of Islam, has caused the downfall of all Muslim nations."²⁴ He stressed that Afghanistan, along with the other Muslim nations should adopt new technologies and scientific developments, develop industries and reorganize the civil society. He sought to prove to the Afghans and Muslim world that modern science was not contrary to the Islamic precepts.

²¹ Shahrani, n. 40, p. 43 - 44.

²² Ibid., p. 44 - 45.

²³ Olesen, n. 81, p. 114.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 116 - 117.

He also championed women's rights, their right to education and monogamous marriages.²⁵ He explained that polygamy contributed to the decline of Afghanistan's power and prestige. He invoked Islamic principles to support monarchy and the nation-state and explained that the principles of pan-Islamism and nationalism do not contradict. Thus Tarzi and his associates of the 'Yough Afghan' movement endeavored to reform and modernize Afghanistan under the combined leadership of the ruling elite.²⁶

Therefore the first constitution was promulgated in 1923, concessions to Islam were made to satisfy the Ulema and Islam was declared the state religion. Adherence to the Hanafi code of Sunni Islam was spelled out.²⁷ But Islam as practiced in the Afghan society at the time hindered the process of secular modernization and much of Amanullah's policy was criticized as being anti-Islamic. While bringing about reforms to change the state and civil society Amanullah constantly has to convince the Ulema that the new reforms were compatible with laws of the Sharia.

In 1931, Nadir Khan had promulgated a new constitution, which lasted till 1964. To build a strong power base the new regime began to conciliate the various tribes but the government was cautious in pursuing social and cultural matters.²⁸ Many of the educated Afghans refused to accept Nadir Khan's accession to the throne. Fifteen year-old Zahir Khan succeeded his father to the throne but for a while ultimate authority rested with Sardar Hashim Khan, the Prime Minister and Nadir Khan's brother.

By 1943 Zahir Shah has established America-Afghan relations and shortly after the second world war the Kabul regime sought US

²⁵ Ibid., p. 118.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 119 – 120.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

²⁸ Raja Anwar (1988), The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A Firsthand Account translated by Khalid Hassan, Verso, London, p. 23 – 25.

assistance in diplomatic field. Kabul got economic aid and the Afghan government improved upon its agricultural, educational, economic and transport infrastructure. But unlike the British the United States could not assume the role of a powerful protector. Soviet involvement grew after 1955.

In 1946 Sardar Shah Mahmood, a liberal had replaced his brother as the Prime Minister. He released many of the political prisoners, held elections to the seventh parliament and eased press and censorship law.²⁹ Similarly in 1951, after press restrictions had eased, a number of publications were brought out.

The palace revolution of 1953 brought Sardar Daud Khan to power and he became the Prime Minister. After, "a decade of socio-economic reforms and expansions of education the urban middle class had grown even stronger so that it also became imperative to accommodate its wish for political reforms."³⁰ During this period of consolidation the United States was approached for military assistance but it declined. The US believed that its assistance could provoke the USSR and it would also conflict with the American plans to build up relations with Pakistan.

Daud raised the 'Pashtunistan' issue that created problems with the Pakistan establishment. Afghanistan leaders, therefore, looked to the USSR for assistance. It provided the Soviets an opportunity to aid, control and modernize a country, which did not belong to the group of communist nations. Rubin puts it succinctly with his remark that "nonaligned Afghanistan has turned to the Soviet Union for military aid only after being refused by the United States. The United States had recruited Afghanistan's new neighbor, Pakistan, into both Central Treaty Organization (SEATO). Pakistan an ally of the United States opposed aid to Afghanistan, its rival in a bitter dispute over the areas of northwest Pakistan, including the tribal territories that were inhabited by

²⁹ Anwar, n. 103, p. 26.

³⁰ Olesen, n. 81, p. 203.

Pashtuns. The Government of Afghanistan argued that the inhabitants of 'Pashtunistan', as it called those areas, should enjoy the right to self determination."³¹

The Soviet Union gave economic and technical assistance to Afghanistan and supported communist movements for its strategic interests. In response the US too, poured in money and manpower into the country. During the cold war as the two blocs' competed for influence through the politics of aid to a common recipient, Afghanistan benefited immensely. According to Dupree and Kamrany the two hostile super powers-the USA and USSR-competed for patronage and influence on Afghanistan and tacit understanding and collaboration had developed between them.³²

The Muslim Republics of Soviet Union lying athwart Afghanistan were strategically placed through which the Soviets could aid and influence the Afghans. The Soviets sought to modernize and strengthen the Afghan army. From 1956 to 1978 they provided Afghanistan with \$ 1265 million in economic aid and approximately \$ 1,250 million in military assistance. Whereas the United States Provided \$ 533 million in economic aid. During the same period 3,725 Afghan military officers, with the majority belonging to the elite air force and armored corps, trained in the Soviet Union. While a total of 487 officers trained in the United States during the said period.³³ A few of the Afghans also pursued training in Egypt and India. Egypt's al-Azhar university trained Afghan officers in Islamic jurisprudence and legal studies, Dr. Ghulam Mahammad Niyazi and Burhanuddin Rabbani were two outstanding Islamist scholars who studied there.³⁴

³¹ Barnett R. Rubin (1995), The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 22.

³² Dupree, n. 20, p. 526 – 530.

³³ Henry S. Bradsher (1983), Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, Duke University Press, Durham, p. 24 – 25, 29.

³⁴ Roy, n. 101, p. 69 – 70.

Foreign aid enabled the Kabul regime to strengthen itself. But the government lacked the will and the attitude to penetrate the countryside and to institutionalize the state apparatus. Rather the state-tribe relations were based upon 'encapsulation' and appropriate networks were not mobilized to demonstrate the potential will of the Kabul regime.³⁵ The policy of encapsulation thus precluded the evolution of a "national political system" primarily because "the state elite acted as an ethnically stratified hierarchy of intermediaries between the foreign powers who provided the resources and the groups who received the largesse of patronage. Most of the population considered the government only a source of kinship-lined patronage.³⁶ The kinship based groups remained isolated and out of the control of the Kabul regime and were tied to the state only through the personal ties to the individuals linked with the state institution.

As new professionals joined the state, relations between the state and civil society underwent changes. The ethnically divided Afghan society, wherein Pashtuns dominated, had begun to accommodate the professional form the other ethnic groups, such as Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras. In 1964 the King Zahir Shah promulgated a new constitution to accommodate these newly educated groups. Since then, for nearly a decade Afghanistan enjoyed a constitutional rule under 'New Democracy.' The New constitution enshrined an elected, consultative parliament and two national elections were held. The various groups competed for power under the banner of different political parties, which were declared as legal entities by the 1964 constitution.³⁷ Numerous factions organized politically under different streams of ideology-nationalist, community, Islamist-led to the strengthening of the correspondingly similar

³⁵ Tapper, *Introduction*, n. 43, p. 50 – 52.

³⁶ Rubin, n. 112, p. 23.

³⁷ Anwar, n. 103, p. 40.

movements. But such groups still lacked institutional channels in the absence of effective party system.

Since the early 1960s educated elite of Afghanistan began to gain strength and so did their ideology Influenced by international events and the differing strategy of the United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers of Cold War era, the politics of the developing, non-aligned countries in general, and Afghanistan in particular, took a new course. Under the 'Nixon Doctrine' the United States encouraged the regional hegemons in the Persian Gulf areas. The soviet perceived such acts as deliberate strategy of encirclement. Under the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' Soviets aided the militarized vanguard- party regimes in Third World countries.³⁸ The attitude and foreign policy objectives of the powers affected the internal politics of Afghanistan. To enhance their bargaining capacity vis-a-vis the Afghan regime, the USSR and US began to aid the communists and the Islamists respectively.³⁹ The US support to the Islamist was channeled through the routes in Pakistan.

In Afghanistan leading left-wing figures had set up 'study circles' by 1956 and by 1963-64 there were about four or five such study circles. These intellectuals spread new communist idea taking bold and new initiatives.⁴⁰ In early 1965, thirty men met at Noor Muhammad Taraki's house to form the Hizb-e-Democratic Khalq Afghanistan, or, the People's Democratic party of Afghanistan. A couple of years later the party spilt into two factions Khalq, people, led by Taraki, and parcham, Banner, spear headed by Babrak Karmal. The split was a result of social origins of Taraki and Karmal, that reflected their doctrinal differences.⁴¹ Taraki belonged to the Ghilzai Pashtun tribe and opposed King Zahir shah's

³⁸ Rubin, n. 112, p. 26.

³⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, "The Fragmentation of Afghanistan," *Foreign affairs*, Vol. 68, (1989-90), p. 150-168.

⁴⁰ Anwar, n. 103, p. 39 – 42.

⁴¹ Anwar, n. 103, p. 48 – 68.

regime. Karmal, a Tajik,⁴² (not a Pashtun which he claimed as his nationality), initially did not want to displease the Kabul regime. Moreover, the Parcham group led by Karmal was city-bred and recruited members from the middle and upper classes. The social base of the Khalq comprised members of rural background, hailing from tribal Pashtun families. The newly educated leader of the Khalq came from humble lower-middle class, salary-earning families.⁴³ Although the Soviets pressured them to reunite in 1977 they could not constitute a unified, potent political movement. The communist leader could not overcome their regional and individual differences resulting in constant conflicts and preventing their unity, thus impacting upon the nascent movement.

Constitutionally, Afghanistan became a one-party state with the Hizbe-e-Inqilab-e-Melli (National Revolutionary party) acting as the vanguard of the Revolution. A *Melli Jirga* (National Assembly), where the will of the people manifested and which represented the whole nation, was to have half of its members coming from the workers and the farming community. Furthermore, Daud's rule initially coopted part of the Left and silenced the religious opposition. But ideological crisis was deepening and political culture became radicalized and militant. Afghan society became a victim of internal power struggle wherein various sections of the elite competed for the control of the instruments of state power.

The murder of Ustad Amir Akbar Khyber Khan, the ideologue of the Parcham faction, on the night of 17-18 April 1978 triggered the April Revolution.⁴⁴ The communists, led by the members of the Khalq, staged military coup on 27 April 1978 and executed Daud along with his family.

⁴² Ibid., p. 42, 257.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 49; Rubin, n. 113, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Anwar, n.103, p. 92 – 109.

Noor Mohammad Taraki, the leader of the PDPA and of the Khalaq faction, succeeded Daud. The Khalqis, predominantly rural-based Pashtuns, had always favored a violent and sudden overthrow of the systems on the Marxist-Leninist lines. The Parchamis were gradualist and appeared to co-operate even with the non-communist to build communism. For about a year and half the Khalqis, under the leadership to Taraki and then Hafirzullah Amin, carried out socio-economic reforms in the countryside to ameliorate the condition of the teeming millions, But such acts, which sought to bypass the existing social structures, were deemed as the handiwork of the 'heathen' and 'infidel' communists. Moreover, the revolution had come from above it lack social base for the communists had not endeavored to build up strong political and social institutions. The leadership remained deeply divided by personal allegiances, political opportunism, regional origins and doctrinal differences.

From April 1978 to December 1979 many of the Parcham leaders were removed from the government exiled abroad. Parcham military men were purged and imprisoned. In December 1978 a new Soviet Afghanistan Friendship Treaty had been signed. In March 1979, Hafizullah Amin succeeded Taraki as the Prime Minister. On Taraki's death in October 1979 he became the President and the Party leader. As internal struggle in Afghanistan continued the Soviets interfered and finally an armed intervention took place on 27 December 1979. Amin was executed and Karmal assumed power. With assistance from the Soviets he sought to bolster the weakened regime. The Soviets claimed that the Afghan regime had requested for military assistance and in true faith they had responded.

In response to the Soviet action in Afghanistan the United States' Carter administration announced the "Carter Doctrine". The United States, which had recuperated sufficiently from the Vietnam Fiasco, reacted by arming the resistance. Yet, it was reluctant to commit troops

to fight the menace of communism. The Troika America-Pakistan-Saudi Arabia has been galvanized into action. The Americans, criticizing the expansionist design of the Soviets increased cooperation with Egypt and China. Thus, the cold War end-game battle lines were drawn and like the previous century's 'Great Game' The battleground was Afghanistan. A non-aligned, poor and developing country was to bear the brunt of the hostilities of the two super powers.

For nearly a decade the two superpowers and its allies reoriented their foreign policy to aid their favorite allies in Afghanistan. A chronology of the events from December 1979 to 1989 suggests that neither of the two blocs were willing to concede ground to its opponent. The Afghan war saw different levels of conflict that resulted into the death and exodus of millions of refugees. Unemployment increased and strained the emaciated economy. Plight of the Children, women and elderly grew from bad to worse.

In their Zeal to transform the Afghan society the Soviet-backed Kabul regime introduced economic and social reforms. In the initial phase the regime "tried to monopolize power, attach Islam and transform the society through state terror".⁴⁵ But later, under Najibullah, the PDPA sought to abandon its monopoly over power and had diluted its revolutionary ideology. Najibullah invoked the notions of Islam, sought legitimacy on the basis of Loya Jirga and nationalism.⁴⁶ In the years following the Soviet withdrawal he constantly had to use his political brinkmanship to hold on to power. But in 1992 the Mujahiddin had formed a government. Najibullah was prevented from leaving the country and he took refuge in UN Premises in Kabul.

Split in the resistance and mutual hostilities among the various mujahiddin leaders precluded the formation of a unified resistance front. The political and religious elite could not overcome their differences

⁴⁵ Barnett R. Rubin, "The Next Round," *Orbis*, Vol. 33, no.1, (Winter 1989), p. 59.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Regional, ethnic, tribal and doctrinal difference proved unity elusive. Not even the universal Islamic principles could bring the mujahiddin leaders to negotiate forming a common platform or, rule with a common programme. Rabbani's Tajik nationality prevented him from consolidating his base in the Pashtun dominated regions. While Hikmatyar, Masud and the ex-communist Dostum constantly fought against one another, government's failure to provide peace and security led to the proliferation of numerous war lords who operated within their fiefdoms creating their own militia. In the Words of Matinuddin "the people of a proud and fiercely independent nation did not have the wisdom to sink their personal animosities when it came to ruling their country along the lines they had been advocating during their combined struggle to get rid of the 'occupation' forces."⁴⁷ In that civil war that ensued Muslims killed Muslims, contrary to the Islamic injunctions.

Rabbani's extended term, as the President of the transitional government of Afghanistan and as the leader of the Shura, expired on 15 December 1994 but he held onto power. The internecine fighting between the mujahiddin wrought death and destruction. The people lost faith in the leaders whom they accused of not fulfilling the pledge they promised to at the Holy Kaba, co-sponsored by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan was piqued at Rabbani's refusal to step down after the expiry of his term of office. As per the Islamabad Declaration of which Rabbani was a signatory the president was to remain in office for not more than eighteen months with effect from December 29, 1992. By July 1994 relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan had deteriorated when "six Pakistanis were shot dead by Rabbani's forces and seven others were arrested on trumped-up charges" alleges Matinuddin.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Kamal Matinuddin (1999), The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994 – 1997, OUP, Karachi, p. 8-9.

⁴⁸ Matinuddin, n. 138, p. 126.

General Babar and his interior ministry began to support a group of religious students. To paraphrase Cooley, two Islamic powers, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan joined hands with the world's sole superpower, at the time, the U.S. and had by 1994 successfully developed a new form of extremism- the Taliban. Saudi Arabia's steady supply of money and Pakistan's arms and logistical support made Taliban's victory a lot easier.⁴⁹ The Taliban, from its take over of Kandhar in 1994 to the capture of Jalalabad on 12 December 1996, had covered lots of ground in south-western Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul was close. In a swift move on the night of 26-27 September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul. Russia and Central Asia were alarmed.

This brings us to the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan. Their arrival on the Afghan stage marked the end of the period of inter-mujahiddin civil war and a new development in the ongoing Afghan war. Afghanistan drifted from one ideological extreme to the next, especially with the rise of the Pakistan – orchestrated medievalist Taliban militia, who instituted a reign of terror and turned Afghanistan into a source of international terrorism – all in the name of an Islam, historically alien to Afghans. The historical background of Afghanistan has been given since the day Afghanistan became an independent sovereign nation state till the disintegration of the soviets following the withdrawal of soviet troops from the war ravaged country called Afghanistan. During the period of soviet domination, there emerged a form of autarchic nationalism that opposed foreign threats to the integrity and independence of Afghanistan. The Afghan traditionalists falling into the category of Islamic state nationalism stuck strongly to retain the indigenous Afghan culture under firm traditional Islamic principles. Taliban later filled the room for such an ideology and nationalism. Taliban gained relevance as a political and ideological force behind this kind of nationalism, and Taliban could

⁴⁹ John K Cooley (2000), Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism, Penguin Books, New Delhi, p. 3, 145 – 146.

override the identities and interests of the minorities with economic privileges and cultural imperialism.

AFGHANISTAN: THE PEOPLE, LANGUAGES AND ETHNIC DIVERSITIES:

Afghanistan, that has for many years remained a cultural melting pot, has a predominantly Muslim population. Afghanistan has had a varied past primarily because of its geographical location. It is situated at the meeting point of four ecological and cultural areas-the Middle East, Central Asian Republics, China and the Indian subcontinent. The remnants of various races inhabiting Afghanistan, the influx and encroachments by numerous groups, and constant movement of its nomadic people, has turned the country into a cultural mosaic. Lying at the cross roads of Asia, other cultural impediments make the difference.⁵⁰

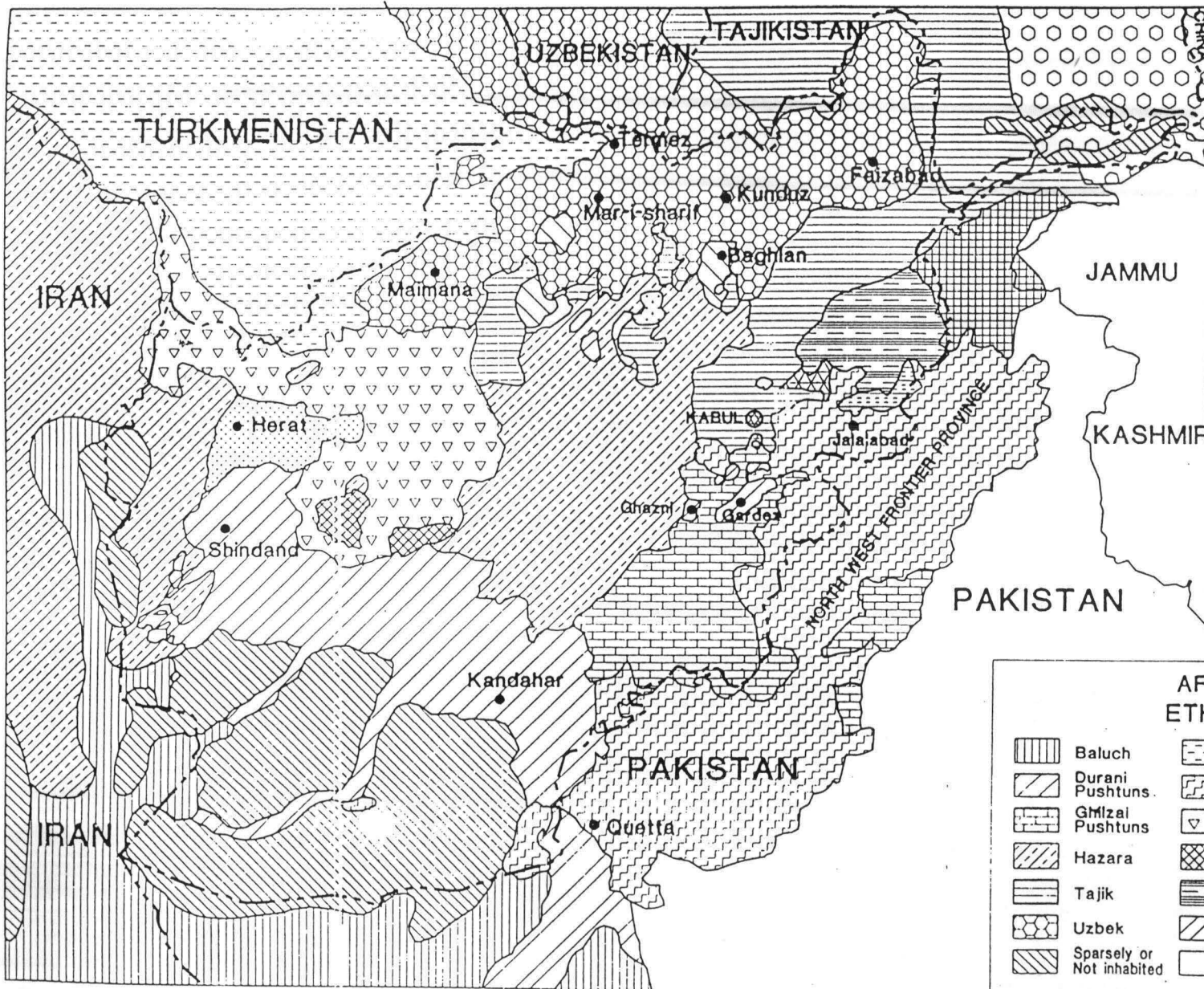
LANGUAGES:

The numerous influences and movements of the people have resulted in the growth of different languages. According to Dupree we can account for four major language families, viz. Indo-European, Uralic-Altaic, Dravidian and Semitic.⁵¹

The two principal languages spoken in Afghanistan are Pashtu and Persian. Both belong to the family of Indo-European languages. The 1964 constitution named Pashtu and Dari as official languages of the state. Tajiki is another important language spoken in Afghanistan. The Tajiki dialects are often referred by the name of the valley in which it is spoken, e.g. Panjsheri, Andarabi, etc. Dari is spoken by the Mughals who are

⁵⁰ Louis Dupree (1973), Afghanistan, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 55.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 66.



AFGHANISTAN'S ETHNIC GROUPS

	Baluch		Turkmen		Tatar
	Durani Pushtuns		Other Pushtuns		Kirghiz
	Ghilzai Pushtuns		Chahar Aimak		Chitrali
	Hazara		Muchai		Pashai
	Tajik		Nuri		Safi
	Uzbek		Brahui		Miscellaneous Tribes
	Sparsely or Not inhabited		Area excluded From this study		International Boundry

concentrated in Ghor. Most rural Afghans tended to call their spoken language as Farsi and not Dari. But since the last three and a half decades Dari language has developed a great deal and taken hold in many parts of the country. Different regions account for different dialects and the vocabulary, too, differs.

The second important group of languages belongs to that of the Uralic-Altaic family. The Altaic (Turkic dialects) speakers are concentrated on the north of the Hindu Kush and come from the members of the Uzbek, Turkmen and Kyrghyz ethnic groups. As dialects vary from group to group and region to region, the Uzbeki speakers of Afghanistan absorbed many of the Persian words. The Brahui speak the Brahui language, which belongs to the family of Dravidian languages.

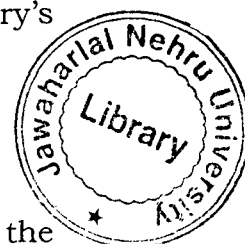
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There are many Brahui who also speak Pashtu or Baluchi language.⁵²
The numerous languages of Afghanistan have enriched the country's literature and culture.

ETHNIC GROUPS:

Coming to the ethnic groups in Afghanistan we find that the country is a cultural mosaic and few of its ethnic groups are of indigenous origin.⁵³ Afghanistan has often been described as a tribal confederation, comprising of multiracial groups and nationalities. All Pashtuns are not Afghan citizens as many live in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Tajiks, Uzbwks, Turkmen, Kyrghyz and Kazakhs now have their own Republics in the north. The Hazaras, Nuristanis, Brahui, and Baluch form their separate cultural units and have their own languages. These ethnic groups, professing either of the two major sects of Islam, have also developed local variations of Islam's major doctrines, incorporating distinctive cults and beliefs that predate Islam. It is estimated that eighty percent of Afghans belong to the Sunni branch

⁵² Ibid, p.62.

⁵³ M. Elphinstone (1972), An account of the Kingdom of Caubul, Vol. 2, Oxford, p.2.



and the rest, mostly inhabiting the more remote parts of the country, are Shias.

The Pashtuns: The dominant group, both in economic and numerical terms, is Pashtun concentrated in the south and south east but have spread through all sectors of the country. It is certain that they were in their traditional region when they converted to Islam between the eighth and tenth centuries.⁵⁴ They profess the *Hanafi* Sunni sect of Islam. Their language is Pashtu, which belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. Their approximate population is about 6.5 million. Around twelve million Pashtuns live across the border in Pakistan. Many Pashtuns are farmers, but many mix agriculture with herding and as many as one million of them are entirely nomadic. Nearly all are organized on tribal basis.

In the changing political environment, the Pashtun tribes have preserved their own forms of organization and remain independent. Their independence is expressed through the autonomous enforcement of the tribal legal order—the *Pashtunwali*.⁵⁵ It is a code that limits anarchy among a fractious but valorous Pashtuns. *Pashtunwali* demands vengeance against injury or insult to one's kin, chivalry and hospitality towards the helpless and unarmed strangers, bravery in battles and openness and integrity in individual behaviour. Interplay between leadership (*khan*) and lineage (*khel*), makes up the Pakhtun social structure.⁵⁶ The Pashtun rulers have ruled Afghanistan for over two hundred and fifty years. But the governance was possible only because the day-to-day administration was left into the hands of the non-Pashtuns who were to large extent Persian-speaking urban elite.

⁵⁴ N.P. Newell and R.S. Newell (1981), *The Struggle for Afghanistan*, Ithaca, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Bernt Glatzer, "Is Afghanistan on the brink of Ethnic and Tribal Disintegration," in William Maley (ed.) (2001), *Afghanistan and Taliban: The Rebirth of Fundamentalism?*, New Delhi: Penguin, p. 171.

⁵⁶ Jon W. Anderson, "Khan and Khel: Dialects of Pakhtun Tribalism," in Richard Tapper (ed.) (1983), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, London, p. 119-149.

The Tajiks: Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group ethnic community in Afghanistan, estimated to constitute 25% of the total population – are concentrated around Kabul, the Panjsher valley and the Badakshan province. Most of the estimated four million Tajiks live in settled communities, usually as farmers or urban people. Their religion is *Hanaf* Sunni. Their language is Dari and Tajiki dialects. The Tajiks often refer to themselves with geographic rather than kin-tribal designations i.e. Panjsheri, Andarabi, Ghorbandi.⁵⁷ Among the Tajiks the regional differences could be very strong and fierce. Many of the Tajiks are the descendents of the families of refugees who came to Afghanistan from Ferghana and other regions of Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s, after the turmoil of the Russian revolution, civil war and forced collectivism.⁵⁸

The Uzbeks: Of the Turkish people dominating the extreme northern plains of Afghanistan, the most numerous are the Uzbeks. Numbering about 1.7 million they live near the Amu Darya (Oxus River). Their religion is Hanafi Sunni. Their language is Uzbek and Turkic belonging to the Uralic-Altai family.⁵⁹ The Uzbeks, like the Pashtuns, practice a mixture of farming and herding. Many Afghan Uzbeks are relatively recent migrants from Central Asia. These people have developed economic and cultural relations with their ethnic community, living across the border, who now have their own independent Republic.

The Hazara: The mountainous central region of the country is inhabited by the Hazaras. At present their population is about 1.5 million. Their religion is Imami Shia, although few also follow Sunni version of Islam.

⁵⁷ Ibn Khaldun, *Maquaddimah*, translated by Franz Rosenthal as Ibn Khaldun (1958), *An Introduction to History; the Muqaddimah*, New York, Bollingen Foundation, Vols. I-III.

⁵⁸ Anthony Hyman, "Central Asia's Relations with Afghanistan and South Asia," in P. Ferdinand (ed.) (1994), *The New Central Asia and its Republics*, London, p.76-78.

⁵⁹ Newell and Newell, n. 89, p. 25.

Their language is Hazaragi, a Dari dialect, of the Indo-European family.⁶⁰ They constitute the majority of Afghanistan's *Shia* religious minority. The Hazaras have been under-privileged to an extent reminiscent of an outcaste in a caste society.⁶¹ Among them religious difference, geographical separation economic subordination, and phenotype act together, constituting strong boundaries between them and other ethnic communities of the country. For the Hazaras, their ethnic (*qawm*), political (*millat*) and religious (*mazhab*) identity is often one and the same thing and the three terms are often employed interchangeably. Of late feeling of cultural identity has developed, especially amongst the young intellectual émigré's, which has led to the emergence of Hazara nationalism.⁶² In a recent study Iesha Singh explores the nature and the extent of violence carried out against the Hazaras. She concludes by saying that the violence against the Hazaras has been both structural and personal and this has led to differential power relations vis-à-vis the other dominant ethnic groups, in particular the Pashtuns.⁶³

The Hazaras disliked the Pashtuns and when the Hazaras liberated the region from the communist regime, they denied to all the Pashtuns access to Central Afghanistan. Until 1992, the Hazaras were divided and there existed many groups.⁶⁴ But then at the behest of Iran the Hazaras united, becoming the first major ethnic group in Afghanistan which is able to act as a coherent unit. Thus, for over a century the Hazaras have been subjugated and discriminated by the Pashtuns and as a community they have faced systematic disadvantages.

⁶⁰ Dupree, n.3, p. 60.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² K.B. Harpviken, "Transcending Traditionalism: The Emergence of Non State Military Formations in Afghanistan," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 34, no.3 (1997), p. 271-287.

⁶³ Iesha Singh, "Exploring issue of violence within the recent context of the Hazarajat, Afghanistan," in *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.20, no.2, (2001), p. 195-228.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

The Nuristani: The Nuristanis live in the mountainous region north of the Khyber Pass. They have never fitted comfortably within the modern Afghan political system.⁶⁵ Divided into five major tribes, they number around 100,000.⁶⁶ These people were Kafirs but were forcibly converted to Islam in the late nineteenth century by Amir Abdur Rehman. Despite their conversion they have remained people apart developing and independent culture whose origin is disputed. For many years these people have felt a serious disadvantage in matters of justice, taxation and economic competition. To maintain internal autonomy they regulate and mediate affairs within the community. Since Nuristan has occupied a strategic position with its border with Pakistan, the central authority has had reasons to be sensitive to their political situation and quite a few Nuristanis were recruited into the Central Military Forces. Efforts to integrate them into the Afghan polity have brought about mixed results. The Nuristanis now practice *Hanafi* Sunni religion. Their language is Kafiri, belonging to the family of Indo-European languages.

The Turkmen: Primarily, semi-sedentary and semi-nomadic and numbering around 600,000, the Turkmen live in northern Afghanistan. Many of these people had migrated from Soviet Central Asia during the Bolshevik revolution.⁶⁷ They live in Herat, Andkhui, Maimana, Daulatabad, and Maruchak. But with the emergence of independent Turkmenistan Republic in the north, the Turkmen tribes are aspiring for more political autonomy from the centre.

The Kyrgyz: Several thousands of them live near the Afghan Pamir Mountains in close proximity to the Chinese border as nomads. Most of

⁶⁵ Newell and Newell, n.89, p. 98.

⁶⁶ Dupree, no.2, p. 62.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

them are the descendents from the families of refugees who had migrated to Afghanistan from Soviet Central Asia. Their religion is *Hanafi* Sunni version of Islam and they speak Kipchak Turkic dialects of the Uralic-Altaic family of languages.⁶⁸

The Brahui: Many Brahui work as tenant farmers or hired herders for Baluch or Pashtun landlords. Their population is around 200,000 with majority of the people living in the south western Afghanistan. They practiced *Hanafi* Sunni religion. The language is Brahui which belongs to the Dravidian language family. However, some of them also speak Pashtu or Baluchi.

The Qizilbash: This is primarily an urban group scattered throughout the country. Today many of them hold important bureaucratic and professional appointments. They are among the more literate groups in Afghanistan. Their language is Dari.

The Aimak: Numbering around 800,000 the Aimaks of the country practice *Hanafi* Sunni Islam. They usually refer to themselves with their tribal designations. They speak Dari dialects with a mixture of Turkic vocabulary.

The Mughals: Originally they were concentrated in Ghor but now several thousand of them live scattered through central and north Afghanistan. They practice *Hanafi* Sunni faith of Islam. Most of the Mughals speak Dari language, while many of the southern Mughals also speak Pashtu.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Dupree, n.3, p. 61-63.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.60.

The Kazakhs: Like other ethnic groups, which now have a separate homeland in the north of Afghanistan, the Kazakhs had migrated into Afghanistan in 1920s and 1930s. But with the emergence of independent Kazakhstan there was 'homecoming' of about 4,000 ethnic Kazakh refugees from Afghanistan and Iran.⁷⁰ The long overland journey of the Kazakhs to their place of origin was helped by co-ordination and funding from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). For most of these Afghan-Kazakhs, Kabul and north Afghanistan had been their home for over six decades.

The Baluch: There are nearly 100,000 Baluch living in Afghanistan. They were basically the caravaneers, nomads and were even used as slaves. Now they are semi-sedentary or semi-nomadic living in the north western region of Afghanistan. Their religion is *Hanafi* Sunni and language is Baluchi of the Indo-European family. Since the mid 1970s, some 2,500 Baluch guerillas, fighting for autonomy in Pakistan have taken refuge in Pakistan. But their cause has not received international support due to the reprisals actions in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Other ethnic groups are negligible in number. Most of them have been integrated into the mainstream culture thereby displaying very little distinctive cultural traits. In a society where *qawm* membership precluded the formation of a national-level broad-based unity, the *Ulema* invoked the *Sharia* to create the universal principles that could guarantee some unity among the groups. Islamic principles sought to provide a system of norms, codes for regulating human relations and to act in accordance with an ethical model. Ironically and sadly, for the Afghans, this has rather led to the development of radical fundamentalism which led to the decline of Afghanistan internally as well as externally.

⁷⁰ Anthony Hyman, "Central Asia's Relations with Afghanistan and South Asia," in P. Ferdinand (ed.) (1994), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, p. 78-79.

This brings us to the rise of Taliban which changed the course of Afghanistan's history like never before. The rise of Taliban and its ideological underpinnings and the other critical issues related to it have been discussed in the third chapter where the US involvement in the ascendancy and strengthening of this fundamentalist regime has also been explored.

CHAPTER II

THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS; AND THE U.S.- SOVIET RIVALRY

U.S. - AFGHAN RELATIONS : AN INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world nation-states are increasingly becoming inter-dependent for their economic, cultural and political engagements. The interests and objectives that govern the relations of a country with others at various levels, is broadly called its foreign policy. By and large the foreign policy of a country is determined by a unique combination of domestic as well as external factors. They include its geo-strategic setting, historical background, and desire to live in peace with the neighbors, role in the international community and so on.

On the international stage, Afghanistan is a small power whose geo-strategic location has influenced the Great power's attitude towards it. The case of Afghanistan presents an interesting profile of a small power.¹ As Erling Bjol has noted, "It makes a lot of difference whether a country is an immediate neighbor of the Soviet Union like Poland, or Hungary or whether it is at a comfortable distance, like Albania".² Afghanistan shares borders with Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan, which imparts tremendous significance to it.

After the conclusion of the II World War, the strategic significance of Afghanistan assumed added dimensions, especially during the cold war when Pakistan joined the US – sponsored military alliances – South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).³ But Afghanistan despite its long borders with soviet Russia as well as Pakistan pursued independent and non-aligned policy. Following the Russian invasion into Afghanistan since December 1979, its strategic location assumed greater significance in the US foreign policy towards this region. It is important to note, however, that all the rulers of Afghanistan pursued

¹ Shram Chubin and Sepher Zabih (1974), The Foreign Relations of Iran: A developing state in a Zone of Great Power Conflict, Berkeley, p.27

² Erling Bjol, "The power of the weak," Cooperation and Conflict, Vol. III, no.3, 1968, pp.158.

³ David Vital, (1967), The Inequality of States: Study of small power in international relations, Oxford, p. 8.

the policy of strict neutrality which kept the country free from foreign interventions even during the First World War as well as the Second World War.. This historical experience went a long way in the shaping of the foreign policy of Afghanistan in the post Second World War period.

Afghanistan, having a long border with the Soviet Union could not afford to pursue a pro-west policy. Simultaneously, it also could not pursue entirely a pro-soviet foreign policy for fear of being dubbed as communist. Shift to either side could mean an end of active non-aligned and independent foreign policy of Afghanistan. Prior to the advent of the communist coup in April 1978, Afghanistan had actively participated in the Non Align Movement summit and remained a staunch supporter as well as adhered to the policy of non-alignment.⁴

AFGHAN - US RELATIONS TILL THE WORLD WAR II:

For a long period since its independence in 1776, the US remained concerned primarily about its role in the western hemisphere. Its policy towards Asia and Africa was that of isolationism.⁵ There was no political or diplomatic interaction between the US and Afghanistan till the second decade of the 20th century.

The enthronement of Abdul Rahman Khan in Afghanistan was instrumental in envisaging the first major and concerted effort for modernization in that country. Knowing fully well that his country was surrounded by powerful neighbors i.e., Britain and Russia, Abdur Rahman was faced with a major dilemma as to how to modernize the country and at the same time, maintain its independence. Consequently, he adopted “a policy of voluntary aloofness from the

⁴ Robin Alison Remington, “The non-aligned context: Problems and Prospects,” Punjab Journal of Politics, Amritsar, Vol. VI, no.1, Jan-June 1982, p. 205.

⁵ Afghanistan emerged as a independent political entity in 1747 and the United States attained independence in 1776 by shaking off the British colonial yoke.

rest of the world, thereby delaying the exploitation of country's resources".⁶

Following the accession to the throne by Amanullah Khan in February 1919, Afghanistan's foreign policy received a new fillip. The king, improved relations with both Britain and Russia and got recognition of Afghanistan as an independent sovereign state, no longer subject to Anglo-Russian rivalry. King Amanullah also sent his personal emissary to explore the establishment of friendly relations with other European countries and the US. Though there was no immediate show of enthusiasm by the US to respond to Afghanistan's desire to establish diplomatic relations between two countries, in 1934 President Roosevelt recognized the regime of King Zahir Shah. In a way, it seems that the visit of the Afghan Mission to the US in 1921, laid the foundation of Afghan-US relations which ripened into fruition subsequently.

Thus far, we find that the advent of US-Afghan relations before the II World War commenced on the basis of mutual desire for friendship and cordiality. Prior to I World War, both the US and Afghanistan were preoccupied with their regional and domestic roles. Random efforts were made by both the countries to forge closer relations. The subsequent period especially 1930s and 1940s marked a watershed in US-Afghan relations when both sides reciprocated positively to each other's friendly gestures. The beginning of the 1940s was marked by establishment of relations between Washington and Kabul at ambassador level. By the conclusion of the II World War, the US-Afghan relations had been founded on very firm basis.

AFGHAN-US RELATIONS AFTER II WORLD WAR:

The immediate period, following the World War II was marked by two significant factors; emergence of the cold war between the two

⁶ Bimal Prasad, (1968), The General Experience of Non-Alignment and its prospects for the future, New Delhi, p. 1.

superpowers; and breaking up of the colonial system. We find that, American political interest in the region enormously increased during these years. Oil wealth of the Arab countries became a focal point of Washington's policy. Soon after the War; the US policy of containing communism came to southwest Asia. Washington's policy to 'encircle' the communist countries, especially the Soviet Union and China was one of the agenda involved in the US policy making even though a consistent policy did not materialize. The US had already been involved in the Northern Tier Security since the day in 1947 when President Harry Truman requested the US congress for aid to contain communist guerrilla warfare in Turkey. Accordingly, to a certain extent, Washington assumed responsibility for Great Britain in southwest Asia when the latter withdrew from the India subcontinent in 1947.

The rivalry between India and Pakistan following partition greatly affected the American involvement in Afghanistan. In the subsequent years, it became clear that after 1947, the pivot of American policy was Pakistan, Afghanistan was a secondary factor. Over the years, Islamabad successfully convinced Washington that both India and Afghanistan were soviet satellites and that Pakistan was the only pro western country in the region. And, for that matter, Islamabad deserved American military and economic aid. Pakistan did get substantial aid from the US, but Afghanistan did not remain as a 'forgotten land' in the American strategic thinking. A careful analysis suggests that, Afghanistan had repeatedly sought American assistance on the military, economic, political and diplomatic fronts.

For the US containment policy, Afghanistan was strategically important. But at the same time, the US policy makers believed that this land locked country for geographical reasons was more or less vulnerable to the soviet pressure. When the US sponsored CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) in 1954, Washington tried to persuade Kabul to join. Vice President Richard Nixon visited Kabul in Dec, 1953

in connection with 'Afghanistan's neutrality, vitality and suitability as an ally'. He tried to convince Afghan rulers that 'an alliance with Pakistan and Iran (and with the US) would answer all Afghanistan's problems. Afghan neutrality, he meant, 'was equivalent to political leprosy'.⁷ However this could not bring about any understanding between the two nations. Undoubtedly, Afghanistan was interested in improving relations with the US, but, simultaneously, it could not afford to have any alliance with Washington which could annoy its northern neighbor – the Soviet Russia.

Daoud not only refused to join in the Western sponsored military alliance; he also criticized Pakistan for doing so. Daoud expressed the Afghan outlook in the following words: "Our whole life, our whole existence, revolves around one single focal point freedom. Should we ever get the feeling that our freedom is in the slightest danger, from whatever quarter, then we should prefer to live on dry bread, or even starve, sooner than accept help that would restrict our freedom".⁸ It is therefore suffice to say that Afghanistan pursued a policy of genuine non-alignment and maintained cordial relationship with the US. Despite the provocations of Cold War during the 1950s, Afghanistan did not join any military alliances nor allowed its territory to be used by either superpower against each other.

American policy makers also believed that Afghanistan was a truly non-aligned country in the cold war competition. In fact, Kabul was more inclined towards the west, especially towards the US, rather than the Soviet Union. Afghan leaders had a traditional fear of the soviet expansion in their region. Commenting on this afghan rhetoric, Secretary of State Dulles once remarked: "If Afghans are already so anti-Russian we don't have to worry about them".⁹ Even when the US sponsored 'Northern Tier' excluded Afghanistan for the above

⁷ Leo Mates, (1972), Non-Alignment: Theory and Current Policy, Belgrade, p. 22.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ N.P. Nair, "Non-Alignment: History, Ideology and Prospects," in Karunakaran (ed.) (1963), Outside the Context, New Delhi, p. 27.

mentioned reasons, and Kabul turned to Moscow for economic and military aid, there were reasons for the Americans to believe that the moves were tactical rather than ideological. So paradoxically, Afghanistan was not a soviet satellite by 1954; US 'presence' was very much there, and Afghanistan's non-aligned status remained.

The US believed that this position of Afghan neutralism would best serve its interest in the region because by then, Pakistan had become an American Satellite state, and had already joined several military alliances sponsored by the west. So, Washington viewed its political - military relationship with Islamabad as far more conducive than that of with Kabul. For the US, limited leverage in Afghanistan was taken for granted as maintaining its traditional buffer status between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. As early as late 1940, Iran had come under the American strategic sphere, a country that continued to be close to Washington up to 1979. With this, the American policy makers contented themselves on the ground that their interests in the Persian Gulf region would be fully protected.

Pakistan's joining of the American security umbrella undermined the Afghan request of military aid from Washington. This was so because of the continuous strained relationship between Islamabad and Kabul over their border disputes. To repeated afghan request for military aid, US officials cited a rapprochement with Islamabad as a crucial precondition. On the whole, it was not strategically threatening to the American interests in the region even if Washington did not give any military aid to Kabul.

But this did not mean that the US had ignored Afghanistan from its strategic sphere of influence. Over the years, Washington had kept an alerted eye on the soviet influence in Afghanistan, and even considered the prevailing 'Russophobia' as more tactical than ideological. Washington also continued its economic support and maintained a 'visible presence' in Afghanistan. The cold war

strategists feared that providing military aid to Afghanistan would be nothing but risking on escalation of the cold war with the USSR.

WAS THERE REALLY A THREAT TO THE U.S. INTERESTS IN THE REGION?

As stated earlier, Afghanistan fell under the American 'strategic compulsions' to contain the soviet communism first, and then, the Chinese communism. Afghanistan, as traditionally believed, was a 'cross road of Asia', and obviously a land of potential strategic importance. This idea had been developed in the strategic eye of America during World War II. And first time it was reinforced and made public in the US congressional hearing in 1951 when George McGee testified that, "Afghanistan is an important country of South Asia and its strategic location further augments its significance"¹⁰.

In view with its intention to keep Afghanistan under its influence, the US provided moderate aid for various developmental projects. In the initial years after the war, Washington moved slowly, but adequate economic aid started flowing from the early 50s. The purpose of this aid was to maintain Afghan neutrality, and possibly, to keep that country under the US sphere of influence, so that in case of future conflicts, it could be a 'military base' of the western powers against the Soviet Union and China. American aid was meant for the furtherance of these objectives. But the Soviet Union started supplying both military and economic aid about two times more than that of the US aid, so the latter maintained restraint from the competition with the former. But American aid continued up to 1979, when the soviets invaded that country.

In the wake of these developments, there emerged 'three schools of thoughts' within the US about the latter's policy towards Afghanistan:

¹⁰ George McGee cited in Peter G. Frank, (1960), Afghanistan between East and West, Washington, p.36.

- (1) One school opined that Washington should counter the Russia influence in Kabul.
- (2) Second school of thought was of the view that Afghanistan should be left to its own fate and in case it tilted towards the Soviet Union, it would be a warning to other non-aligned countries.
- (3) Third school of thought favored continuation of incremental help to Afghanistan. This view was highlighted by Hamilton F. Armstrong, the editor of prestigious quarterly *Foreign Affairs* in an article. Some military strategists in Washington regarded landlocked and remote countries like Afghanistan as just 'real estate' not worth spending little money or effort to help them preserve their independence. The author setting aside such calculation rather pleaded for more US economic and military aid for Afghanistan.

Despite such divergent views, some Americans still favored a positive US policy towards Afghanistan. Adam C. Powell told the House of Representatives that the Afghan Government had full faith in universal human rights and world peace. He further asserted that by remaining neutral during the two world wars, Afghanistan had earned admiration of world community which was evident from the fact that Kabul's admission to the UN in 1946 was done unopposed.

To further examine the nature of the American policy making in the context of the containment of communism in Afghanistan, keeping account of the regional actors, most notably Pakistan, we need to study the Afghan-US relations in the context of soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. We find that several factors contributed to a cautious US approach towards the Afghan resistance, most notable among them being the US readiness for a protracted proxy war with the soviets. It concludes that the strategic location of the country, and

the determination of the Afghan people for their independence, favored Washington more than any other factor in its policy making.

SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The country's turbulent history had fostered the development of traditional patterns of violence that performed specific roles in society; there was no modern tradition for war of great magnitude. No one predicted that the local, low-intensity rebellious of late 1978 would evolve into a war of national destruction that would change the course of world history.

Zahir Shah assumed power at a time when the external threat to Afghanistan was minimal. However, within the country there was a breakdown of state control and re-emergence of tribal power. The sources of revenue had diminished, as taxes on agriculture had declined. For development the country sought foreign aid. It had to look for an ally within close proximity of its frontiers. The withdrawal of the British from India, and the partition of the latter into two sovereign states, had left the infant state of Pakistan on its Eastern borders. The relations between the two turned hostile with the emergence of the issue of 'Pashtunistan', the home of the Pashtuns. This led to Afghanistan circumventing its dependence on Pakistan for access to the international market. Since transport route to Iran had not been developed, the only alternative was through Soviet Central Asia.

When Daoud became the Prime Minister in 1953 he accepted the Soviet offer of assistance. It led to international realignments in South Asia. As Rubin states, "India and Afghanistan received military equipment from the Soviet Union, which supported their position on regional issues, while Pakistan received similar supplies and support

from United States and, later, China.”¹¹ In 1954, the Soviet agreed to assist Daoud and they offered a \$100 million line of credit for development and other aid. After 1956, the US competed with the Soviet Union in offering development aid.¹² Till 1973, foreign grants and loans accounted for eighty percent of Afghan investment and development expenditure. As Fry remarks that ‘even to pay for the twenty percent of the projects earmarked for local financing or to operate for other projects, the Afghan government had lots of difficulties.’¹³ Afghanistan had, however, no control over its foreign aid and a sharp decline could precipitate an acute fiscal crisis in the state which did occur in 1966. Because of such dependence of Afghanistan upon foreign agencies, it has been termed as a ‘rentier state’ by Rubin.¹⁴

The impact of all the external aid was the proliferation of weapons in Afghanistan. Although foreign aid was also used to finance developmental projects like health, education, agriculture, transportation and communication, industry and mines, the accumulation of weapons led to the creation of large scale turmoil in the years to come. State building strategy of the government had a direct correlation with foreign aid, as the former’s role of a distributive agency was limited by the availability of foreign resources. The government had become more independent of the tribes, peasants and Ulema. The education system was now churning out newly educated intellectuals. These intellectuals had opposed any compromise that the regime sought to make with the traditional forces. Daoud invested heavily in the expansion of this class and widened opportunities for the teachers, bureaucrats and army officers. These people needed political forum for seeking Zahir Shah never signed any legislation which sought to legalize the political parties. However, the People’s

¹¹ Barnett R. Rubin, (1995), The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System, New Haven, p. 65.

¹² Ibid., p. 65.

¹³ Maxwell J. Fry, (1974), The Afghan Economy: Money, Finance and the critical constraints to Economic Development, Lei den, p. 158.

¹⁴ Rubin (1995), op. cit., p. 62-73.

Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) founded in 1965, tried to accommodate the grievances of the people. It was used effectively by Daoud.

Daoud had also appointed members of the PDPA to key posts in the army. These leaders were mostly Soviet-trained military officers. They belonged to the Parcham, (banner) faction of PDPA and had a tilt towards the Soviet Union. These intellectuals now began to struggle for state power. During the Cold War, the Soviet leaders supported communist movements in those countries whose non-alignment with the West served Soviet interests. Afghanistan was one such country to benefit from this policy. U.S. and its allies too gave aid to Afghanistan. There emerged tacit collaboration between the donors.¹⁵ The Soviet Union has become the largest aid donor. From 1956 to 1978 Soviet aid to Afghanistan had been "\$1,265 million in economic aid and roughly \$1,250 million in military aid" whereas the United States provided "\$533 million in economic aid."¹⁶ Afghan military elite were trained in the Soviet Union and the USA. Bradsher and Kakar have different figures; however, Bradsher puts the figure to 3,725 Afghan military officers trained in Soviet Union and 487 in United States. Kakar puts the figure to 7,000 trained in the USSR and Czechoslovakia and 600 trained in the US.

Afghanistan had exploited its geo-strategic location to secure foreign aid and support. The foreign economic aid was instrumental in financing the governmental expenditure. Every year from 1958-68, and again from the mid 1970s up to the withdrawal of the aid in 1991, about forty percent of the state expenditure came from foreign aid. The country had become in Luciani's term an "allocation state,"-a state where about forty percent of the state is dominated by oil or other foreign sources, or the state expenditure constitutes a

¹⁵ Louis Dupree, (1973), Afghanistan, Princeton, p. 526-30.

¹⁶ Henry S. Bradsher, (1985), Afghanistan and the Soviet Union., Durham, p. 24-25, 29.

substantial share of the GDP.¹⁷ Afghanistan, however, fulfilled only the first criterion and not the second one, as its state expenditure did not constitute a large share of the GDP.

Though the Soviet invasion was sudden the ground work had begun in the mid 1960s. The invasion rested on several assumptions about the Soviet ideology, its political system and its role as a global power.¹⁸ Its goal of world's socialist transformation, in particular through support of class wars and socialist and national liberation movements promoted her entry into international conflicts.¹⁹ The Soviet Union was optimistic about a Marxist-Leninist Revolution in the Third World societies where it had invested heavily. Thus geopolitical constraints coupled with geo-strategic factors had necessitated the Soviet action.

It is evident that over the years, it was American influence in Kabul that had alarmed the soviets; it was the Americans who started the 'game' first in the form of economic aid, not the Russians, it was Washington's struggle for supremacy in the region that had pulled Moscow into Afghanistan. Invasion of a country is obviously an extreme case; otherwise, Afghanistan could have been a 'cold war beneficiary'. If we analyze the American strategic stakes in Afghanistan in view of the Soviet penetration and the communist expansion in the region, the former's stand sounds more superficial and exaggerated than that of the latter. American power remained more influential, especially in Iran and Pakistan, than the Soviet power. Both Islamabad and Teheran joined the US sponsored security alliances and were known as the 'two pillars' in the region to further American objectives and protect its interests. On the other hand, despite soviet strategic interest in and substantial aid to Afghanistan,

¹⁷ Giacomo Luciani, "Allocation Vs Production States: A Theoretical Framework," in Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, (eds) (1987), Nation, State and Integration in the Arab World, Vol. 2, London, p. 49-82.

¹⁸ Rasul B. Rais, (1994), War Without Winners: Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition After the Cold War, Karachi, p. 86-87.

¹⁹ Richard Pipes, (1971), US-Soviet Relations in the era of Détente, Boulder, p. 135-214.

the latter pursued a policy of non-alignment, a policy that was more tilted towards the west than the east. So all the Northern Tier states—such as Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, had combined common borders on Soviet territory of over 2,666 miles and were under the American influence. All that Washington remained uncommitted with regard to Afghanistan was a direct security guarantee that it already had with the other two countries. Afghanistan's non-alignment policy had more to do with its leaders rather than the cold war warriors, the US and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet intervened to enable the Afghan Marxist regime. They charged that the US, China, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia sought to combine to destroy the Marxist regime in Kabul. The US had recruited Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan, into both Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). It was to develop as a 'northern tier.'²⁰ These strategic factors too had necessitated the Soviet reaction. The Soviets argued that the invasion introduced no change in the international situation and that the Khalq regime was thoroughly dependent on the Soviet support for more than a year and that Soviet Union had already been involved militarily. The change was however fundamental. The situation was altered totally. Overt aid had ensured Soviet influences in almost all sectors of Kabul's official life. Covert connections were almost entirely limited to the very small but rapidly growing segments of the modern educated class. These strategically placed leaders, who had been trained in the Soviet Union, were to assist in the days to follow.²¹

Three major events occurred during the first stage of Afghan War. First, a coup d'état in April 1978 overthrew Mohammad Daoud's nationalist regime and installed the fledgling communist party in power. Second, a rebellion, perhaps more reactionary than loyalist, broke out in the summer of 1978 in response to the coup and the new

²⁰ N.D. Palmer and H.C. Perkins (1985), *International Relations*, New Delhi, p. 583-4.

²¹ Newell and Newell, *op. cit.* p. 109-10.

government's radical reform program. Third, the Soviets intervened in December 1979, in response to the deteriorating position of Kabul government as the rebellion intensified and widened.

The Afghan War began with the communist coup d'état by officers in the army and air force on April 27, 1978. This event, now known as the Saur Revolution, developed out of unrest on both sides of political spectrum over Daoud's policies. Religious traditionalists were unhappy with his "modernization and centralization of authority, which threatened villagers' virtual autonomy."²² The PDPA, whose bitterly antagonistic factions Khalq and Parcham had ended their ten year split in a unification conference in July 1977, resented the steady erosion of its position that Daoud's distancing from the Soviet Union had caused.²³ In July 1978, after a rapprochement of one year, Khalq and Parcham split again. Open violence was kept to a minimum, however, and the independent-minded Afghan villagers ignored the promulgated reforms.

A disastrous symbolic move occurred with the introduction of the new national flag in October; the traditional Islamic green was replaced by communist red. It was quickly followed by the new policies regarding land reform, credit reform, marriages, and mandatory education for both sexes. As Richard and Nancy Newell noted:

"Any one of these programs, tactlessly introduced, would almost certainly have aroused a bitter reaction among most segments of the population. When they were introduced together as a package under the red banner of communism, the effect was catastrophic...Taken together, these reforms virtually guaranteed opposition. Their enforcement...was brought home by government servants who saw no virtue in using tact or diplomacy. Incidents of protest quickly mushroomed into local armed revolts."²⁴

²² Larry P. Goodson, (2001), Afghanistan endless Wars: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, p.55.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Richard S. Newell and Nancy P. Newell, (1981), The Struggle for Afghanistan, Ithaca, p. 73.

These reforms struck at the very heart of the socioeconomic structure of Afghanistan's rural society; indeed, their sudden nationwide introduction, with no preliminary pilot programs, suggests that this was their real purpose. The bases of authority in rural society were the family and the tribe or clan. Implementation of these reforms eroded the underpinnings of these bases of authority; consequently, it is hardly surprising that they were so fiercely resisted. When the Khalq regime signed a treaty with the USSR in December 1978, it made clear under whose patronage the restructuring of Afghanistan would occur. Thereafter, the rebellion spread rapidly and unremittingly.

Although the initial outbreaks of violence took place among the minorities, antigovernment activity spread rapidly among the Pashtuns, from whom the major early Mujahiddin groups developed. Most of the leaders split off from Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami party and acquired the support of local fronts. Pashtun activism was motivated by anger at the reform policies, abhorrence of the new government's manifestly anti-Islamic ideology, and desire for national liberation. By the spring of 1979, nationwide resistance to Khalq regime had developed. Without the preexisting ethnic tension and ill-timed government policies it is questionable whether the rebellion would have begun so suddenly or spread so vigorously.

Shortly before midnight on December 24, Soviet troops started landing at the Kabul airport; they were followed by troop landing at the air bases at Bagram and Shindand and the airport at Kandhar. By Christmas morning of 1979 the Soviets were in Afghanistan. On December 27, the Soviet forces attacked Darulaman Palace. The citadel was overrun after a night of vicious fighting, including the use of poisonous gas to overcome the defenders. By January 1, 1980, the Soviets had nearly eighty-five thousand soldiers in Afghanistan. They controlled the cities and governments, and their puppet Karmal was in power. The initial invasion of Afghanistan was a success.

US-AFGHAN RELATIONS SINCE 1979

The background for direct soviet military invasion had been laid down when Kremlin-backed communists seized power in Kabul through a coup by overthrowing the democratic regime of Sardar Mohammed Daoud. The soviet-backed communist coup was staged by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), under the leadership of Noor Mohammed Taraki.²⁵

It appears that paramount geopolitical considerations had to prompt the Soviet Union to intervene in Afghanistan. The Soviets wanted to prevent Afghanistan slipping into western side. During 1970s and '80s their important policy objectives in Asia were related to the Chinese influence in the region and counterbalancing the Americans. More importantly they wanted to block an eastward expansion of American imperialist influence. American policy was containment of communism and the 'evil empire' of Soviet Union. For the people of Afghanistan, the Soviet American rivalry caused immense hardships and suffering. Without political stability the country became highly impoverished, economic development obstructed. It gravely affected agricultural and food production-system remained crippled. Illicit drugs cultivation and trafficking thrived under this condition. All these factors created a situation wherein the basic rights of human security, especially that of women, are violated. Civilian population had to go through unendurable difficulties for a long time.

Later, the US responses became sharp and the invasion triggered a major reassessment of the role of US in the world.²⁶ The advent of the Russian-backed communist regime in Kabul was itself the harbinger of determination in the US-Afghan relations. The

²⁵ Hannah Negaran, "The Afghan Coup of April 1978: Revolution and International Security," *Orbis* Philadelphia, Vol. 23, no.1, Spring 1979, p.97.

²⁶ Beverlay Male, (1982), *Revolutionary Afghanistan: A Reappraisal*, London, p. 52.

beginning of the year 1979 was marked by increased Russian interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The brutal assassination of the US ambassador in Kabul, Adolph Dubs in February 1979 proved a last straw in the wind. The specific US response to Russian actions in Afghanistan was announced by President Carter in his message to the nation on 4 January, 1980.²⁷ Suggesting US measures in this regard mostly associated with various steps taken against Soviet Union. Though these measures received only partial support from US allies and other friendly countries, they certainly created discomfort for the Soviet Russia. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan had accelerated the process of reinforcements of same form of qualified globalism for the US policy.

The American response to the invasion became strong. The then President Jimmy Carter accused the Soviets of 'blatant violation of the accepted rules of international behaviour' and warned of 'serious consequences' if the Soviets did not withdraw.²⁸ But in reality America had conceded Afghanistan. The consequences were the boycott and embargo actions and the general chilling of US relations with the Soviet Union. Part of America's difficulty lay in the fact that it was geo-strategically disadvantaged due to Afghanistan's location. It had to offset this disadvantage by establishing strong ties with the other regional governments that feared Soviet invasion.²⁹ The Reagan administration which was dominated by the people, who were known for conservative views, brought about a new thinking in America's foreign policy toward the Soviet Union.³⁰ It is interesting to note that the administration put accent on anti-Soviet approach in general foreign policy making.

²⁷ Richard P. Cronin, "Afghanistan, Soviet Invasion and the US Response," Congressional Research Report, Washington, p. 4.

²⁸ Newell and Newell, (1981), op. cit., p. 194.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 195.

³⁰ Zalmay Khalilzad, "Afghanistan and the Crisis in American foreign policy," Survival, London, Vol. 22, no. 4, July-Aug., 1980, pp. 156.

But in the initial years, it did not believe that the soviets could be pushed back, and therefore, only continued a low-level program to the existence forces who were fighting against the communist regime in Kabul. It felt that by giving limited aid to the rebels, the fighting would continue for a indefinite period, and eventually, the soviet would negotiate with the resistance for a political settlement. Because from the very outset, the dominant positions of the conservative elements in the Reagan administration were successful in keeping the soviets in the defensive in the context of the superpower relationship. The US wanted to keep the Afghan issue alive in the superpower relationship, and a limited secret operation of the CIA continued. The demarcation line of American policy remained to be the non-recognition of the Kabul regime and increasing condemnation and support in the UN.

Basically, American policy during the first 4 years of the Reagan Presidency was based on four fundamental principles:³¹

- (1) Demand for the unconditional withdrawal of the soviet troops from Afghanistan;
- (2) Mobilizing world opinion against the soviet aggression;
- (3) Initiating UN condemnation, and, most importantly;
- (4) Supply arms and money to the resistance forces fighting the soviet controlled regime in Afghanistan, and for that matter, improving the US-Pakistan relationship. Besides this, the US continued its military build up in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region by upgrading the Rapid Deployment Forces into a central command.

Reagan administration moved slowly and developed a long-term strategy to compete with the Soviets in Southwest Asia. It was by the end of 1984; Washington had reached to a conclusion that the Soviet

³¹ USICA, "President Reagan's Afghanistan day Proclamation," Official Text, New Delhi, 29 Dec., 1981.

could be pushed back from Afghanistan. So the making of the policy towards the Afghan resistance had a broader meaning for the US, and the world community as well. It had greater repercussions in the international geo-political environment, which ultimately transformed the fate of Soviet Union and brought about a rapid change and by and large, a new world order.

The events around the Soviet American rivalry on Afghanistan during the decade of 'communism in Afghanistan' (1979-89) are significant to understand the US policies in Afghanistan. During this period, Americans made the Mujahiddin instrumental to defeat Soviets. To win the cold war, they aligned with militia groups with motivation and values alien to Afghans and their long-term security considerations. C.J. Chivers remarked in his article in *The New York Times* that the 1980s honeymoon between the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was given a new color in the mid 1990, and the brainchild produced was named Taliban.³² In fact, a popular perception emerged in the whole region that the US was allied with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in this effort, as in channeling aid and arms to the mujahiddin during the 1980s war against the soviets. The sudden surfacing of this new organization and continuous military successes in Afghanistan changed the cause of political configuration of the country and redefined the American policy towards the whole region including Pakistan, Iran and newly emerged Central Asian Republics. America discovered same kind of benefit in supporting the Taliban, which obviously led to a realignment of forces within the country and the region.

US-AFGHAN RELATIONS IN THE POST COLD WAR ERA:

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was one of the three most significant conflicts of the Cold War era, the others being the Korean

³² The New York Times, 1 Dec. 2001.

War in the 1950s and Vietnam from 1945-1975. Indeed, in many respects, Afghanistan eventually became the Soviet equivalent of America's Vietnam War. It was also the only Cold War conflict in which Soviet forces were directly engaged in full scale combat outside or at best on the periphery of what was generally acknowledged to be the Soviet sphere of interest. The impact of Afghanistan upon the Soviet Union, its armed forces-the army in particular-and the outcome of the Cold War was significant. Indeed, the eventual withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989 coincided with the year i.e. generally considered to be that in which the Cold War ended. But as events since 1989 have demonstrated all too clearly, another significance of the Soviet adventure against its neighbours in 1980 was the way in which it unwittingly aggravated the Islamic extremism that was already growing in strength throughout the region. This led not only to later sectarian problems in the former Soviet Union's predominantly Muslim Republics, but also enabled Islamic radicalism, and the excess and terrorism from which it is inseparable, to flourish virtually unimpeded in Afghanistan post 1989.³³ The evidence of this eventually manifested itself in the terrorist attack at New York on 11 September 2001.

There was a certain irony in this, as US military support for the guerrillas who fought the Soviet invaders was a decisive factor in the mujahiddin victory. Had Washington better understood the new threat then incubating in Asia and the middle east, whilst at the same time appreciating that the more familiar threat posed by communism was in decline, it might have modified its attitude and response to the Soviet invasion. All that it required was for the US to do nothing-political, economic or militarily.

The end of the Cold War has left the US in the most fortunate position. It is not entangled in any serious disagreement with any one major power. Two (Japan and EU) of the four leading powers are allies

³³ David Stone, (1990), Wars of the Cold War: Campaigns and Conflicts; 1945-1990, p. 250.

and 'locked in the US-led system in what has been called 'the zone of the democratic peace and prosperity.' With regard to the other two great powers (China and Russia), they are 'constructively engaged' with the US rather than collaborating with each other to 'challenge' or even 'contain' the US led system.

In post Cold War era, without communist hindrance to the advancement of the democratic peace and free trade, the US grand strategy for global dominance is increasing even further. The US strategy is 'freer' in its maneuvers and has been able to apply a multiple set of policies to change and adapt to the multiple changing conditions and circumstances of international politics and economic affairs. A widespread tactic had been Clinton's strategy of 'enlargement and engagement.' Whether directly or indirectly, the US has attempted to gather countries into the zone of peace and competitive prosperity. To others that do not wish to become 'engaged' the US has simply isolated them, which also means isolation from the international system as well. In the third strategy, such as applied to China, the US has played a combination of carrot and stick to influence the decision-making. These policies may seem inconsistent, but that is the nature of US policy that aims to preserve the US preponderant position in the international system. Via this strategic philosophy, the US has influenced and will influence the rising power, (Japan, EU, China, Russia, India and Turkish states) even more. In fact, the fear of being left out has made these powers into something rather like subordinate units of US power.

Behind this 'success' has been the US military, foreign affairs, economic, the US media, corporation and other apparatus too apply a multiple strategy of alliance to get the multiple interests of others into that of the US. On the global level, the US is the leading nation and leading promoter of the G-7 or G-8, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). On

regional arrangements, the US is member and leading advocate of North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In all these international regimes and institutions, the US is the main power, where major decisions are eventuated and accepted to be universalized, only with US approval. The US also has bilateral agreements with many countries across the globe i.e. Canada, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, South Africa, Chile, and many others on areas of mutual economic and multi interests. In some of these states, the reliance on the bilateral agreements with the US also means their very own survival, i.e., Kuwait, Israel, South Korea, Taiwan, Canada, and Mexico.³⁴ No one power has such an extensive range of complex associations and alliances than the US.

No single state in the world (historically) has effectively dominated the world, although the US is perhaps currently the closest to being labeled in this way. It has, however, been carefully discreet, so as not to be labeled as such. Yet, in the multidimensional nature of power, responsibilities and capabilities, the US position remains the most truly persuasive of the term 'hegemonic.' US is careful not to simply 'impose' its will on the international community, especially towards allies and other major powers. It recognizes that to do so would inevitably lead to resentment from them, and the US itself would eventually fall into the trap of being isolated. The US is not immune to retaliation, especially on financial and commercial issues. Instead, the US, since the end of the Cold War, has been active in 'promoting' and 'enlarging' the zone of economic liberalization and carefully selected political enlargement.³⁵ US leaders have been careful not to appear to be dominant, and careful to discern the concerns of others.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 285-87.

After the cold war, it was oil politics, which made Afghanistan significant in Central Asia. When oil interests of the US were once becoming favorable with the advance of Taliban, they saw it as a positive development. Despite reservations in the beginning, America started viewing the Taliban victory in Afghanistan as a positive development that can serve the American interests. George Monbiot, in 22 October 2001, wrote that the US oil company UNOCAL (Union Oil of California) had been negotiating with the Taliban since 1995 to build 'oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan and into Pakistani ports on the Arabian sea'.³⁶ America took more interest in keeping Eurasia and its large oil, natural gas and others resources under its custody and control once Soviet troops were withdrawn and the disintegration of Soviet Union completed. Their policy towards any regime in Afghanistan has been motivated by this primary objective. America wanted to extract the oil as well as other energy resources and export these back to USA. America also wanted to prevent any assertion of Russia and Iran as a major influence in the region. Pakistan and other regional players had their own calculations.

After the break up of Soviet Union, the US viewed the geopolitical thesis of Harold Mackinder and Nicholas J.Spykman (1997) that argues the importance of geographical location to determine politics.³⁷ The US saw in Central Asia, a key to the security of all Eurasia and assigned herself a new role in the region. The importance of Eurasia is voiced by many others. Zbigniew Brezezinsky, the former Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, stated: "Ever since the continents started interacting politically some five hundred years ago, Eurasia has been the center of world power. In different ways, at

³⁶ He cited Ahmed Rashid's authoritative book 'Taliban, Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia' as a source for this information.

³⁷ Harold Mac kinder as cited in K.B. Usha (2004), A wounded Afghanistan: Communism, Fundamentalism and Democracy, Shubi Publication, New Delhi, p. 3-4.

different times, the people inhabiting Eurasia-though mostly those from its Western European periphery- penetrated and dominated the world's other region as individual Eurasian states attained the special status and enjoyed the privileges of being the world's premier powers."³⁸

Another testimony that revealed the US interest is from the former Department of Defence official Elie Krakovski, who worked on the Afghan issue in the 1980s. He observed that Afghanistan remains important at present because it is the crossroads between what Mackinder called the world's heartland and the Indian subcontinent. It owes its importance to location at the confluence of major routes. A boundary between land power and sea power, it is the meeting point between opposing forces larger than itself. Alexander the Great used it as the path to conquest. So did the Mughals. An object of competition between the British and Russian empires in the 19th century, Afghanistan became a source of controversy between the American and Soviet super powers in the 20th century. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has become an important potential to opening to the sea for the landlocked new state of Central Asia. The presence of large oil and gas deposits in that area has attracted countries and multinational corporations...Because Afghanistan is a major pivot, what happens there affects the rest of the world.³⁹ It is obvious that geographical location of a nation is being subjected to utility by imperialistic interests.

In short, modernization and communist rule in Afghanistan ended in military defeat, strengthening of social fragmentation with a potential of slipping to new conflicts even after the initial conflict is resolved. This is evident from the post communist afghan scene of clash between power brokers in state and in society because of the non-state aimed organizations with strongholds in different regions and provinces that emerged during soviet backed communist regime.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

These political and military formations (and their sources of external support) are critical elements for determining the future of Afghanistan. Nation building, after soviet withdrawal, failed due to disunity among these elements and the incompatibility between the domestic state requirements and external stakeholders.

After soviet withdrawal, a common enemy was absent for militias and thereby developed a civil war between conflicting factions for power. A new force of fundamentalist or radical Islam, namely Taliban emerged in the country and captured power in 1996, filling this power vacuum. Their offer to refuge Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11 attacks on the US, made another entry point for the US in Afghanistan. This is done with a well defined geopolitical calculation meant for the control of the whole resources rich Eurasian region for which Afghanistan is a major strategic area.⁴⁰ The fall of Soviet Union in 1991, gave American the chance and arrogance of being the only superpower, which can police the affairs of the whole world. The strategic importance for the Eurasian region including Afghanistan is related to oil, gas and hydrocarbon and other natural resources vital for west. Wherever there is a resistance for the American advancement, their policy is pre-emptive strike on the pretext of democratization, disarmament, war on terror, search for weapons of mass destruction, regime change and so on, as it did in Iraq. These 'objectives' are under progress in Afghanistan since the American intervention, projected as primarily for Osama hunt in 2001.

Thus the Soviet invasion in 1979 and its failed military campaign in Afghanistan produced one of the most significant long term consequences of the Cold War. For, from the conflict in Afghanistan there emerged a new threat to world peace and security. Indeed, although the Taliban regime was finally removed by the US led military campaign in Afghanistan in 2002, the volatile nature of

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Afghanistan and its disparate peoples are such that true peace and democracy will probably continue to elude the country. Afghanistan's future remains almost as uncertain today as it has been during the last two three centuries.

One of the tragedies and historic failure of the final decades of the Cold War era has been the misinterpretation and distortion of many of the age old principles and teachings of Islam in certain countries. The consequence is that one of the world's great religions has gradually become even more closely identified with Arab nationalism and anti-Semitism, and with extreme anti-Western and anti-American movements. Finally, during the decades or so that has followed the end of Cold War, Islam is widely perceived to have become inextricably bound up with major acts of terrorism carried out on a global scale.⁴¹

The US, which had led the battle for the Afghans for about ten years, abandoned their cause at the end without addressing their basic issues such as the formation of a strong interim government, repatriation of the refugees and their rehabilitation, and the reconstruction of the country, which should have been of paramount interest to Washington. Ironically, instead it relinquished its role to the UN, whose efforts since 1980s had been singularly ineffective. Same influential policy makers, such as National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, held the view that the Afghan conflict was no larger a superpower clash by proxy. Instead, it was a civil war, and therefore American policy was harder to defend. American officials argued that the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in conjunction with the end of the cold war and collapse of the Soviet Union had all but eliminated the strategic aspect of the superpower game i.e. from the American perspective – soviet threat to the Persian Gulf.

One significant aspect of the Afghan war after the departure of the soviet troops was that it changed the political nature of the war. It

⁴¹ David Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

reignited the old social and political fragmentation on ethnic lines and took an explosive dimensions.⁴² Intra-groups fighting among the mujahiddin became the order of the day. They were no larger freedom fighters but warlords. The US simply wanted to walk away from this fluid situation and paid little attention of the internal civil war in the country. This also led to the curtailing of the US aid to the resistance. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the communism as a political ideology left hardly any option for Moscow to come to the assistance of any country including Afghanistan. And since that was the ultimate target of the US, and Afghanistan was merely a means to that end, Washington's attention was obviously diverted to the aftermath of the cold war and to the realignment of forces around the globe. From a strategic angle, Afghanistan no longer remained a buffer between the contending empires or alliance systems. What the superpowers left in Afghanistan was the huge quantity of modern sophisticated arms and millions round of ammunition that were used to kill each other. The Afghan war also facilitated the spread of opium production throughout a cash-starved and economically devastated society. Moreover the UN humanitarian efforts were also limited by danger of the security of the personnel, lack of a viable and stable government in Kabul, and failure of the US and other Western countries to fund most of the programs they had proposed.

There is no doubt that the partnership between the CIA and the Pakistan ISI proved highly successful in serving American strategic interests in the 1980s in ousting the soviet troops from Afghanistan. But one of the unintended consequences of this strategic alliance had nurtured a new breed of terrorists in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the best known of whom is Laden. Even the most sophisticated small arms became accessible in the bazaars of Peshawar and different semi-urban centers in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. This became a very important cause of violence and

⁴² Amin Saikal (2004), Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival, I.B.Tauris..

lawlessness in Pakistan and Afghanistan throughout the 1990s and exacerbated Islamic extremism and fundamentalism in the whole region.

For more than a decade in the 1980s, the US lavishly and unquestionably financed and armed fundamentalist, reactionary armed bands in order to make the Soviet Union pay a heavy price for its intervention. That was perhaps understandable as long as the fundamentalists were fighting against the Red army. But strongly enough, American support continued directly or through Pakistan, even after the fundamentalist's factions that benefited most from the US money supported Saddam Hussain in the 1991 Gulf War. The US could not realize that an Afghanistan under a thoroughly reformed Najibullah would make more sense than one under militant fundamentalists Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Washington gradually dovetailed the aid program and finally walked away from Afghanistan, thus leaving the country to the mercy of regional powers and fundamentalist warlords. US neither pressed harder for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict nor opposed the ISI's policy of emphatically supporting the Islamic extremists. A little more forceful, well planned, and concerted American effort might have averted the tragic civil war that spawned the Taliban and provided a heaven for the Saudi terrorist, Osama bin Laden. The US did not pay any heed to the Afghan civil war, because it could not 'discover' any strategic interest at stake in the region after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union.

In fact, it was during this period that Pakistan became the breeding ground of global terrorism that later haunted the US as a worldwide phenomenon. In retrospect, American officials admit that the US made a mistake in continuing to support the largely ISI-driven Pakistani policy on Afghanistan and in failing to shift gears sooner after the Soviet pullout. Richard Armitage, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for international security affairs commented, "We drifted too long in 1989 and failed to understand the independent role

that the ISI was playing"⁴³. But it is not that all the American policy making top brass was 'blind' about the Pakistani agenda on Afghanistan. One exception in this regard was the American Ambassador to the Peshawar based mujahiddin, Peter Tomson. Within a very short period of his appointment, friction quickly developed between Tomson and the CIA, which did not like his interference in an area that had been a CIA preserve for a long time. The Pakistani ISI also disliked Tomson, as the new ambassador openly criticized its support to the fundamentalist leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and instead urged increased help for the moderate elements like Ahmed Shah Massoud. Unfortunately, these kind of voices were not given due importance at that time, which only temporarily fulfilled the Pakistani agenda, but created a monster against the long term strategic interest of the US.

The US neither developed a concrete policy towards Taliban, nor took any initiative to contain the spread of Islamic military in the region and beyond. Unintentionally, it allowed its allies in the region to play their own game that proved disastrous in future. After the 1998 attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Washington's only agenda vis-à-vis Taliban was to 'get bin Laden'.

The Afghan civil war had obviously shaken up American strategic interests in the region. But as a very shortsighted, half hearted stopgap measures, the US tried its best to isolate the terrorist threat from the Afghan conflict. In the absence of a clear cut strategic policy for the region that could have helped mitigate the Afghan problem to a certain extent, Washington only depended on sanctions as a weapon to teach the Taliban a lesson. Under US leadership, the UN imposed two rounds of sanctions in November 1999 and December 2000 with dramatically isolating the Taliban. The December 2000 sanctions were particularly more significant because it took same drastic measures against the Kabul regime. It gave 30 days to Taliban

⁴³ Mohammed Khalid Maarooof (1987), Afghanistan in world politics: A Study of Afghan U.S. Relations, Gyan Publication.

to close down all terrorist camps and hand over bin Laden to the US. It also reinforced air embargo on the Taliban, froze their overseas assets, and restricted the travel of officials abroad among others. But it did not have any positive effect on the Taliban regime, and instead, led to negative repercussions on Afghanistan and its supporters in Pakistan, and enhanced the Taliban's prestige among Islamic fundamentalists in the region, and outside. With the support of all the fundamentalists' elements and terrorist groups, Taliban became more stubborn in their resistance to the UN sanctions and US pressure. The US never developed a new strategic framework for Afghanistan and the region and 'dealt with issues as they came up in a haphazard, piecemeal fashion, pursuing constantly changing single - issue agenda that were driven more by domestic American politics than the goal of ending the civil war'.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the US could not learn any lesson and failed to create a policy more congruent with American interests in Afghanistan and the surrounding area.

It is estimated that between 1982 and 1992 some 35,000 Muslim radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East - were trained under the mujahiddin.⁴⁵ Tens of thousands more foreign Muslim radicals came to study in the hundreds of new Madrasas (schools) that Zia's military government began to fund in Pakistan and along the Afghan border. French Scholar, Olivier Roy described it as 'a joint venture between the Saudis, the Muslim brotherhood and Jamait-i-Islami put together by the ISI'.⁴⁶

In camps near Peshawar and in Afghanistan, these radicals studied and trained, and forged tactical and ideological links that would serve them well in the future. These camps became universities

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Vijay Prasad (2002), War against the Planet: The Fifth Afghan War, Imperialism, and Other Assorted Fundamentalisms, Left Word Books, New Delhi.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

and defense colleges of Islamic fundamentalism. As Samuel Huntington puts it, “the war left behind an uneasy coalition of Islamic organizations intent on promoting Islam against all non-Muslim forces... it also left a heady sense of power and self confidence over what had been achieved and a driving desire to move on to other activities”.⁴⁷

Ahmed Rashid, the correspondent who had covered the region for a long time, explains the consequences of this heady sense of power. “Most of these radicals speculated that if the Afghan jihad had defeated are superpower, the Soviet Union, could they not also defeat the other super-power, the US and there own regime. While the US saw the collapse of the soviet state as the failure of communism, many Muslims, saw it solely as a victory for Islam”.⁴⁸ Al-Qaeda or military base was set up as a service centre for Arab – Afghans and their families and to forge a broad based alliance against the Russians. An Afghan has a strong will to live by one’s own local highly diverse traditions, standards and Islamic conviction. These are the characteristics which have made the Afghans cooperate against a common enemy as well as weakened it and created painful divisions inside. The divisiveness of the different Mujahiddin groups after the Soviet withdrawal clearly points out this fact.

Between 1994 and 1996, the USA supported the Taliban politically through its allies – Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, essentially because Washington viewed the Taliban as anti-Iranian, anti-*Shia* and pro western. The USA conveniently ignored the Taliban’s own Islamic fundamentalist agenda, its suppression of women and the consternation it created in Central Asia, largely because they were not interested in the larger picture. Though US had repeatedly denied by support for the Taliban, given the close involvement of the CIA with

⁴⁷ Samuel Huntington (1994), The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order, London, Penguin Publishers.

⁴⁸ Ahmed Rashid (2001), Taliban, Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, I. B. Tauris Publications.

Pakistan and the ISI throughout the 1980s, however, it is highly implausible that Washington did not know of or give tacit approval to the Bhutto government's plan for the Taliban.

The shift in Washington's policy became public in November 1997. Washington began to exert pressure on Pakistan over the Taliban's involvement in the heroin trade and the danger's of Islamic terrorism. The charge became complete in the US policy when in the aftermath of the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, the Clinton administration launched cruise missiles against Osama Bin Laden's training camps in Khost in Afghanistan. In August 1996, Laden had issued his first declaration of jihad against the Americans who, he said were occupying Saudi Arabia. Striking up a friendship with Mullah Omar, the Taliban's supreme leader, in 1997 Laden moved to Kandhar and came under the protection of the Taliban. It was the bombings of the US embassies that made Laden a household name in the Muslim world and the west.

Just 13 days after accusing Laden, the US retaliated by firing of 70 cruise missiles against Osama's camps around Khost and Jalalabad. In November 1998, the US offered a \$5 million reward for bin Laden's capture. The US accused Osama of every atrocity committed against the US from the beginning of the 1990s. What the administration failed to admit was its own role, mainly, through the CIA, in creating the 'demon' that posed a threat not only to the US but also too many countries including those from which members of the Al-Qaeda came. The USA was now paying the price for ignoring Afghanistan between 1992 and 1996, when the Taliban were providing sanctuary to the most hostile and militant Islamic fundamentalist movement the world faced in the post cold war era. Afghanistan had become truly a haven for Islamic terrorism. Had the horrendous event of 9/11 not occurred, the Taliban would still be ruling Afghanistan.

THE U.S. VIEWED BY THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

The views given in this section are important as they provide an insight as to why the US has generated fear and dislike in many countries across the globe. This section seeks to analyze the present International scenario from all perspectives related to both the superpower or superpowers on one hand, and the third world countries on the other hand.

The new world order, pronounced by Western leaders in 1989, was projected by same leaders as bringing into being a more stable and peaceful international order, one built on democratic values and the free market economy. The bitter antagonism between East and West, the nuclear confrontation, and the rivalry for strategic preeminence and ideological hegemony would all be left behind. In its place the Western powers would be able to work through the UN to create a world order reflecting democratic values and a deeper respect for human rights, wherein attempts to disrupt the new international harmony would be met by collective action channeled through international organizations. The so-called-end-of-history thesis was sometimes built into this perspective. The world was seeing the victory of liberal democracy; beyond that there would be no further political system that could evolve. Wherever liberal democracy was not yet established, it would be within the foreseeable future. There was, ultimately, no alternative system that could challenge it.⁴⁹

Although some of the optimism that pervaded Western government circles during the beginning of the 1990s may have diminished-replaced by a more realistic appreciation of the continuing problems in managing the world order –in some respects the earlier projections and hopes of Western governments have been realized. First, the threat of global war no longer dominates the consciousness of most Western publics. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union

⁴⁹ F. Fukuyama (1993), The End of History and the Last Man, U.K., Penguin Publications.

and the communist bloc, the international system is generally viewed in the West as more benign, less subject to dynamics that could lead to a nuclear confrontation.

Second, liberal democracy has spread. The number of countries operating multiparty systems has increased not only in Eastern Europe but also in Asia and Latin America. Moves toward liberal democracy in Africa and the Middle East have been more limited. In the case of the Middle East, indeed, the 1990s opened with new initiatives toward liberal democracy. Nonetheless, the emergence of functioning liberal democracies in most of Eastern Europe, the opening up of the political systems of Taiwan, South Korea, and Indonesia, the disintegration of apartheid in South Africa, and the strengthened credibility of liberal democratic systems in Chile, Argentina, and some other Latin American countries support the perception that the values of liberal democracy have spread.⁵⁰

Third there has been a well documented advance toward a global economic market. The 1990s saw the transformation to free market economies in the former Soviet Union and a worldwide trend toward economic liberalization, as well as the strengthening of global regulatory mechanisms that underpin and facilitate global trading. The structures of the World Trade Organization established in 1995 promote and expand the regulatory framework of the global market.⁵¹ It is significant, moreover, that the realm within which international financial institutions have sought to promote policy changes has steadily widened. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the objective was to achieve structural adjustment; in the late 1980s and early 1990s the objective was to achieve economic liberalization; in the mid-and late 1990s the concern was extended to cover good governance-deemed necessary if economic reforms were to achieve success. The criteria for

⁵⁰ L. Diamond (2000), *The Globalisation of Democracy* in F. Lechner and J. Boli, *The Globalization Reader*, Oxford, Blackwell, p. 246-254.

⁵¹ P. Hirst and G. Thompson (eds.) (1996), *Globalization in Question*, Cambridge, Polity, p. 129-143.

entry into the global economic market have, in practice, been made more rigorous in many respects.

Fourth, human rights considerations play a more significant role in international relations than they did before. The body on international human rights legislation has expanded, and governments have become more intent than before to act upon the legislation. There is also an increasing recognition of the close interrelationship between human rights, peace, democracy and development. The rights of minorities were given more specific recognition than before in the declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992.⁵² The right to development also attracted more attention than before. Such bodies as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and many more have helped to ensure that human rights issues remain at the forefront of popular concerns and that government must bear some cost in international esteem if they infringe upon basic human rights.⁵³

Fifth, the UN has expanded its international peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and security roles, guided in parts by the new concept of "humanitarian intervention."

A substantial part of the world's population, however, sees the New World Order in much less positive terms. And negative critiques of the political-economic order today are to be found in both Western and non-Western countries. There is a significant difference, however, in the manner in which Western and non-Western critiques are expressed. The former tend to describe the developments as the product of global forces that have damaging effects on all societies: a process of globalization-set in motion by the characteristics of international capitalism-that is increasing social and economic inequality nationally and internationally. Non-Western critique in

⁵² J. Symonides, "Human Rights: New Dimensions and Challenges," Paris, UNESCO, 1998, p. 89.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 5-6.

contrast, tend to associate the perceived negative aspects of the New World Order less with impersonal global forces and more with a rejuvenated Western dominance. The US is seen as a guiding force in, and the main beneficiary of, this reassertion of Western hegemony, the loss concentrated in the non-Western world. The New World Order, the, represents a new Western dominance, an imposition of the values and interests of Western governments and corporations of the world, not a move toward the harmonization of the values and interests of the world's different population groups.⁵⁴ The new dominance, within which the US is the critical hegemon, is not the 'benevolent global hegemony' as purveyed by some western writers but rather a malign hegemon.

The sense of insecurity is given substance by the increasing US use of "air strike diplomacy."⁵⁵ Initiated during the US bombing of Libya in 1986, it was later used during the Gulf War and then at regular, prolonged intervals against Iraq throughout the 1990s. Sudan and Afghanistan suffered air strikes in August 1998 in the wake of the US embassy bombing in Africa. The international position of the non-Western states is perceived as having weakened under the New World Order. During the Cold War, third world countries could maneuver between the antagonists, leveraging Western fears that they might align with the East to secure enhanced diplomatic or economic support or conversely, leveraging communist fears to obtain support from the Soviet Union. Since 1990 these countries have not been able to take advantage of this valuable diplomatic and political leverage. Their weakness in the international balance of power has been revealed more starkly than before.

This weakening is also seen as the key factor in the so-called new interventionism practices by the Western powers under US leadership.⁵⁶ It has enabled NATO to widen its concerns from Europe

⁵⁴ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilisations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, 1993, p. 22-49.

⁵⁵ S. Milne and R. Norton Taylor, "Air strike Diplomacy Ups the Odds," *Guardian*, 14 October 1998.

⁵⁶ J. Mayal, (1996), *The New Interventionism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

to the rest of the world within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. This new, wider role for NATO has also taken on a nuclear dimension. This military interventionism is accompanied by an increase in other forms of interventionism. Former US Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger has acknowledged this trend. In a 1997 issue of *National Interest*, Schlesinger pointed out that during President Bill Clinton's first term in office the US imposed new unilateral economic sanctions, or threatened legislative action to do so, sixty times in thirty-five countries representing roughly forty two percent of the world's population.⁵⁷

The edge of bitterness at the new US/Western interventionism is sharpened by the perception that principles associated with world peace are camouflage for maintaining the power of the US and its closest allies. In the Arab world, concern focuses on the use of these principles to strengthen Israel relative to its Arab neighbors. Early in 1999, for example, the US was reportedly intent on taking measures against Middle Eastern and Asian countries believed to be developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Sudan as Middle Eastern countries suspected of WMD development and needing to be watched were identified by the US Central Intelligence Agency, together with India, Pakistan, and North Korea. The omission from the list of Israel, whose WMD development was considerably more advanced than that of any other state listed, was noted by the Arab states. It was recalled, furthermore, that whereas considerable pressure has been exerted on all of the Arab states to sign the extension of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty in 1995, Israel was not asked to participate.⁵⁸

It is also widely believed that the UN has become a vehicle for Western interests. The perception is that where the institutions of the UN can be exploited to provide legitimacy to Western actions. Where they cannot be employed for Western purposes, they will be ignored,

⁵⁷ N.Aruri, "The United States Versus the World," *MidEast Mirror*, 12 March, 1998.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

as when NATO decided to use force in Kosovo. In the latter case, NATO for the first time took major armed action against an independent state-without the support of all five members of the UN Security Council-over government-sponsored repression within a state's internationally recognized borders.⁵⁹ NATO has now become the tool of intervention, "underpinned by whatever UN authority can be achieved to create a sense of an international community consensus."⁶⁰ However just or unjust the cause may have been, the action relegated the UN to a support role, undermining and distorting its assigned role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Arab world has been particularly affected by perceptions that UN structures and resolutions are used selectively for western purposes. The Security Council resolution that has set the framework for the sanctions regime in force on Iraq since 1991 reaffirms the Council's call for a nuclear-free Middle East, yet this matter has never been pursued with the only nuclear power in the Middle East: Israel. The rigidity displayed by the major western powers in seeking the implementation of Security Council resolution against Iraq and Libya is contrasted with the US refusal to allow Israel to be subject to severe criticism in any Security Council resolutions.

Programs of economic liberalization are perceived as bringing more benefit to advanced Western economies than to the countries forced to adopt them. Economic failure has opened the way for direct pressures to be exerted by Western governments and conditionality to be imposed by the international financial institutions. The perceived results, seen from the underside, have been the effective destruction of some economies (e.g., in Russia), the widening of the gap between rich and poor nationally and internationally, and the new dependence of the poorer states on the richer. This may be described as the "globalization of world poverty."⁶¹ The point is not simply that

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Milne and Norton Taylor, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ M. Chossudovsky (*The Globalization of World Poverty: Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms* (London: Zed Books, 1998.))

economic damage has been done to the economies concerned but that the Western economies have gained from the damage. The 1998 World Development indicators report also showed that whereas in 1990 some 14 million people in the transition economies of Europe and Central Asia had been living in poverty, by mid-1998 some 147 million people had fallen into that category-approximately one-third population. And rates of adult mortality in the region were worsening, not improving.⁶²

Finally, the manner in which human rights issues have been pursued is perceived as promoting US/Western hegemony. It is contended that Western powers have used their influence in international bodies to restrict the implementation of human rights legislation to those issues on which non-Western states are vulnerable, while neglecting rights that might impose obligations on Western governments i.e., the right to development, peace, a healthy environment, and environmental protection-all of which form an integral part of international human rights legislation.⁶³ Comparisons of human rights records, even those produced in the West, where primary attention is given to civil liberties rather than to the wider structures of human rights, do not rank the US highly.⁶⁴ The observer Human Rights Index of 1998 ranked the US as the ninety second worst offender out of a total of 196 states. Among affluent states, the US emerged as the second worst offender.⁶⁵

The New World Order, therefore, has provided the opportunity for sanctions to be imposed and created conditions for them to prove ineffective. On the one hand, the dynamics of the New World Order are such that leading Western powers have been able to orchestrate the imposition of UN sanctions. On the other hand, negative reactions to this Order (i.e., the view from the underside) destroy the international credibility and perceived legitimacy of sanctions.

⁶² World Bank, *World Development Indicators 1998* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1998).

⁶³ Symonides, *Human Rights*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Observer, 28 June 1998.

The states at the forefront of Western concern have been described variously as “pariah states,” “rogue states,” and “states of concern.” In the US, “pariah states” was the most usual epithet while Ronald Reagan was President, moving to “rogue states” in the 1990s, then to “states of concern” beginning in mid-2000. Of all these terms, “pariah states” probably reflects most accurately the manner in which the US government views them. Such states were deemed to be playing an international role that was not only disruptive to US interests but was also contrary to the norms and values of the international order. The “pariahs” had to be restricted and contained until domestic political change removed the leadership that had inspired the state’s delinquency. Perceptions of pariah hood, therefore, are of direct relevance to the imposition, implementation, and dynamics of sanctions regimes.⁶⁶

An ambivalent US policy towards Afghanistan and its allies in the region, transformed the Afghans from the cold war victors to tragic victims that ultimately led to the collapse of the Afghan state, its traditional society and the economy, and allowed all the disruptive and destabilizing forces to expand their network world-wide. American cold war strategy of declaring sanctions or rogue status – a short term punishment to a state that does not comply to its own terms – to a country did not work in case of Afghanistan as it comes about in other political societies.

America’s initial support to Taliban was mostly based on the assessment of its close ally in the region, Pakistan that was pursuing its own longstanding agenda in Afghanistan. Frantically, the US continually repeated the same mistakes despite having bitter experiences of their blind support and closer relationship with the Islamic fundamentalist leaders backed by the Pakistani ISI. Whenever there is a political upheaval in any country in the region, or the

⁶⁶ E.Herring, “Rogue Rage: Can We Prevent Mass Destruction?” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23, no. 1 (March 2000): 188-212; and N.Chomsky, *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs* (London: Pluto, 2000).

Americans perceived any strategic threat to their interests, Pakistan is brought to the limelight and the US strategists behave as if there is no alternative to Pakistani support in the whole of South and Southwest Asia. This American tendency has given rise to more anti-Americanism in Afghanistan and the surroundings region, rather than furthering same short-term American strategic interests.

At the end of the Second World War and until 1949 the US could in theory have carried out an atomic first strike against the Soviet Union, or any other state with policies contrary to those of Washington; for until the Soviets acquired the atom bomb the US enjoyed a situation of global military pre-eminence unique in the history of modern warfare. Not surprisingly, Washington chose not to use this temporary strategic advantage, and the rest became the history of the Cold War. Since the end of the Cold War, however, a comparable situation has occurred. The demise of the Soviet Union and the slow progress of the other states towards the great power status have left the US as the only superpower, and thus it once again occupies a position of military pre-eminence.

Today, the US an exception to the general trend of reducing defence capability although the one thousands of casualties sustained in the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack was a high price to pay for the wake-up call that altered Washington to the need to reverse that policy. The US has already demonstrated in Afghanistan that-while allies and coalitions are a welcome bonus-it is today more than ever before in its history prepared to act alone to restore issues affecting its national sovereignty and security. The assumption, moreover, that the West can rely upon the American security umbrella indefinitely and free of conditions would be wrong. With no sovereign superpower to check and balance US policies and actions, the burden of responsibility borne by today's White House administration is probably greater than at any time since 1949.

CHAPTER III

THE TALIBAN MOVEMENT: IDEOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

ORIGIN OF TALIBAN:

By the year 1992, the Afghans were tired of the civil war. The communist regime of Najibullah had been forced to quit. But the majority of the people had lost faith in their leaders, who made or broke alliance overnight.¹ By 1994 bitterness against the Tajikdominated Burhanuddin Rabbani regime had increased. The Pashutun-dominated south was hostile against Rabbani as wanton killings and near famine conditions had imposed a lot of hardship upon the Afghans. But the contradictions within the Pashtun mujahiddin leadership had weakened them. Although Durrani Pashutun had led none of the seven Peshwar based parties, the madrasa-educated Jamait talibs were determined to end the internecine violence and fighting.

The popularity of the Afghan mujahiddin had not only waned but also law and order situation and order situation had worsened. As a result gangsters had begun extracting money and the numerous warlords leveled taxes on passangers and goods passing through their area. According to one source there were as many as seventy-one checkpoints between Chaman and Heart alone.² Many mujahiddin were alleged to even indulge in corruption, looting, drug trafficking and atrocities on women. Kandhar, the traditional seat of Durrani Pashtuns, was badly affected. The Ulema, who valued the ideals of Islamic history and worked within the broader paramerters of traditional Afghan tribal structures like the Jirga were accommodating towards then ethnic minotiries.³ But the nIslamists not only denigrated the tribal structures, they also pursued a radical political ideology and sought to bring about

¹ Kamal Maninuddin (1999), The Taliban Phenomeneon: Afghanistan 1994-1997, Oxford University Press, Karachi, p. 22.

² Ibid., p. 23.

³ Ahmed Rashid (2001), Taliban, Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, I.B. Tauris, London, p. 19.

an Islamic revolution in Afghanistan, and also globally. The traditionalists and the Islamists had fought each other mercilessly and by 1994, the traditional leadership in Kandahar had been virtually eliminated, leaving the field free for the new wave of even more extreme Islamists – The Taliban.

The mujahideen who had fought the Soviets were appalled by situation in Kandahar. A few had gone back to pursue their studies at the madrassa in Pakistan but many wanted a radical change in the situation. Mullah Mohammed Omar, born in Noden village near Kandahar into a poor, landless peasant family of Hotak tribe, the Ghilzai branch of Pashtuns had began to mobilize a small group of students to fight for change.⁴

The education, which the talibs, students, received in the madrassas from semi-educated maulvis had turned them into religious fanatics.⁵ These talibs believed that none of the Afghan leaders were eager to establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan. Mullah Mohammed Omar, a jihad veteran who had fought under commander Nek Mohammed Of Hizb-e Islami (Khalis),⁶ decided to give up his studies and work toward achieving the objective of bringing about peace by evicting the pro-communists.⁷ He endeavoured to introduce Islamic values in Afghanistan.

Mullah Omar then began to mobilize support for his mission. When about fifty students had joined him he apprised them of his objectives, but told the group that he had neither money nor weapons to offer them. Then Haji Bashir a muhajid commander of Hizb-e-Islami

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ Zerb-e-Momin quoted in Matinuddin, n.1, p. 24.

⁶ Rashid, n. 3, p. 24.

⁷ Matinuddin, n.1, p. 25.

(Khalis) opened up his armoury and gave Omar both vehicles and weapons. The Taliban movement had begun and the newly created political fraction was christened Tehreek-e-Islami-I-Taliban Afghanistan.⁸ Within a few days Omar emerged as a Robin Hood figure, helping the poor against the rapacious commanders. His prestige grew because he asked for no reward or credit from those he helped. But he demanded that they assist him to set up a just Islamic system.

Meanwhile, in September 1994 Pakistani surveyors and ISI officers had discretely traveled the road from Chaman on the Pakistani border to Herat, on a survey. The Pashutun-born Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar had visited Chaman the same month. However, the Kandahar warlords viewed the plan with mistrust and suspected that Pakistanis desired to intervene militarily to crush them. Nonetheless, the Pakistanis began negotiations with the Kandahar warlords, and Ismael Khan of Herat bypassing the Rabbani regime. The talks revolved around facilitating the flow of traffic through to Turkmenistan. In September 1994 Mullah Mohammed Rabbani, a founding member of the Taliban visited Kabul and held talks with President Burhanuddin Rabbani. The isolated Kabul government desired to support any new Pashutun outfit that could oppose Hikmatyar, in its own interests. Hikmatyar had been shelling Kabul and Rabbani promised to help the Taliban with funds if they opposed Hikmatyar.⁹ But on 12 October 1994 some 200 Taliban from Kandahar and Pakistani madrassas, divided into three groups, and captured Spin Baldak. The rout of the Hizb-e-Islami garrison under Mullah Akhtar Jan by the well-organized and disciplined Taliban was over in two hours.¹⁰ In the operation only one Taliban died while seven

⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

⁹ Rashid, n.3, p. 26.

¹⁰ Anthony Davis, "How The Taliban Became a Military Force," in William Maley (Ed.) (2002), Afghanistan and The Taliban: The Rebirth of Fundamentalism? Penguin Books, New Delhi, p. 45.

Hezbis were killed and many wounded.¹¹ The Taliban seized the Pasha arms depot, which had huge munitions dump.¹² With the capture of Spin Baldak and Pasha arms depot Taliban had seized some 18,000 kalashnikovs, dozens of artillery pieces, a huge quantity of ammunition and many vehicles.¹³

The goals of the Taliban can broadly be categorized as : write in different lines or points. (i) to disarm all the rival milita and warloards, (ii) to fight against those who did not give up arms, (iii) enforce Islamic laws in the areas they had 'liberated' and (iv) retain all the captured areas.¹⁴ To realize their goals an effective leadership was a pre requisite. The prominent leaders who had joined the Taliban were: Sheikh Haji Moawin Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, Sheikh Haji Mullah Mohammad Shahid, Sheikh Mullah Mohammad Hassan, Mullah Borjan and Haji Ajmir Mohammad Agha. All the leaders were the former members of the Yunus Khalis faction of the Hizb-e-Islami. Mani others like Shiekh Nuruddin Turabi, Ustad Sayaf, Mullah Abbas, Shiekh Mullah Mohammad Sadiq, Shiekh Abdus Salam Rocketi, from Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's Ittehad-e-Islami, had reinforced the Taliban. Sayyed Hamid Gilani, chief of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) stated that NIFA commanders sought his permission to join the new band of black-turbaned Islamic worriors to bring peace in Afghanistan.¹⁵

¹¹ 'Rout of the Warlords' Newline, November 1994.

¹² Pakistani, Intelligence Officer quoted in Davis, n.15, p.46.

¹³ Rashid, n.3, p.28.

¹⁴ Matinuddin, n. 1, p.26.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.27.

Ideology practiced by Taliban and its political advance

Accounts in the mujahideen journals produced during the jihad by the various parties of the lives of commanders reveal that a majority came from small-town religious backgrounds. These commanders demonstrated a particular zeal and leadership qualities. Similarly, the students educated at the Pakistani madrassas run by the Jamiat aspired to leadership positions in a society that accords age and experience tremendous weight and respect. The Pashtun of Jamiat like the Taliban belongs to the Durrani Pashtun tribe. These children of the jihad were tutored by semi-educated maulvis. The Jamiat activists, ardent Deobandis, follow the fundamentalist reformist sect, which interprets Islam, particularly its injunctions against women, extremely strict.¹⁶ The Deobandi tradition is opposed to the tribal and feudal structures of Pakistani society and believes in egalitarianism. Moreover, the Deobandis have a deep-seated antipathy against the Shiite Muslims, who are viewed as unbelievers. The Taliban, with their limited exposure to the world and arriving in Jamiat run madarssas and taught by narrow-minded village mullhas, soon become ardent Deobandis.

However, there remained to difference. The Taliban's interpretation of Islam was tempered with the Pashtunwali – the tribal code of the Pashtuns and was primitive to the extreme. While the Jamiat forbade any political role for women, under the Taliban the dignified place for women in Afghan society was their home. They sought to define the role of women in the complex Afghan without matrix. Afghan society has liberal, conservative and orthodox elements. When Afghan rulers tried to introduced radical reforms like abortion of the veil, introduction of western dress for women, the deep-rooted Islamic values and tribal

¹⁶ Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan and the Taliban," in William Maley (Ed.) (2001), Afghanistan and the Taliban: Rebirth of Fundamentalism, Penguin Books, New Delhi, p.75.

traditions did not permit these changes. But the actions of the Taliban leaders and their views on various social issues put them into the category of 'extremists'.¹⁷

The religious training the talibs received reinforced their belief that departure from orthodox Islamic practices was evil and unislamic. The Taliban movement comprised of different strands of thought ranging from extremist to relatively secular backgrounds. Maley compares the movement to the Kandhari Pailuch brotherhood, which had been involved in anti-modernist disturbances at the instigation of conservative clerics in Kandahar in 1959.¹⁸ Ideologically, the Taliban's brand of Islam was fundamentalist as its members defined faith in absolute terms and literalist manner. According to Parekh, fundamentalism presupposes a separation between religion and society; the existence of a single sacred text of a set or texts organized in hierarchical manner; direct access for the believer to the text or texts; and authority within the religion for using the state to enforce religious identity. The Taliban like the fundamentalists accept no separation of religion and politics and interpret the texts in the light of political objectives seeking to challenge and change the world.

The ideology of the Taliban, based upon puritanical attitudes, found favours with the Saudis. However, their anti-Shia bias alarmed Iran. Discordant voices and criticisms came from the Iranians who along with the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks perceived the rise of the Taliban as an attempt to reintroduce Pashtun hegemony in Afghanistan. The critics alleged that the Taliban's policy was primitive extreme and fundamentalist. In fundamentalist movements, the role of leadership becomes important as all the sources of authority emanate from him.

¹⁷ Matinuddin, n.l, p. 34.

¹⁸ William Maley, "Interpreting the Taliban," in William Maley (Ed.) (2001), Afghanistan and the Taliban: Rebirth of Fundamentalism, Penguin Books, New Delhi, p. 15.

A fundamentalist movement requires an authoritative leader not only to interpret the sacred texts but also for guidance. His authority is displayed by his super ordinate role in the organisation vis-à-vis his followers.¹⁹ In practice fundamentalism entails loyalty not so much to a particular doctrine as to a particular leader. In Afghanistan the fundamentalist movements has been built around men like Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab to Gulbuddin Hikmetyar.²⁰ The leadership become crucial because of low level of political institutionalism.

In the Taliban movement a special status was accorded to the leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. He got identified as the Amir al-Momineen (Leader of the Faithful), by his followers. Mullah Omar had reportedly shown the Cloak of the Prophet Mohammad (Khirqe-e-Mubarak) to his followers and symbolized his legitimate authority.²¹ Thus through the symbolic use of religion he exploited the sentiments of the masses in pursuit of political objective. The leadership helped the Taliban to transform into a potent political force. Ahmad Rashid has remarked that the Taliban leadership was the most physically handicapped (physically challenged) leadership as most of his to leaders carry physical deformities sustained in the course of the jihad.²² But such wounds enhance a leader's credibility since it demonstrates that the leader had personally sacrificed for the cause of religion in his fight against the infidels.

The leadership of a movement is responsible for mobilizing followers and strengthening the organizational resilience in times of adversity. That the Taliban movement survived for so long tells us

¹⁹ E. D. Watt (1982), Authority, Croom Helm, London, p.68.

²⁰ David B. Edwards, "Summoning Muslims: Print, Politics and Religious Ideology in Afghanistan," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.52, no.3, 1993, p. 609-628.

²¹ Tim Mc Girk and Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'Mullah with a Mission,' Times, 31 March 1997.

²² Rashid, n. 3, p. 8-12.

something about the nature of the movement survived for so long tells us something about the nature of the movement and its leadership. Internally, for a good part, a social movement activates people and allows its member to pursue collective action without possessing much resource base. But then factionalism renders defection possible,²³ and the movement may be exposed to competition and repression. Further the resources supplied by external backers permit movements to construct prudential support based on clientelism and patronage. The loss of such support can devastate the movement. Therefore the role of the leadership assumes importance for it not only seeks to manage the cohesion in the movement but also makes the movement less vulnerable to outside interferences. The Taliban leader Mullah Omar and his immediate subordinates coordinated the actions of the Taliban movement and also helped create a hierarchal structure for better command and control of the movement.

The Taliban leadership, with the support of the outside agency, organized a full-fledged fighting force. Training was imparted to the recruits that helped them operate sophisticated military hardware.²⁴ The logistics required to sustain the conflict came from the benefactors of the movement, the troika – United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The leadership also had its aims and objectives which was as restoration of peace, collection of weapons, implementation of the sharia.

The Taliban leaders called their movement a jihad. According to Mullah Syed Abdullah, the then Taliban Governor of Khost, 'the Jihad is against sins, corruption, and cruelties'.²⁵ Mullah Omar wished to recreate the times of the Khulfa-e-Roshideen by emphasizing upon

²³ Sidney Tarrow (1994), Power in Movement: Social Movement, Collective Action and Politics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 23.

²⁴ Matinuddin, n. 1, p. 40.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

equality to all citizens and simplicity in leading one's life. To oust the Rabbani regime from Kabul was their political mission for they believed that Rabbani was holding on to power in spite of his term having been expired in October 1994. They also considered the Rabbani government to be the main stumbling block in the restoration of peace. The Taliban for all the killings and destruction in Afghanistan and the Taliban sought to oust him from Kabul, too, blamed Ahmed Shah Masood.

ETHNIC CLEANSING UNDER THE RULE OF TALIBAN:

As the Taliban began their journey to root out evil from Afghan society, the other interested parties for whom the uncertainties of the civil war had meant a staggering loss of revenue helped them. The primal puritanical force comprised of mainly the young who had no memories of the past and were the orphans of the war. They were rootless, restless and jobless. They had no understanding of their own society – the tribes, the elders, the neighbours – or the complex ethnic mix of peoples that made up their villages and their homeland.²⁶ Moreover, they had willingly gathered under an all-male brotherhood that the leadership had created and transformed it into a disciplined cadre to act as a force of national redemption. The talibs had grown to maturity on the gruel of orthodoxy, estranged from the mitigating influence of women, family, village and tribe. And firmly believed that women had to be veiled to prevent sin from being spewed into society.²⁷ As a natural corollary the talibs regarded the graduates of their course – the mullah as their natural officer and leader. The title mullah was thus, invoked to stress seniority and became inseparable from the movement's corporatist image. The title had as much connection with spiritual integrity, as the term comrade with solidarity.

²⁶ Rashid, n. 3, p. 32.

²⁷ Michael Griffin (2002), Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan, Pluto Press, London, p. 60.

After the chaotic and anarchic Pashtun-south had come under the control of the movement, the Taliban began their northward march reinforced by new recruits and a simple belief in a messianic, puritan Islam. Untrained for anything, save fighting, they were what Karl Marx would have termed Afghanistan's lumpen proletariat. By January 1995 the movement had battled and bribed to control the Helmand province.²⁸ They continued westwards and reached Dilaram on the Kandahar – Herat highway. At the same time they moved north towards Kabul, easily slicing through the Pashtun belt where they met with more mass surrenders rather than resistance. Gulbuddin Hikmetyar was worried by this rival Pashtun force sweeping up from the south and tried to halt the Taliban while at the same time launching massive rocket attacks against Kabul. On 2 February 1995, the Taliban captured Wardak, just 35 miles south of Kabul and Kikmetyar's bases around Kabul came under threat for the first time. On 14 February 1995 the Taliban captured Kikmetyar's headquarters at Charasyab and the latter's troops fled to Jalalabad.²⁹

Ahmed Shah Masud was fighting the Sha Hazaras of the Hizb-e-Wahdat. He met the Taliban commanders Mullahs Rabbani, Borjan and Ghaus at Charasyab and tried to buy time. The Taliban then negotiated with the Hazaras.³⁰ Masud had decided to deal with his enemies one at a time and first he launched a blitzkrieg against the Hazaras, driving them out of Kabul. The desperate Hazaras cut a deal with the Taliban, yielding their heavy weapons and positions to them. But in ensuing handover and melee, the Hazara leader Abdul Ali Mazari was killed while in Taliban custody.³¹ The death of Mazari condemned the Taliban in the eyes of the Afghan Shias and their main patron Iran. A

²⁸ Rashid, n. 3, p. 33.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

³¹ Ibid., p. 35.

bloody ethnic and sectarian divide, between the Pashtun and Hazara, Sunni and Shia bubbling just below the surface now came into the open.

Withal, Masud launched another offensive, pushing th Taliban out of the city that left hundreds of Taliban dead. This loss revealed the Taliban's weak military structure and poor tactics. The defeat in Kabul came as a major blow to the aliban's prestige. Earlier, sustained income form the drug trade, the transport business and external aid from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had ensured their majestic march and surrenders were facilitated by pure cash incentives.³² After the loss, the Taliban then turned their attention to the west in a bid to capture Heart. When Nimroz and Farah fell, Masud's aircraft bombarded the Taliban frontlines that resulted in heavy casualties on the Taliban. By the end of March 1995, the Taliban had been decisively pushed back and their political and military leadership was in disarray.

But the Heart commander, Ismael Khan, also faced problems. He had disarmed the population and created an unpopular conscript army. He also made a serious military miscalculation. Believing that the Taliban had suffered insurmountable defeat and were on the verge of disintegration, he launched an ill-prepared and badly timed offensive against them. To meet Ismale Khan's threat, the Taliban quickly mobilized some 25,000 men, many of them fresh volunteers form Pakistan.³³ By the end of August the Taliban and pushed back Ismael Khan's forces of Shindand. Two days later the Taliban mobile columns swept through and Ismael Khan abandoned Heart, fleeing with his commanders and several hundred men to Iran.³⁴ Their morale boosted by the victory, the Taliban launched another attack on Kabul during

³² Ibid.,

³³ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁴ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby (1998), Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, Harper Collins, New Delhi, p. 183.

October and November. Masud counter-attacked and pushed them back. But the Taliban persisted and tried to devise other means to conquer Kabul, weakening Masud's front lines by bribes rather than tank fire.³⁵

Despite their defeat at Kabul, the Taliban remained a potent force. But many outside the country realized that the Taliban were not strong enough, militarily to take Kabul, nor could Masud capture Kandahar. A Shura was held in Kandahar. It discussed issues such as the political and military future, how best to impose the Sharia law and the future of girls' education in Taliban-controlled areas. Pakistani officers were there to monitor the Shura, including the Pakistani ambassador to Kabul, Qazi Humayun and several ISI officers such as Colonel Imam, Pakistan's Counsel general in heart. A core group of Kandaharis then nominated Mullah Omar to become the 'Amir-ul Momineen' or Commander of the faithful, an Islamic title that made him the undisputed leader of jihadi and the Amir of Afghanistan. On 4 April 1996, Omar appeared in public wrapped in the Cloak of the Prophet. People applauded and acknowledged him as their commander. This Oath of allegiance or 'baiat' confirmed Omar's status and it was also a political masterstroke. The Shura ended with the Taliban declaring a jihad against the Rabbani regime. Consequently, it was declared that the final decision on allowing women to be educated could only be tackled "when there was a legitimate government in Afghanistan."³⁶

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia stepped up the arms supplies to the Taliban with Pakistan also providing a new telephone and wireless network for the Taliban. Pakistan then refurbished Kandahar airport and helped out with spare parts and armaments for the Taliban's air force and continued to provide fuel, money, food and ammunition. The Saudis

³⁵ Rashid, n. 3, p. 42.

³⁶ AFP, 'Ulema Declare Jihad Against Rabbani,' The Nation, 4 April, 1996.

provided money and hundreds of new pick-ups to the Taliban.³⁷ The US assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphel arrived in Islamabad to review US policy towards Afghanistan. On 19 April 1996, Raphel visited the three centers of Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif and later the Central Asian capitals. Raphel stated that the objective was to restore peace in Afghanistan and make the warring combatants talk. She emphasized that economic opportunities could be missed if political instability persisted.³⁸ However, the US remained sceptical that the Taliban would conquer Kabul in the near future. Raphel had described the Taliban as highly factionalised, inexperienced, lacking strong leadership and inept at administration while their obstinacy had alienated other factions.³⁹ US reluctance to support the Taliban was influenced by Pakistan's failure in creating an anti-Rabbani alliance.

Camping outside Kabul, the Taliban launched rockets into the capital. The rocket attacks were punctuated by frequent ground assaults against Masud's front lines south and west of the city. "The Taliban's stubbornness in refusing to cut deals with other warlords frustrated the Pakistanis, but finally it appeared to pay off when the Taliban persuaded Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to back another major bid to capture Kabul before the winter,"⁴⁰ writes Rashid. Then the Taliban launched their surprise offensive on Jalalabad on 25 August 1996. There was panic in Jalalabad and the Shura fell apart. Pakistan allowed hundreds of armed Taliban supporters to join the Taliban.⁴¹ After much killing and fighting Mullah Borjan drove into Jalalabad. Within the next few days the Taliban columns captured the three eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman

³⁷ Rashid, n. 3, p. 45.

³⁸ AFP, Bagaram, 'Raphael says US interests in Afghanistan increasing,' The Nation, 20 April 1996.

³⁹ AFP, Washington, 'US wants Peace, stable Afghanistan,' The Nation, 11 May 1996.

⁴⁰ Rashid, n. 3, p. 48.

⁴¹ Ibid.

an Kunar and on the night of 24 September 1996 they moved on Sarobi 45 miles from Kabul and the gateway to the capital.

The Taliban did not pause to regroup and moved on to Kabul massoud had ordered a general withdrawals to evacuate the city. But according to Davis “the most decisive elements of the Taliban triumph went far beyond morale. These were planning; impressive command – and – control and intelligence in a fluid tactical situation; unfailing logistics supports; and unrelenting, overwhelming speed.”⁴² Examining the victory Davis has stated “this was mobile warfare at its most effective. To suggest that semi-literate Taliban commander whose military experience had never extended beyond the hit-and-run attacks of guerrilla warfare could have risen to this level of planning and execution defies belief.”⁴³

It clearly revealed that the covert Pakistani support for the Taliban had been fundamental in its expansion as a regional and then a national force. In Kabul the Taliban hanged the former president Najibullah and his brother dragging them out from the UN diplomatic compound. Then the leadership sought to bring about ‘changes from above’ and issued decrees on a range of social issues which produced widespread if nonetheless muted consternation.⁴⁴ According to Rashid, Najibullah’s execution was the first symbolic, brutal act by the Taliban in Kabul which was premeditated and designed to terrorize the population.⁴⁵ There was widespread international condemnation of the murder, particularly from the Muslim world. The Taliban had not only humiliated the UN and the international community but also embarrassed their

⁴² Anthony Davis, “How The Taliban Became a Military Force,” in William Maley (Ed.) (2002), *Afghanistan and The Taliban: The Rebirth of Fundamentalism?* Penguin Books, New Delhi, p. 68.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68-69.

⁴⁴ Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur to the United Nations, “Final report on situations of human rights in Afghanistan,” (United Nations: E/CN. 4/ 1997/ 59, 20 February 1997), p. 32-36.

⁴⁵ Rashid, n. 3, p. 50.

allies, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The identity of Najibullah's killers remained some what mysterious. Maley has remarked that ethnic Pashtun members of the Kalq communist faction had infiltrated the Taliban and since they had been notoriously hostile to Najibullah, they killed him.⁴⁶ We killed him because he was the murderer of our people the Taliban leader said later from his base, Kandahar. But Najibullah's execution had resulted in a public relations disaster. On 1 October 1996 the new deputy foreign Minister of the Taliban, Shere Mohammad Stanakzai told journalists, "under his leadership, our country was destroyed. It was the anger of our people that killed him" He pledged to bring the killers to book.

The Taliban "then set about imposing their vision of Islamic propriety upon Kabul's population."⁴⁷ As in Herat, the first official edicts focused on the rights of females and the issues of public decency and morality, Radio Kabul was renamed 'Voice of Sharia' and on 27 September it announced, "since satar (the Islamic all sisters are women) is of great importance in Islam, all sisters are seriously asked... to cover their faces and the whole of their body when going out."⁴⁸ As a result tens of thousands of women were sent home and all the government offices had been paralysed. The male members were curtly informed that in accordance with the dictates of Islamic faith they were obligated to grow beard. In case of non-compliance punishment under Islamic Sharia law would follow. However, in their enthusiasm the Taliban leadership overlooked the fact that the level of hirsuteness in no way determines a person's religiousity.

Not only the West but the Muslim world, too, was puzzled and dismayed. Vigilance in Kabul grew as the Taliban officials employed the

⁴⁶ Maley, n. 15, p. 2.; Rashid, n.3, p. 49-50.

⁴⁷ Griffin, n. 38, p. 5.

⁴⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 5-6.

rhetoric of religion and Islamist revolution to legitimatise their rule. Few Sharia judgments carried out in the capital transformed the security climate overnight but it inflamed the human right activists abroad.⁴⁹ The Taliban's gender politics bore an unmistakable odour of state-enforced misogyny, sanctified by religious dictums. Their edicts on social and gender issues went against the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 3 September 1981. Afghanistan had ratified the document in 1980. But the Taliban, a religious movement of a radical and fundamentalist nature, was not willing to respect international treaties. The Taliban leadership was rather interested in getting Afghanistan rid of "corrupt, Western- Oriented time-servers."⁵⁰ Foreign relations was to be handled only after settling the internal affairs in Afghanistan. Part of the Taliban's mission to cleanse aimed at ensuring that the population of Kabul abandoned all vestiges of alien cultures and ideologies. The Taliban's policies in Kabul and Heart were different from those in the rural Ares, where the population had largely been left alone to live as they wished. The urban areas were singled out because of fear that they might harbour sympathisers with the oppositions forces.

The Taliban believed that armed struggle was an accepted form of jihad. For them the internal unbeliever had first to be confronted and then the external ones. The leadership of the Taliban believed that as a religion Islam was not simply a basis for individual faith but a system that encompassed all aspects of society, including individual behaviour and the relationship of the individual to both society and state. There is the fore no question of the state being a secular entity and of religion being relegated to the private sphere. The state is seen as the collective

⁴⁹ Amnesty International, Grave Abuses in the name of religion, November 996.

⁵⁰ Peter Marsden (1998), The Taliban: War, Religion and The New order in Afghanistan, Zed Books Ltd., London, p. 61.

embodiment of the Islamic values espoused by society, and its continued existence is dependent on the commitment of citizens to uphold and defend these values.⁵¹ The establishment of religious police force Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi An al Munkar, the department responsible for the 'Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice' is derived from the Holy Quran. Such enforcement of regulations is directly derived from Washbasin and there is a similarly - named religious police in Saudi Arabia. With the assistance of the religious police and its reinforced military strength the Taliban then began to target the internal unbelievers to make them conform to the Islamic faith.

The involvement of Iran and Saudi Arabia in Afghan war heightened the sectarian conflicts between the Shiite and Sunni sects in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia had made heavy investment during the Afghan war. Its foreign policy had three major objectives: the promotion of Islam; guaranteeing the security of the country and the royal family; and stability in the region. The Saudis intended to promote Wahhabism in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Islamic revolution in Iran had influenced Saudi involvement in Afghanistan for it feared that Iran's Shiite brand of Islam may be counter productive to its own strategic and regional interest. Islamic revolution in Iran had challenged Saudi Arabia's preeminent position as the leader of the Islamic world.

The Taliban, after capturing Kabul in September 1996, began to consolidate in Afghanistan. Within the next couple of years they had captured Mazar-e-Sharif and Bamiyan. At Mazar the Taliban killed nine Iranian diplomats and one journalist. They also systematically killed

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 69.

thousands of Hazaras.⁵² Human Rights and international Shiite organizations were alarmed and the acts of the Taliban were condemned.

The violence against the Shiite Hazaras in Afghanistan, according to Isha Singh, was both structural as well as personal.⁵³ Ethnicity and sectarian differences were responsible for the conflict between the Pashtunes and the Hazaras. Primordial connotations, social orientations, religious practices, ethnic identity engendered strong emotional content, leading to particular aggressiveness during conflict situations. The leaders exploited the feelings and mixed it with the notions of honor and shame to efficiently counter their opponents. The Hazaras, who showed a high degree of political cohesion, fought for the preservation of their local, cultural and religious autonomy.

When the Taliban captured Mazar in August 1998, they instituted a systematic series of massacres against the Hazaras which, according to the Human Rights Watch “appear to have been carried out largely in reprisal for the killing of several thousand Taliban soldiers after a failed attempt by the Taliban to take the city from May to July 1997”.⁵⁴ The revival of deep-seated rivalry was, to a large extent, influenced by the nature of the Taliban’s religious indoctrination.

The most significant was the association of the Taliban leadership with the Jamiat-e-Islami. The Jamiat opened madrassas as in Pakistan and tutored the Afghan refugees. The limited exposure the rural Talibs got at the madrassas, coupled with the teachings of the semi-literate mullahs with the Talibs’ ardent followers of the Jamiat—being Deobandi, and profoundly conservative, the Taliban showed an “antipathy to Shiite

⁵² Kate Clark, “Hazaras Massacred,” *Middle East International*, 18 September 1998.

⁵³ Isha Singh, “Exploring Issues of Violence within the Recent Context of the Hazaras, Afghanistan,” in *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 20, no. 2, 2001, p. 195-228.

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch, n. 74, p. 2-3.

Muslims, who are viewed as unbelievers, and consequently to Iran.”⁵⁵ In the context of the Deobandi orthodoxy, evil and apostasy could be defined at least in part in terms of departure from ritual – that is action wrapped in a web of symbolism. It is for this reason that the Taliban sought to enforce their brand of behavior upon a on compromising populace, to solve the problems of Afghanistan.

The growing ethno-religious tensions was further aggravated when the Taliban had taken upon themselves to act as the cleansers and purifiers of a social system that as effectively derailed, marked any violence and in security. Thus apostates were subjugated and only the true divine law prevailed, as the Taliban interpreted it. The Human Rights Watch had observed that, in August 1998, while the Hazar as were being massacred the Governor of Mazar reputedly delivered speeches throughout the two one’s mosques, criticizing the Hazara for being Shia and labeling them as Kafir, infidels, and coaxed them to convert. The Taliban too had” ordered some residents to prove they were not Shia by reciting Sunni prayers.⁵⁶ Consequently, under thence exclusiveness the concept of ‘otherness’ was invoked and dehumanization and annihilation of the enemy had become both logical and possible.

According to Roy, The Taliban seek top reinforce the traditional conservation and Puritanism of Afghanistan’s tribal out, the Quran belt.⁵⁷ Fro Roy Afghanistan islamiss was rooted in the rural society and whose basis was the net work or rural madrassas. These are nevertheless some of the specificities of the Islamist movement that was activated to fight the communists. This rural dimensions accentuated the role played by ethnicity and tribalism among the Afghan Islamists. It led

⁵⁵ Ahmed Rashid, “Pakistan and The Taliban,” in William Maley (Ed.), n. 15, p. 75.

⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch, n. 74, p. 2, and 10.

⁵⁷ Oliver Roy, “Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?” in Willaim Maley (Ed.), n. 15, p. 204.

to the “crystallization of order patterns of segmentation into an almost ‘modern’ ethnic divide” which consequently resulted in its failure to provide a model of an Islamic republic.⁵⁸ Therefore the Islamists never bypassed ethnic divide.

The emergence of the Taliban was closely related to the balance of power and evolution among the fundamentalist movements. America had opposed Hikatyar’s brand of radical Islam and searched for another Islamic movement. Pakistan played its Pashtun card to create the Taliban. The Taliban played both ethnic as well as the Islamist card. In the first case they legitimized their control over the Pashtun-dominated South. Then using their Islamist identity they constantly refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden, the Islamist militant linked with the terrorist networks, to the United States.

The Taliban had begun as an Islamic reform movement. Through the Muslim history Islamic reform movements have transformed both the nature of belief and political and social life through the law, as Muslim nomadic tribes destroyed other Muslim empires, transformed them and then were themselves urbanized and destroyed. The political change has always been made possible through the concept of jihad. Essentially, jihad is the inner struggle of moral discipline and commitment to Islam and political action. It enables a Muslim to become a better human being, improve himself and help his community. But the Taliban used the word jihad as a synonym for qital, fighting and killing in a war. The Taliban leadership and people like Osama Bin Laden, Fazlur Rahman Azhar Masood claim that qital is one of the fundamental duties of Muslims along with the five pillars of Islam. This is one of the reasons why the variety of Islam practiced by the Taliban had sent a wave of fear among its neighbour. The Taliban were acting in the spirit of the Prophet’s jihad when they had

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 205.

attacked the warlords. But certainly not when they began to kill their fellow Muslims.

It can be said that the Taliban's interpretation of Islam, its views on jihad and the nature of its social transformation was an anomaly in Afghanistan because the movement's rise echoed none of the leading Islamist trends that had emerged through the anti-Soviet war, argues Rashid.⁵⁹ The Taliban did not fit into the Islamist framework of the Sufis or the traditionalist. They did not recognize any Islam except their own. The Islamists like Rabbani and Massoud were not opposed to modernism. In contrast, the Taliban opposed modernism and had no blueprint about economic development and lacked modern ideas of progress.

As the Taliban lacked historical perspective and their leadership was not highly educated, the movement soon turned obscurantist. They did not allow any room for debate, not even with their fellow Muslims who differed with them ideologically. Thus their model of purist Islamic revolution created immense repercussions in the neighbouring Central Asian republics and Pakistan. After capturing Kabul, the Taliban leadership had become highly centralized in its decision-making process and soon the leadership became secretive, dictatorial and inaccessible. Mullah Omar became powerful and introverted and "the movement's power structure developed all the faults of the Mujahideen and communist predecessors."⁶⁰ Like the communists, the Taliban sought to impose changes from above in the traditional social structure. The movement neither had ulema for guidance, nor did they have educated leadership in its political front.

⁵⁹ Rashid, n. 3, p. 87.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

The movement was completely dominated by the Durrani Pashtuns. As the Taliban were able to bring about peace and security in the areas under their control, it led to the proliferation of poppy crop. The leaderships permitted the farmers to grow opium since it was to be consumed by the kafirs, unbelievers, in the West.⁶¹ Also, the Taliban had realized the need to formalize the drug economy in order to raise revenue. The Taliban expanded the area available for opium production and the drug dealers began to fly out opium on cargo planes from Kandhar and Jalalabad to Gulf ports of Abu-Dhabi and Sharjah.⁶² Drug money funded weapons, ammunitions and fuel for the war. It provided for salaries to be paid to the mercenaries who fought along with the Taliban.

The Taliban leadership had also befriended the Arab millionaire Osama bin Laden. With the help of bin Laden and several thousand Arab militants, bases were established in the provinces of Kunar, Nuristan, and Badakshan.⁶³ Osama bin Laden, the seventeenth son of the Yemeni construction magnate, Mohammad bin Laden (a close friend of King Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia), is a ruthless man. There was a time when his callousness was useful to the CIA, as bin Laden brought scores of zealous anti-communist (and anti-modern) Arab men to Afghanistan to fight in CIA Director William Casey's 'jihad' against the Soviets and the leftist Afghan regime. Bin Laden's antipathy both to communism and to modernity was shaped into an armed militancy in Afghanistan, where, under the tutelage of the CIA and the ISI, he was able to learn the skills that have now allowed his network to grow.⁶⁴ When Saddam Hussein entered Kuwait in 1990, bin Laden urged the Saudi loyal family to allow

⁶¹ Ahmed Rashid, "Drug the Infidels," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 1997.

⁶² Rashid, n. 3, p. 120.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁴ Vijay Prashad (2002), *War Against the Planet: The Fifth Afghan War, Imperialism, and Other assorted Fundamentalisms*, LeftWord Books, New Delhi, p. 11-13.

the 'Afghan Arabs' a chance to join with the Saudi army in a campaign to remove the Iraqi army from Kuwait. When the US took leadership in the Gulf War and then when US troops remained in Saudi Arabia, this jihadi became antagonistic. His dislike of the US stems from this act: the permanent maintenance of troops in the birth place of Islam.

Without a doubt, bin Laden a creation of Saudi royals and the CIA, has created mayhem not only as an individual but also as a symbol for the creation of a violent terrorist network that includes groups around the planet.

STATE AND SOCIETY UNDER THE RULE OF TALIBAN:

Although the leadership of such a state by *Ulama* was unprecedented, the underlying structure reproduced a historic pattern; the state was dominated by a small solidarity group of Pashtuns, in this Qandhari mullahs (rather than Muhamamadzais), depend for its resources on foreign aid and taxing commercial agriculture, now mostly illegal drugs rather than Karakul lamb and cotton, and foreign trade, now mostly smuggling rather than exports of natural gas.

The social network of the elite at the core of the coalition was formed from Qandhari mullahs who studied in the same set of madrasas in Pakistan and participate in the jihad. Mullah Omar and all but are member of the supreme *Shura* were Qandhari Pashtuns. All the members of the military *Shura* who's ethnic and regional, were Qandhari Pashtuns. The Kabul *Shura* was also predominantly Qandhari but included more eastern Pashtuns, a few Persian speakers, and at least one Uzbek. All without a single exception were Sunni mullahs trained in private madrasas. Hence the movement had a strong ethnic and regional characteristic, without its leaders having any intention the form such a movement, and it therefore attracted support from same who sought a Pashtun ethnic movement capable of ruling Afghanistan.

These core leaders belonged to the Deobandi movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan⁶⁵. Deobandis reject all forms of *ijtihad* – the use of reason to create innovations in *Sharia* in response to new conditions – the revival of which is a key plank in the platform of the Islamic modernists. They oppose all forms of hierarchy within the Muslim community, including tribalism or royalty, they strive to exclude *Shia* from participating in the policy, and they take a very restrictive view of the social role of women. All these characteristics of the Indian and Pakistani Deobandis were found in exaggerated forms among the Afghan Taliban.

Afghanistan is rather a conglomerate existence of different tribes and ethnic groups, which makes it a microcosm of diverse cultures and nationalities. This society can be considered as the society of tribal leaders and theologians, as it displays many features of a tribal society and has a structure of traditional authority reflecting the influence of traditional leaders. Islam is the uniting force behind these different ethnic communities that gather them under the umbrella of an independent nation-Afghanistan.

The Islamic theologians (*Ulama*) and the village level mullahs integrated the feudal level social, political and economic views into the Islamic theology. Since the governance of the country was based on the Quranic law and dictum as interpreted by the religious leaders, the traditional *Ulama*, they have acquired considerable hold on the reign of Afghanistan. This explains the election of Mullah Mohammad Omar, the head of state, as *Amir-al-mu'minin* (commander of the believers, a title of the Caliph) by an assembly of about 1,200 invited *Ulama* in Kandhar from March 20 to April 4, 1996. Closely linked with this is the

⁶⁵ The Deobandi movement, which owes its name to the Indian town where a famous madrasa was established in the 19th century, developed from conservative reform movement among Indian Muslims.

transformation of Taliban movement into a state structure, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

The IEA appointed provincial governors and administrators of districts, cities, towns and precincts from the centre. Taliban also established a nationwide judiciary with *Sharia* courts at all levels, culminating in the supreme court of *Sharia* in Kabul. The Taliban also established a new security service, 'the ministry of enforcement of virtue and suppression of vice'. This has been responsible for the enforcement of all decrees regarding moral behavior, women employment and dress, enforcing men's beard length and mosque attendance, regulating activities of UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, commanding destruction of 'graven images' and requiring the labeling of religious minorities. Through the network of local mullahs, the Taliban also penetrated into the village structure, perhaps more than previous Afghan governments, enabling the IEA to carry out such policies as the eradication of opium growing in 2000-01.

Coming to Taliban's political structure, one finds that the tribal institution of *Jirga* has a very important place in the Afghan political structure. It's a collective decision making platform on tribal disputes. In the political structure, the *Jirga* is designated as *Loya Jirga*. It stands as one of the best examples of the traditional element as it is well incorporated into the exercises of the central government. *Loya Jirga* in Pushtu language is equivalent to 'great council'. In the national context, it stands for the assembly of several hundred representatives from all major tribes, areas, religious sects and economic groups. Matters of great importance are consulted in this forum.

Afghanistan under Taliban, in the opinion of Sultan Shahin, appeared determined to change the very character of Islam, turning it into the pre Islamic religion of the *Jahilya* (Dark Age Arabia). The centerpiece of the Taliban ideology is their concept of Jihad used

exclusively as a synonym for *Qital*, fighting and killing in a war, and claims Jihad as one of the fundamental duties of Muslims along with *Namaz, Roza, Zakat* and *Haj*. *Jihad* by some of the *Ulema* is a potential passport to heaven. The main feature of the Taliban view of Islam can thus be summarized in one word, 'intolerance.' Their Islam is total negation of all that Islam stands for. In fact, Talibanism may be considered as a complete different religion.

It was March 2001 which shocked the world community with the destruction of the world famous status of the Buddhas in Bamiyan by the Taliban. Armed with a ruling from Afghanistan's highest court and '*farman*' from the *Amir-al-Mominean*, Taliban soldiers reportedly used rockets and anti-aircraft ammunition to destroy centuries old status. Ashgar Ali engineer notified Taliban as not at all authentic representative of Islam and their acts of omission and commission, product of highly sectarian mindset far from spiritual, were more politically motivated. Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmed Mutawakel declared that the destruction of the statues was 'an internal religious issue'. As to the protection of cultural property, Taliban spokesman later claimed that the Buddhas in Bamiyan were destroyed in reaction to the hypocrisy of western statesman who cared about statues more than near-destitute Afghans. Since the Taliban was doing the same to Afghans, this bares all the hallmarks of the clumsy ex-post facto rationalization.

Wherever they conquered, they immediately imposed what amounted to a highly brutal, medievalist rule, which produced 'security', for which the people were yearning, but discriminated savagely against not only those who actively opposed the, but also women and *Shia* minorities and any form of cultural and social practices which happened to be at variance with their idiosyncratic preaching and understanding of Islam. They also allowed poppy cultivation, heroin production and drug trafficking in the areas under their control as the best revenue raising

means to help finance their territorial conquests and political and ideological impositions.

Thus the central tenet of the Taliban used, when they took power in Kandhar in October 1994, was to free Afghanistan from the control of the Mujahiddin parties that had run the government since April 1992 and to establish an Islamic state based on *Sharia* law. They saw the ousted government as having failed to adhere to the standards expected of an Islamic state, in spite of the long-involvement of its leaders in Islamist movements and the commitment of these leaders to the creation of such a state. Its replacement by a movement that was in a position to establish an Islamic government possessed of the necessary purity was therefore seen as justifiable.

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SOCIAL POLICY

When the Taliban took over Kabul at the end of September 1996, whether by design, accident or as an act of revenge quite independent of the Taliban – ex-President Najibullah and his brother were hanged in a public square, and the image they presented was stark and simple. Their subsequent declarations barring female access to education and employment, their imposition of strict dress codes on both men and women, and their dramatic military conquests brought to the surface all the negative stereotypes about Islam that have beset both international relations and race relations within Europe.

The Taliban implemented an extreme interpretation of the *Sharia* or the Islamic law that appalled many Afghans and the Muslim world. The Taliban had closed down all girls' schools and women were rarely permitted to venture out of their homes, even for shopping. The Taliban had banned every conceivable kind of entertainment including music, T.V., videos, cards, kite-flying and most sports and games. The Taliban brand of Islamic fundamentalism was so extreme that it appeared to denigrate Islam's message of peace and tolerance and its capacity to live with other religious and ethnic groups. They were to inspire a new extremist form of fundamentalism across Pakistan and Central Asia, which refused to compromise with traditional Islamic values, social structure or existing state system.

Part of the international response to the Taliban's policies, both from the west and from other parts of the Islamic world, has been a reaction to their use of certain punishments laid down in *Sharia law*, known as *Hudud*. These include the stoning of adulteress and amputation for theft. Men have been required to conform to a strict dress code, avoiding western clothing and abstaining from shaving. The requirement that men should pray five times per day, ideally in a mosque, is consistent with the wish of the Taliban to ensure a higher

degree of religious observance. Collective worship has traditionally been regarded as preferable to individual worship bans on music, games and on the visual representation of the human or animal form also draws their inspiration from a conservative interpretation of the dictates of Islam.

Ethnic cleansing is another of the gruesome aim of the Taliban. It has been reported that Taliban had killed 8,000 civilians, mainly belonging to Hazara community since August 1998. The victims included men, women and children. A gruesome massacre of around 2,000 *Shiite Hazaras* in Mazar-e-sharif in August was one of notable among this type of activities.⁶⁶

Part of the Taliban's mission to cleanse is aimed at ensuring that the population of Kabul, Kabul has perhaps been singled out as needing particular corrective action, abandons all vestiges of alien cultures and ideologies. The Taliban sought to impose their vision on the relatively uneducated and impoverished population that remained.

WOMEN UNDER THE TALIBAN RULE

The Afghan women had actually paid the price for the violent misuse of Islam by Taliban. It interpreted Quran according to its own personal whims and political interests, and used Islam as a cover to hide the brutal crimes of the fundamentalist Taliban. Objections and disagreements to Taliban policy on women came even from the Islamic believes who considered what Taliban claimed were not in accordance with Quran and *Sunna* (the tradition of the prophet).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Peter L. Bergen (2001), Holy war, Inc: Inside the secret world of Osama bin Laden, The free press, London.

⁶⁷ Valentine M.Moghadam, "Patriarchy, the Taliban and the politics of public space in Afghanistan," Women's studies international forum, Vol. 25, no.1.

The policies of Taliban also aroused controversy because of their particularly detailed and onerous restrictions on how women and men should dress and behave. On 6 December 1996, the Department for the Promotion of virtue and prevention of vice announced that it had punished 225 women the previous day, in accordance with the *Sharia*, for violating the rules on clothing.⁶⁸

Though Taliban claimed that their policy was for the protection of the honor, dignity and personal safety of Afghan women, in reality it was the extreme violation of women's rights and perpetration of severe atrocities against women, as the report of the Amnesty international revealed. Their gender regime imposed a policy of strict – discrimination of women. Women and girls were denied most of their human rights. They were even denied their equal right to religious freedom. UN special reporter on violence against women, Radhika Kumaraswamy, on a visit to Afghanistan in 1999, pointed out that this discrimination was officially sanctioned.⁶⁹

The Taliban barred women from participating in government, higher education, and all other areas of Afghan public life. Women had been subjected to a wide range of human rights abuses, including instances of rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution and forced marriage. Taliban put severe restrictions on access to employment, healthcare and medical treatment. In general the Taliban claimed to protect Afghan women; in fact it brutalized women and girls to poverty, poor health, illiteracy and handicap.

Since the end of cold war, no other political movement in the Islamic world has attracted as much attention as the Taliban in Afghanistan. For some Afghans it created hopes that the movement would finally bring

⁶⁸ Amnesty International, *Women in Afghanistan: A human rights catastrophe*, Vol. 12 (Amnesty International, 1996).

⁶⁹ Amnesty International, *Afghanistan: Women in Afghanistan: Pawns in men's power struggles*, (Amnesty International, Nov.1999).

peace and security to their country shaped and molded by its experience with more than two decades of war. Others feared that the Taliban movement would rather degenerate into one more warlord faction, determined to thrust despotic rule upon the hapless Afghan people. It was unfortunately the latter which further deteriorated the plight of Afghanistan and its residents.

The movement also brought to the fore the devious motives of not only the regional powers but also the international players. The pipeline politics and the strategic and economic situations it had generated one important in the emergence of Islamic Movement of Taliban. It is obvious that geographical location of a nation was being subjected to utility by imperialistic interests. Thus Pakistan with the financial support of Saudi Arabia and the earlier tacit approval of the US was responsible for the existence and the maintenance of Taliban. Iran, in a counter alliance, supported the Northern Alliance. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to supported Northern alliance. Thus Afghanistan continuously suffered and the burden fell most on the innocent Afghans who never saw peace even under Taliban.

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Clearly it was the Cold War politics which prompted Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The Soviets wanted to curb western influence and counterbalance the Americans. American policy was containment of communism and the 'evil empire' of Soviet Union. There is also a well-defined geo-political calculation meant for the control of the whole of resources rich Central Eurasian region, for which Afghanistan is a strategic area majorly. This is related to oil, gas and hydrocarbon and other natural resources vital for west.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Roy Allison, "The superpowers and south west Asia," in Roy Allison and Phil Williams, (Eds.), op. cit.

According to Jane's Defense weekly, "Pakistan's direct support, direction, planning and control have been critical to Taliban's success in overrunning Kabul."⁷¹ Southern Afghanistan was, however, also the preferred route for a number of proposed pipelines from Turkmenistan to Pakistan. An Argentinean corporation, Bridas, was the first to enter the race. It initially attempted to involve US energy giant, UNOCAL, in the project. UNOCAL had plans of its own and later that year signed a separate pipeline agreement, triggering sharp rivalry and a legal battle between the two companies.

The pipeline politics and the strategic and economic situations it had generated are important in the emergence of the Taliban. In 1994, the US State Department and Pakistan's ISI agency sought to install a stable regime in Afghanistan to enhance the prospects for western oil pipeline. They financed, armed and trained the Taliban in its civil war against the Northern Alliance. Later UNOCAL announced that the Taliban victory in Kabul was a positive sign.

Further we find that in 1995, at congressional hearings, Raphael spoke favorably of the Taliban. She mentioned their leaders support, in principle, for a peaceful political process, in contrast to 'factional leaders' who were 'reluctant to relinquish their personal power for the overall good of Afghanistan', - thinly veiled criticism of President Rabbani.

Despite its public denial of any association with the Taliban, in reality Washington maintained a conspicuous silence over their human rights violations and medievalists theocratic approach to governance and voiced only muted criticism as they destroyed Afghanistan's distributive and administrative institutions, turning the country into a hub for poppy

p. 181.

⁷¹ Rasul Bakhsh Rais, "Afghanistan and the regions powers," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, no. 9, September 1993.

cultivation, drug trafficking, narco-economic activities. This indulgence continued for almost two years.

Washington also expressed no qualms over the large number of Arab and non-Arab volunteers who moved into Afghanistan via Pakistan in support of Taliban. One of these, who arrived now for a second visit but with more drastic consequences, was the Saudi millionaire dissident, Osama bin Laden.⁷²

The Clinton administration allowed senior officials from both the state Department and the CIA, including Assistant Secretary of for South Asia Robin Raphael, to meet Taliban leaders on a regular basis inside and outside Afghanistan. It also remained calm in the face of the Taliban-al-Qaeda alliance. Only while coming under public pressure over the Taliban's treatment of Afghan women and girls, did secretary of state Madeline Albright describe the Taliban's policies towards women as 'despicable' and make it clear that the Taliban rule of Afghanistan was not assumed given the presence of other forces in the country.⁷³ This proved to be a precursor to stronger American criticisms, especially following the al Qaeda bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania at the cost of hundreds of lives in August 1998. Even so, Washington remained some what passive and confused in the face of the challenge posed by the Taliban-Al-Qaeda – ISI alliance. It supported UN pressure on the Taliban. However, this was something that the Taliban and al-Qaeda could easily defy as long as Pakistan supported them.

⁷² He had earlier visited and fought against the soviets with indirect, if not direct support of the CIA, in alliance with the ISI. It was after coming into close contact with the Pakistani radical Islamists that bin Laden set up the original cell his Al-Qaeda network, essentially to help the Arab volunteers.

⁷³ Ibid.

In the post Second World War period American political interests in the region increased enormously. Looking back it becomes clear that after 1947, the pivot of American policy was Pakistan. Afghanistan was a second factor. Till the soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the US had limited options. Its strategy was to build Pakistan and through it influence the course of development in Afghanistan. "Asia is the key to the economic health of the United States and to the everyday lives of America. It is the most lucrative terrain for American jobs and exports." This was according to the White House, a *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (February 1995, pp. 28-29). This candid admission by the American policymakers speaks for itself.

Simultaneously, the USA did nothing to provide financial and military support for the badly pressured and poorly equipped and trained forces of commander Massoud, who had been squeezed into north-eastern Afghanistan by late 1998. It repeatedly ignored Massoud's warnings about Afghanistan being turned into a centre for not only medievalist theocracy, but also international terrorism, involving thousands of al Qaeda Arab, Pakistani, Kashmiri and Chechen operatives – all in the name of an Islam that Afghanistan had never experienced in their history. Washington's response continued to be 'no help to any factor' in Afghanistan.

This gave rise to a serious shift in the strategic picture in the region, alarming not only Iran, but also Central Asian republics, Russia and India. While Tehran viewed the whole development as an attempt to enforce the American policy of containment of Iran, the secularist Central Asian leaderships felt threatened by the possible spread of the Taliban's Islamic extremism. Moscow came to perceive the changing situation as threatening to its vital strategic interests in its former Central Asian republics, and New Delhi found the changes upsetting the regional balance in favor of Pakistan.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITED STATE'S WAR AGAINST TALIBAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AFGHANISTAN

The attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 by nineteen men paved way for the immediate collapse of the Taliban. The rapid defeat and decimation of the Taliban and the formation of the agreed Afghan regime under the leadership of Hamid Karzai brought to an end one of the most tragic phases in the history of Afghanistan. These terrorist attacks on the US pointed the finger of suspicion to Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization for this heinous crime. The reason that it was widely believed that Laden was responsible for the attacks was that no other terrorist group had the resources, organization and the technical expertise to launch such a venture. President Bush responded swiftly to the attacks on the Twin Towers and retaliated by declaring a war on international terrorism and those who harbored terrorists.¹

These nineteen Arab men, from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia brought their various frustrations onto four commercial air craft, three of which struck the WTC in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D.C- symbols of US global hegemony. These men were not from among the wretched of the earth, the hungry and desolate. They, however, came from among the educated middle-class, with access to European technical education and with a reasonably bright future before them. And yet, they turned away from bourgeois tedium for a terrible martyrdom. The targets these men chose lead to the belief that the act was against the symbols of US imperialism, for these are the financial (WTC) and military (Pentagon) headquarters of neoliberals' globalization.²

¹ Kalim Bahadur, "The Afghanistan Crisis: Problems and Perspective," Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2002, p.51.

² Vijay Prasad (2002), War Against the Planet: The Fifth Afghan War, Imperialism And Other Assorted Fundamentalisms, Leftword Books, New Delhi, p.8-9.

U.S. DECLARES WAR AGAINST TERRORISM:

Only a few people on the world stage welcomed these attacks, for most of us condemned them without reservation. Quickly the international mood turned toward grief and many wondered how anyone could have been so callous as to do this deed. US President Bush did not help matters when he spoke of the men as Evil, when he dismissed any attempt to understand the social forces that drive people to such actions. If the actors are adjudged to be Evil, then there is no way to deal with them but to destroy them- to grant that they might be misguided in their strategy and tactics, but that they may represent a genuine grievance was tantamount to heresy. One can condemn an act without reservation, and yet attempt to analyze the act to see how it can happen. Analysis is not a justification, but a method to determine the causes of an act. Random acts of terror do not change anything for the better; indeed they increase the suffering of ordinary people. Right after 9/11, US began to compare it to Pearl Harbor, the attack of the Japanese armed forces on 7 December, 1941 that brought the US into World War II. President F.D. Roosevelt then called it a 'day of infamy,' and this was the phrase that many used to describe 9/11.

The Bush administration, hours after the attacks, said 'Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization were prime suspects,' and CIA Director George Tenet pointed out by way of evidence that only Bin Laden and his networks had the capacity and tenacity to conduct 'multiple attacks with little or no warnings.' With the kind of planning, skill, training, finance logistics involved in the attacks, suspicion was almost immediately drawn towards Osama Bin Laden, the master mind of previous attacks on American Embassies in 1998. Recently Laden had demanded the release of 1993 bombers and it is believed that the destruction of WTC was one of his long cherished desires since they had tried to destroy it many a times before but failed in

their attempts. Apart from this, Arab journalists pointed out that Laden had warned three weeks earlier that he would carry out unprecedented attack on US interests. Other US enemies who might have light to carry out such an attack were the Palestinian groups and Iraqi President Saddam Husséin.³

On September 12, both the General Assembly and the Security Council of the UN adopted resolution which strongly condemned the acts of terrorism and asked the members states “urgently” to cooperate “to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the outrages of September 11, 2001,” and in combating terrorism world wide.⁴ The Security Council passed two unanimous resolutions on terrorist attacks on the US. It adopted resolution 1368 on September 12 that unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks on the US and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts. On September 28, it passed the more specific and far reaching resolution 1373. In this resolution it acted under chapter VII of the UN Charter which gave the Security Council authority to order states to carry out the measures decided upon by the Security Council. But significantly resolution 1373 does not ‘authorize states’ to “take all necessary steps” to implement it. Both the resolutions do not mean or say that military action against Afghanistan would be within the right of self-defense. Article 2 of the Charter prohibits the use or threatened use of force against another state. The article 2 prohibition is a rule of customary international law and is universally binding.

At his first Presidential address to the nation, President Bush declared war on the September 11 terrorist and those who harbored them. On September 20th, in his address to the joint sitting of the Congress, he said that investigation implicated Osama and his Al Qaeda organization which had also been responsible for attacks on American Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya for bombing of USS Cole

³ ‘The Usual Suspect: Osama Bin Laden,’ Hindustan Times, 12 September, 2001.

⁴ V.S. Mani, “The Fifth Afghan War and International Law,” Economic and Political Weekly, Jan 26, 2002, p.294-298.

in the recent past. He declared: "The American response to terrorism is being fought at home and abroad through multiple operation, including diplomatic, military, financial, investigative, home land, security and humanitarian actions." He then proclaimed, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are the terrorists."⁵ Towards the end of his speech, the President put across to the Taliban five demands, which were not open for negotiation, to make sure cease to operate. On September 23, President Bush signed Executive Order 13244, pursuant to the US laws including the law on terrorism, blocking the assets of the terrorists' organizations and the others who support them, prohibiting transaction by Americans with terrorist and those who supported them. The order annexed a list of 27 terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda besides Harakat-ul-Mujahiddin and Jaish-e-Mohammed, targeted by it.⁶

While the Taliban kept insisting that they would negotiate with the US if it could provide evidence of Osama's involvement in the attack, Afghan opposition group met in Rome and gave out clear message to the US to give them the means to ouster the Taliban, the host of Osama.⁷ Not having received any compliance report from the Taliban on its September 20 demands, the US supported by the UK, began nocturnal bombing of Afghanistan on October 7. In the US, the attacks of September 11 produced a righteous and awesome wrath which demanded prompt retaliation. Afghanistan's landlocked character created significant practical problems; especially it had given the hostility to the US of significant figures in Afghanistan's western neighbor, Iran. This suggested a need for allies of two types: first, states to assist in various ways in the conduct of a more limited operation that would be required, and second, partners in Afghanistan

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Arpita Basu Roy, (2002), Afghanistan Towards a Viable State, New Delhi, Hope India Publications, p.129.

to spearhead ultimate ground assault against the Taliban.⁸ Regarding the former, there were many sympathetic states that had also borne the suffering of their nationals in the ruin of the WTC-UK, European allies, NATO alliance partners, Australia-all stood by the US. The most significant partner in line was Pakistan.

Towards the end of September, President Bush approved covert aid to anti-Taliban groups as viewed by Gordon and Sanger. His administration also pursued the policy of isolation of the Taliban. The UAE severed ties with the Taliban on 22 September, followed by Saudi Arabia three days later. On 7 October, the US launched 'Operation Enduring Freedom'-a massive attack on Taliban and Al Qaeda positions in Afghanistan using 15 land based B-52 and B-1 bombers, 'Stealth' bombers, flown respectively from Whiteman Air Force Base near Kansas City and from the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, together with 25 strike aircraft (F-14, Tomcats, F-18 Hornets) from the aircrafts carriers USS Enterprise and USS Carl. E. Vinson. The bulk of ordnance used in this first attack consisted of 500 pound mark 82 bombs directed against training camps.⁹

This was the first blast of a campaign which was to continue through to the end of the year and into 2002, as remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in different parts of the country were systematically targeted. Estimating the number of casualties from the attacks is virtually impossible, but there is no doubt that on occasion bombs struck targets for which they were not intended, either because of mechanical defects or due to intelligence failures.¹⁰ Within the space of four days in November, key cities fell to the anti-Taliban forces in a cascade. On 9 November 2001, Mazar-e-Sharif fell to groups led by General Dostum. The following day, united front forces launched simultaneous attacks across Northern Afghanistan on Khajsgar, Esh Kamesh, Baghlam, Pul-e-Khumri, Nahrin, Aibat, and

⁸ As quoted in The Afghanistan War by William Maley (2002), New Delhi, Palgrave Macmillan Press, p.253.

⁹ Ibid, p.262.

¹⁰ V.S.Mani (2002), op. cit.

Bamiyan. All these including Hairatan and Shibarghan fell to General Dostum's forces. Maimana fell on 11 November and Herat on 12 November. The Taliban fled Kabul on 13 November after looting the main currency market and the Afghanistan Bank.¹¹

There was ecstatic celebration in Kabul as the new forces arrived. Almost all people in Kabul regard the demise of Taliban as liberation. Huge crowds gathered shouting 'Death to the Taliban' though main battles of the war were not quite over. Taliban rule had ended mostly in the areas in which the Pashtuns were numerically less significant, but except in Jalalabad, which fell the day after Kabul, the fall of the main Pashtun centres took a little longer. By the time the battle for Kandhar loomed, the Taliban were on the point of collapse.¹² As bombs continued to fall on Afghanistan, the political strategy to install a new regime in Kabul made discernible progress. Washington tried to assemble a durable coalition that could take over when the Taliban fragments. Progress on the matter was slow as complications in Afghan politics came to the forefront. A dispute broke out between two power holders of an earlier era, Gul Agha and Mulla Naqib, but Karzai succeeded in brokering an agreement between the two. Finally, on 9 December, exactly nine weeks after the bombing campaign had begun; Karzai entered Kandhar in an unarmed convoy.¹³

AFGHANISTAN POLITICS IN THE POST TALIBAN ERA:

From 27 November to 5 December 2001, Bonn Conference was held regarding the formation of an interim government. This conference brought four Afghan factions¹⁴ together to form an interim

¹¹ Maj.Gen. A.Joshi VSM (Retd), "Afghanistan: History, Taliban, Operation Enduring Freedom and new Challenges," *Journal of USI of India*, Vol.XXXII, No.541, July-Sep 2002, p. 317-318.

¹² Maley (2002), op. cit., p. 265-266.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The four groups constitute representatives of the Northern Alliance; the Rome group, which has royalist aides of the former Afghan king, Zahir Shah; the Cyprus group with representatives of the minority Shia Hazaras, led by Hamayun Jareer, son-in-law of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar; and the Pakistan supported Peshawar group, headed by Pir Syed Ahmed Shah Galliani. "Interim Afghan Government: First Step to Stability."

government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. The important tasks stipulated in the Bonn agreement for Afghan peace building and reconstruction contained a number of important factors for securing the future of Afghanistan. State security, interim administration, constitution building, gender equality and women's participation in decision-making, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy, education and health were some of the important factors enlisted. Nation building and re-establishment of state power in accordance with agreement was the main task for Karzai. Taliban finally gave up last stronghold of Kandhar by 7 December 2001, after two months of air strikes and mounting opposition advance. But Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, went into hiding, and he remains at large even now. On 22 December 2001, a Pashtun royalist Hamid Karzai was sworn in as head of a thirty-member interim power-sharing government. And by January 2002, the first contingent of foreign peace keepers arrived. The UN Security Council extended mandate of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) until December 2002, in May the same year. Meanwhile (April 2002), the former king Zahir Shah returned, but with no claim to the lost throne. Allied forces continued their military campaign to find remnants of Al Qaeda and Taliban forces in the southeast.

After Loya Jirga, or grand council, elected Hamid Karzai as interim head of state in June 2002, Karzai constituted members of his administration, which was to serve until 2004. However, conflicts also continued. In July, Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated by gunmen in Kabul. The US continued fighting led to further internal disturbances. In September 2002, an assassination attempt was made against Karzai in Kandhar. Next year June, clashes were reported between Taliban fighters and government forces in Kandhar province. Security situation were sent to such an extent that by August 2003, NATO took control of security in Kabul.¹⁵ Fighting broke out in April 2004 in northwest between regional commander and provincial

¹⁵ It is NATO's first operational commitment outside Europe in its history.

governor allied to government. There is also discontent among the Pashtuns who believe that they have been marginalized because of their identification with the Taliban. The non Pashtun factions have so far supported this cabinet as a blue print for a new government.¹⁶

In January 2004, Grand Assembly (Loya Jirga) adopted a new constitution, which provides for strong presidency. Constitution is an important milestone in the development of democratic governance. It is a framework of governance that reflects the needs and aspirations of the people who are to be governed. At the formal ceremony in Kabul on 3 November 2003, the chairman of Afghanistan's Constitutional Commission, Nematullah Shahrani, handed copies of draft document to Afghan Transitional Administration Chairman, Karzai, former Afghan King Mohamed Zahir Shah and the UN special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi.¹⁷

The constitution approved by the Loya Jirga has provisions of Islamic republic with Islam having the status as Afghanistan's 'sacred religion'; freedom of religion; allegiance of law to the beliefs and practices of Islam; gender equality; form of government as presidential system; and so on. The constitution also provides for a national assembly that consists of two houses: a Wolesi Jirga or house of people, and a Meshrano Jirga or house of elders. The Wolesi Jirga will be directly elected by the afghan people. It has the authority to impeach ministers. The president will appoint ministers, the attorney general and central bank governor with the approval of the Wolesi Jirga. The constitution approves the former king Zahir Shah to be accorded the title "Father of the Nation" for his life time. According to the new constitution, Pashto and Dari are the official languages with other minority languages in the areas in which they are spoken.¹⁸ The new constitution guarantees women twenty five percent of the seats in the future parliament.

¹⁶ The Hindu, 9 June 2002.

¹⁷ Ron Synovitz, "Constitution Commission Chairman Presence Karzai with Long-Delayed Draft Constitution," <http://www.azadiradio.org/>, 3 November 2003.

¹⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk>.

ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN:

The violent and protracted conflict in Afghanistan has been one of the residues of the Cold War conflicts with no signs of resolution, defying the logic of international peace and security as espoused by the United Nations and the comity of nations. According to former Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, Afghanistan has been one of the most orphaned conflicts, which the west ignored or forgot. But the events of September 11 have turned the President George Bush to his firm faith in the UN system in his search for international coalition of forces against terrorism and religious extremism. In the new millennium, the UN has focused on the agenda of people's security as a corollary to state security and hence, it has an enormous role in conflict prevention, peace-building and conflict resolution in different parts of the world.¹⁹

With the success of American bombing of the Taliban and ultimate victory of the Northern Alliance forces, the office of the United Nations has come handy in meeting the scourges of international terrorism and seeking an answer to peace-making in Afghanistan. It is in this context that Secretary General Kofi Annan on 3 October 2001, appointed Lakhdar Brahimi to his special representative with a widened mandate entailing overall authority for the humanitarian and political endeavors of the UN in Afghanistan. Brahimi has hammered out a peace deal among various factions towards an interim administration for Afghanistan as a sequel to peace-building and conflict resolution in Central and South Asia.

In the first instance it was important to build consensus between Afghanistan's neighbours, Russia and the US on how to proceed. Thus the heads of delegation of the six immediate geographical neighbors of Afghanistan (Pakistan, China, Tajikistan,

¹⁹ Millennium Report of the Secretary General, "We the Peoples": The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century, A/54/2000 (New York, United Nations, 2000).

Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Iran) along with those of the US and Russia (i.e., six plus two) met at the UN headquarters and adopted a declaration on November 12, expressing its support for the “efforts of the Afghan people to establish a new and transitional administration leading to the formation of a government,” that should be “broad based, multi-ethnic and fully representative of all the Afghan people,” based on the respect for human rights of all Afghan people “regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion,” and also, the urgent need to facilitate humanitarian assistance and the return of the refugees and internationally displaced persons. The resolution also asserted that “the UN should play an important role in supporting the efforts of the Afghan people to establish urgently such a new transitional administration.”²⁰ A parallel meeting of Afghan ‘civil society’ was held nearby with the support of the Swiss Peace Foundation in order to feed ideas into the formal meeting. The negotiations between the parties proved extremely taxing. Zahir Shah was not present, and neither was Burhanuddin Rabbani, still forming the president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Dostum did not take part, and Haji Abdul Qadir and Karim Khalili left, protesting what they saw as lack of representation for their particular interests.²¹

It goes to the credit of the tenacity and diplomatic skill displayed by Lakhdar Brahimi that he could persuade this heterogeneous group of Afghans with centuries of factional fights and civil wars behind them, into accepting an ‘Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions’ on 5 December. The UN is ideally and practically capable of providing the mechanism for peace building and conflict prevention in Afghanistan. In its chequered history of peace-keeping and conflict resolution, UN operations have seen many ups and downs, starting with traditional peacemaking in Lebanon, Cyprus, Iran-Iraq War (1988) and Namibia to multi-dimensional peace operations in El

²⁰ V.S.Mani (2002), op.cit.

²¹ W.Maley (2002), op.cit., p.269.

Salvador, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Cambodia, Macedonia, Rwanda, Bosnia and in East Timor very recently. One of the most successful operations under the UN auspices, the operations in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), saw the Mozambique peace deal in 1992 which ended 16 years of civil war through a process of disarmament and demobilization and initiation of dialogue among the various groups in the violent conflict. Moreover, in this gamut of peace-building exercise, the UN established a trust fund to transform guerrilla forces into a political party in the reconciliation process. This peace deal may serve as a model for the UN representative Lakhdar Brahimi who is the chief architect of the Afghan Peace Accord at the Bonn Conference.²²

In the context of Afghanistan, the UN's track record of mediation and peace initiative has been a mixed success due to lack of support from the US, Russia and other regional players. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the gradual exacerbation of Cold War conflict between the US and Soviet Union, the offices of the UN like the General Assembly served as impartial agencies for peace-making and conflict management in different parts of the world. Thus, the problem of Afghanistan received proper UN attention with the appointment of Perez De Cuellar in 1981 by Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to mediate between Moscow and the main supporters of the 'mujahiddin' like the US and Pakistan.

In a historical perspective, the mediation of the UN in Afghanistan began with the 'proximity talks' in Geneva involving various internal and external parties to the Afghan conflict. When Perez De Cuellar became the Secretary General, he appointed his close aide, Diego Cordovez, who assiduously carried out the UN's peace mission towards the conclusion of Geneva Accords. During this phase of the Cold War and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN began a series of consultations authorized by the General Assembly (GA) Resolutions that advocated a political settlement. But

²² "The Afghanistan Crisis," Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2002, op. cit.

in the face of serious Soviet objections, the UN agenda was not clear about the nature of the internal government of Afghanistan. So the Geneva Accords of 1988, which largely emerged out of the cooperative relationship between the Super Powers, failed to “address explicitly the link between the international and domestic aspects of the conflict in Afghanistan.”²³ But the Accords succeeded in finding a time table for Soviet troop withdrawal while leaving in place a proxy war.

Gradually, with the Soviet policy of ‘détente’ under President Gorbachev, and improvement of relations with the US, the Afghan question lost its geostrategic significance and the two superpowers drastically scaled down their involvement. But the internal war was resumed in the downgraded version of civil war by internal actors, who continued to receive support from neighbouring countries. In this process, the subsequent peace mission under Bevan Sevan, Mahmood Meistri, and Norbert Holl did not succeed due to continuous ethnic fratricidal wars inside Afghanistan. Gradually, the rule of the Taliban and its atrocities reached such lengths that the internal Afghan situation worsened. There were too many regional states like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Tajikistan who became enmeshed in the power struggle in Afghanistan. So, by the end of 1998, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan spoke ominously of the prospect of a deeper regionalization of the conflict where Afghanistan had become the stage for a new version of the ‘Great Game.’ Still, the UN continued with its peace initiative in Afghanistan through the mechanism of Six-Plus-Two-group of countries throughout 1999 and 2000. These countries included the six neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, namely, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, China and Pakistan and the two big powers, the US and Russia. This was in conformity with the UN’s comprehensive approach to the issues of regionalization and internationalization of the conflict. But this multilateral diplomacy brought some peace dividends as the Taliban joined the forum for

²³ Barnett R. Rubin (1995), The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p.40.

talks and started negotiation with the UN agencies and other international NGO's. But finally, acts like Osama bin Laden's confidants' attacks on US mission in Africa and Al Qaeda's involvement with Chechen fighters against Russia brought the Taliban international condemnation.

Subsequently, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo and economic sanctions on the Taliban for harboring terrorist networks of Al Qaeda. But the Taliban had ignored international calls to respect and follow the UN resolutions at a serious loss to its human population.²⁴ So, the Secretary General had time and again highlighted the plight of average Afghans in the context of economic sanctions and had sought international assistance to stabilize the Afghan situation. After decades of peacekeeping, the UN in recent times has highlighted that conflict prevention and peace-building are multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral in nature and therefore require concerted political, developmental, social and humanitarian efforts. So local, regional, and national capacities need to be developed in a post-conflict situation where all the warring parties need to be assisted to pursue their interests through political channels.

With the adoption of the Brahimi Report by the Security Council, the UN has reaffirmed the importance of structural conflict prevention by highlighting the root causes of conflict like poverty, inequality, absence of democracy, human rights violation, illegal arms and drugs trade.²⁵ Thus, the Bonn Accord is a first step towards peace-building and conflict-resolution in Afghanistan. By and large, the Bonn proposals have got Afghanistan's peace process off to a good start. Instead of pushing a once and for all settlement, which would have proved even more vulnerable to internecine conflict over facts on the ground, the UN and Afghan leaders have opted to begin with an interim council of 29 people. It was decided in the Accord that an

²⁴ Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan: Ending the Policy Quagmire," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.54, no.2, Spring 2001, p.410.

²⁵ Brahimi Report, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, United Nations, General Assembly Security Council, 21 August, 2000, p.1-15.

independent commission will organize an all-Afghan Loya Jirga, an assembly of tribal elders and local representatives will nominate a transitional government to take over from the interim council, as well as a parliament or legislative council that will draft a future constitution for the country. It was further decided that the constitution would be mandated by a second Loya Jirga, and followed by elections. In other words, it is a three-stage process with a specific time frame. The advantage of this three stage process is that it allows the international community and the less democratic Afghan leaders enough space and time for reconstruction and regeneration of the Afghan state and civil society in a smooth transition of political power. The interim council is broad-based in more ways than one. While its membership is drawn from Afghanistan's major ethnic groups (Pashtun, Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek, and other religious minority of Shias), it is led by the southern Pashtun leader Hamid Karzai. So, the focus has been on getting moderate and untainted leaders, as well as those with some track record in their allocated responsibility.²⁶ It also lays down an important role for women's groups, human rights and civil society, both in the Loya Jirga and in Afghanistan future government.²⁷

To this extent, the Bonn agreement provides a framework within which more stable governing structures can be built. In the case of Afghanistan, the interim council's role will be short-lived, but it will hold the key to prospects of peace and security. In the six-month term that the council will administer, the chief tasks are to:

- Provide aid (including housing materials), health care and education on an emergency footing with the emphasis on reaching remote areas.
- De-mine and make transport routes safe.
- Establish the rule of law in cities.
- Draw up exhaustive plans for reconstruction.

²⁶ Michael Griffin (2001), Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan, p.33-52.

²⁷ "The Afghanistan Crisis," Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 2002, op. cit.

- Work with the UN to develop a civil service, judiciary and police Force.

The Bonn agreement has two in-built advantages: the interim and transitional administration will be Afghans. It will also include Afghan refugees and the Diaspora, in which most Afghan professionals are concentrated and are prepared to involve themselves in reconstruction.²⁸ Summing up, the Bonn agreement has charted a political course for Afghanistan future. But its proposal will be only successful when stabilization and Afghan nation-building are a top priority.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEFEAT OF TALIBAN:

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on America led to the American campaign for combating international terrorism, which targeted Afghanistan as the breeding ground of terrorist activities. As Osama Bin Laden waged war against America with the support of Taliban, America intervened in Afghanistan to eliminate the anti-American terrorist. America declared war on Afghanistan on 7th October 2001.

If one views the affairs of Taliban during the year 2001, one could find that it crossed all limits of tolerance. In March, Taliban blew up giant Bamian Buddha statues in defiance of international efforts to save them. In May, it ordered the religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims, and Hindu women to veil themselves like other Afghan women. During September, eight foreign aid workers were put on trial in the Supreme Court for promoting Christianity. This follows months of tension between Taliban and aid agencies. Nine-eleven was the point of complete departure.

Beginning with the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, it took the United States, the sole superpower on earth, 27

²⁸ M. Nazif Shahrani, "The Future of the state and the structure of community governance in Afghanistan" in William Maley (ed.) (1998), Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban, p.242.

days of war preparation before it dropped the first bomb over the Taliban /Al Qaeda forces, their infrastructure and establishments in Afghanistan. The innovative and war fighting strategy of the National Security team, code named as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)²⁹, began on October 7, 2001, and within two months it achieved a spectacular victory for the United States and its allies. It successfully overthrew the Taliban government and deprived Al Qaeda of its sanctuary within Afghanistan and left its surviving leaders running for their lives. Washington also helped establish a government under a new leadership and tried to bring peace and calm to this war-torn country. Under its initiative, international donors' conferences were held and marginal aid began to flow to Kabul from different quarters. Nearly two years after September 11, Afghanistan could be said to be sailing along, and the American policy has paid off well.

As far as the removal of the Taliban from power and the destruction of Al Qaeda training camps and other infrastructures within Afghanistan are concerned, it was a simple walkover for the Americans. The US did it very smoothly in a shortest possible time and, virtually without casualty to its troops³⁰. This was possible mostly due to the working of *four important determinants*. *Firstly*, it was the mobilization of Americans military forces. America had a massive war preparation before it launched its air operation in Afghanistan. In addition to its permanent facilities in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, and floating aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea, and naval base off the coast in Oman, Washington used base facilities in Pakistan as well as central Asian Republics. This was the biggest mobilization since the 1991 Gulf war. The US arsenal included B-1 and B-52 bombers, dozens of fighters and support aircraft that were ordered to the Gulf and the Indian Ocean region along with elite Special Operation troops. With the unfolding of events,

²⁹ The address by George W. Bush, President of US, delivered to the nation, from the treaty room, Washington D.C. October 7, 2001. "We Are At War Against Terrorism: The Attack on the Taliban," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. LXVII, No. 1, Oct 15, 2001, p.3.

³⁰ Michael E.O'Hanlon, "A Flawed Masterpiece," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 3, May/June 2002, p.55.

the US increased the number of special operation forces and CIA Teams, and engaged them in working with various opposition elements. At the peak of war, about 60,000 American forces were involved in this operation, out of which about half were in the Persian Gulf. In addition to this, America's friends and allies added no more than 15,000 troops. Also about 15,000 northern alliance fighters mostly from Tajik and Uzbek ethnic groups and thousands of Pashtun soldiers joined in the winning side in November 2001. So compared to Afghanistan's military capability, it was a huge preparation by the US to remove the Taliban regime from power in the shortest possible time.

Second determinant was the international support to the US. One of the immediate needs of America's war against the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda networks in Afghanistan was the mobilization of international public opinion. On this core US first priority was the UN sanction. The Bush administration successfully maneuvered the Security Council Resolution 1373 adopted on September 29, 2001 and then centered around formation of coalition against its "war on terrorism." Within days, the US claimed that 48 countries had declared their support for the military campaign in Afghanistan³¹. Such a political support of so many countries on US war efforts is a rare event in the American diplomatic history. The countries, which directly participated in the war at some point of time or the other, included UK, France, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Germany. Japan, Italy and the Netherlands showed their support to the US by deploying their warships in the Arabian Sea. In fact, the Europeans were so forthcoming about their support to the Americans that on the very next day of the terrorist attacks on the US, the French newspaper *Le Monde* proclaimed on the front page, "we are all Americans now." A few days later NATO declared its full support to the Americans war efforts. The most powerful military alliance of the world rapidly invoked article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: an attack on one is an attack on all. However, regional support was more

³¹ *Washington File*, International Information Programs, US Department of State, Aug 22, 2002.

important in terms of American war preparation and actual operation on the ground. In this connection, the role of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Oman are very critical and worth noting. These countries provided the most essential logistical facilities as well as their respective territorial waters and transit facilities on their territories. Shortly after the American campaign began, President Bush claimed that the US enjoyed wide support for its actions both in the western hemisphere and the Arab and the Muslim world. The President declared: "we are supported by the collective will of the world."³²

Third important determinant was the use of high technology weapons. When the war was intensified in different strategic points in Afghanistan, it was intensified not in terms of fighter planes and bombardments, but in terms of the use of Americans high technology weapons such as Advance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (AUAV), Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircrafts, use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology³³. All these new technology equipments helped the US maintain continuous reconnaissance of the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in the different parts of the country and put the enemy in the defensive from the beginning.

Fourth, most crucial determinant was the indigenous allies. Within weeks of this detalibanization process, it was observed that one significant development was getting momentum in the south and the south eastern region of the country. A fraction of the Pashtun tribes who had welcomed the Taliban six years ago, and continued to support the regime, had now begun to oppose it openly. In fact, this region of Afghanistan was considered as the stronghold of the fundamentalist militia, and therefore, once Pashtuns backtracked from their support, it implied that the days of the Taliban were numbered. To the chagrin of the Taliban, by mid November, these

³² The Times of India, October 8, 2001.

³³ Greg Schneider, "High-tech devices could help US score in Afghanistan," The Times of India, October 16, 2002, p.9.

people began to accept help from the US Special Forces. The Present Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, led one of the Pashtun groups. Another significant support came from Gul Agha Shirzai tribal factions within the Pashtun populated areas in mainly southern Afghanistan where the Americans played a very critical role in supporting the Afghan leaders. In the opinion of an American analyst, "Had these Pashtun forces decided that they feared the Northern Alliance and the US more than the Taliban, Afghanistan might have become effectively partitioned, with Al Qaeda taking refuge exclusively in the South and the war effort rendered largely futile."³⁴ But the most crucial military support the Americans obtained was from the Northern Alliance of the assassinated commander Ahmed Shah Masud and former President Barhanuddin Rabbani. In fact, once the war started, it was Northern alliance that began to capture one after another city and states in direct consultation with the Americans.

In addition, one reason for the swift collapse of Taliban could have been the "partial withdrawal" and "curtailment of overt support" of the Pakistani military advisors and regulars over the weeks following the Americans attack began³⁵. Western Intelligence Officials said at the time that the Pakistani move "may have been a crucial factor" in the surprisingly quick withdrawal of Taliban forces when confronted by the northern alliance³⁶. Thus presumably, the lessening of Pakistani military support to the Taliban cost dearly to the fundamentalist militia and led to the fall of the regime.

Thus, a combination of several determinants pushed the American led coalition to a military victory. In the words of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, what won the battle was "a combination of the ingenuity of the US special forces; the most advanced, precision-guided munitions in the US arsenal, delivered by US navy,

³⁴ Michael E.O'Hanlon, A Flawed Masterpiece, p.55-56.

³⁵ C.Uday Bhasker, "Lifting the Smokescreen: Terror Tales from Pakistan's Army," The Times of India, January 3, 2003.

³⁶ Douglas Frantz, "Pakistan Ended Aid to Taliban Only Hesitantly," The New York Times, December 8, 2001.

air force, and marine corps crews; and the courage of valiant, one-legged Afghan fighters on horseback...on the plains of Afghanistan, the nineteenth century met the twenty first century and defeated a dangerous and determined adversary-a remarkable achievement.”³⁷

SHORTCOMINGS OF THE U.S. WAR IN AFGHANISTAN:

Despite all these ‘successes’, the United States has failed to accomplish the main objectives of the war i.e. to capture Laden and Mullah Omar and their top lieutenants, and to bring about a reconciliation among the different Afghan faction remained as unfinished agenda. There are several factors responsible for this failed policy of the US.

These could be attributed to overdependence of US on Pakistan. On the eve of the Afghan operation, the US probably underestimated the Pakistani involvement in the Taliban and the Al Qaeda establishments. American leadership could not properly comprehend the bond of religious camaraderie that had been ignited in the form of extremism and terrorism across the Durand line for quite a longer period of time. The situation around this time is that while there was large-scale Afghan resentment against the repressive Taliban regime of mullah Omar, majority opinion in Pakistan, especially in the army and intelligence deeply supported the fundamentalist government of Kabul. In the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan states, people had even demanded the most orthodox *Sharia* law and its implementation in the Pakistani society. The Pakistani leadership not only misguided the Americans to make war efforts a total failure, they also conceived well planned strategies to extract maximum benefit from the US in the form of economic and military assistance. From their own previous experience, ³⁸ Pakistanis knew that their main aim was to linger the conflict to the maximum possible extent so as to

³⁷ Donald H.Rumsfeld, “Transforming the Military,” Foreign Affairs, May/June 2002, p.21.

³⁸ The Friday Times, Lahore, December 13-19, 2002.

keep the country in the international limelight and gain diplomatic support from others.

Another factor responsible for US policy failure in Afghanistan was the self made menace. In a larger perspective, the present American failure in Afghanistan is mostly the outcome of the 1980s CIA's war against the former Soviet Union. Under an illusionary cold war policy, the American CIA and Pakistani ISI wanted to turn the Afghan jihad into a global war waged by all Muslim states against the Soviet Union. Within the American financial support and the Pakistani logistic support, they trained some 35,000 Muslim radicals from forty Islamic countries who joined Afghanistan's fight between early 1980s and early 1990s. This has been given in the third chapter where how Afghanistan was Talibanized and used against the Soviet Union has been discussed in detail. While fighting a Cold War against Soviet Union very little thought was given to the long term consequences, and the likelihood that these militants, "now trained, experienced and self confident," might later turn against the US. Americans became aware of a grave threat when they realized that the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993, killing six people and injuring hundred, was the work of terrorist with an Afghan background. Then a more shocking attack for the US was the bombing of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998, killing over two fifty people and wounding more than five thousand others. The US traced Bin Laden as responsible and launched some seventy five Tomahawk cruise missiles against his bases in eastern Afghanistan, killing twenty militants but leaving his network unharmed. Finally comes September 11, 2001, when more than three thousand people are killed in New York and Washington, and America declares "war against terrorism" and hunts for Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Mullah Omar, and associates.

Another major drawback on the part of the US has been weaponizing the warlords. In Afghanistan, an estimated seven

hundred thousand men remain armed,³⁹ and efforts to disarm them have barely begun, which is undoubtedly a very important step towards bringing peace and stability to the country. But instead of working towards that direction, the US continued to supply weapons and financial aid to the warlords to use them to fight Al Qaeda and the Taliban. In many parts of the country, US Special Forces have provided warlords and commanders huge amount of money, vehicles and sophisticated weapons. In a sense, the US has become simultaneously a staunchest supporter and a greatest opponent of Afghan government. On the one hand, Washington aims at stabilizing the central authority, and at the same time weakening the regime by working with the provincial warlords.

The situation is exactly the same as during the 1980s, when the CIA supported even Osama. Then, it was a fight against a superpower, and now, the fight is within, among the Afghans but again with American money and weapons. American forces argue that it was necessary for them to support the “influential people” to get information about the terrorist, as well as to uphold local support. The advocates of this idea contend that they are only trying to make the best of an age-old Afghan tradition. Yet the notion that Afghanistan has always been of feuding tribes and warlords is a myth popularized by the west which did not hesitate to walk away from the country once their geo-political interests were fulfilled. The present strategy could repeat the old American game in the country and a small spark in the whole Afghan society could ignite a terrible explosion in the form of civil war in future.⁴⁰

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF U.S. WAR AIMS AND POLICY:

B The attacks on 11 September and following American operation in Afghanistan have raised a host of questions, and touched a broad

³⁹ Michael Massing, “Losing the peace?” The Nation, New York, May 13, 2002.

⁴⁰ Ahmed Rashid, “Freedom Isn’t Easy,” Far Eastern Economic Review, June 27, 2002, p.16.

array of ongoing structural and conflictual developments about world politics. Despite the unimpeachable evidence of bin Laden's activities, questions do remain about the nature of the fifth Afghan war and the evidence proffered by the US-UK of the role of Laden and the Taliban. Firstly, what was the evidence by 7 October 2001, when the US-UK assault began? Neither the US nor the UK government offered a comprehensive account of Laden's guilt nor-and this is decisive-did they have an account of why the Taliban and Afghanistan should be a target of the US-UK onslaught? The UK government evidence against Laden, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban, as journalist Robert Fisk reported the next day, rely more 'on conjecture rather than on evidence.'⁴¹ In fact, of the seventy points laid out by the document, only nine relate specifically to 9/11, while the rest report on the known history of Al Qaeda and terror attacks against US targets, as well as on the heinousness of the Taliban-both well-known issues that do not, however, amount to even circumstantial evidence for the assaults of 9/11.⁴²

The second is, why did the US-UK target Afghanistan in the attacks when the state did not itself participate in the events of 9/11? What has the Taliban has to do with bin Laden, and should ant state culpable for the acts of those who take refuge there, particularly if the state does not have an extradition treaty? Does the US action repeal the international norms on extradition?⁴³ The Taliban failed to handover bin Laden or to check his activities, so they had to feel the wrath of a thousand guns. But the point was not to force the Taliban to act, but it was to overthrow the Taliban and to put in place an administration pliant to US demands. The precedent set by this action is immense, for it now opens the door, for example, for an Israeli

⁴¹ Robert Fisk, "This Loose Conjecture is Unlikely to Cut Much Ice with the Arab Nations," The Independent, 5 October 2001.

⁴² Government of UK, *Responsibility for the terrorist atrocities in the United States, 11 September 2001* (4 October 2001).

⁴³ While the US denounces the use of military tribunals for the trials of its citizens in foreign lands, President Bush authorized the use of these military courts to try suspected terrorists who are in the US on legal visas-another act that calls into doubt the US State's commitment to international legality.

occupation of the Palestinian authority and the creation of a puppet administration there. The Taliban had to go not only because of bin Laden, but mainly for reasons of geo-strategic significance discussed later.

Justice operates on two registers. First there is the need to establish the guilt of those who conducted the acts of 9/11 and try them, perhaps in the International Court of Justice. Second, a violent act creates an immense amount of insecurity among the people who have the right to live in a secure world. It is the responsibility of the state and the international institutions to root out the cause of the violence. Bin Laden's confessions suggest that he participated in the acts of 9/11, but to target him alone ignores the social forces that produced 9/11. To pin 9/11 on bin Laden removes the need to investigate the life-stories of the nineteen men, to find out how it is that so many Saudis are dissatisfied with their conditions, indeed why they seem to be unhappy with the presence of a permanent US military establishment in Saudi Arabia since the Gulf War of 1990-91.

Bush and Laden, both men of oil, talked of the war in religious terms. Bush, in the lead, made the conflict about bin Laden and the Taliban, when in fact the struggle should have proceeded from an investigation of 9/11 and then moved in two directions: towards the arrest and trial of those who assisted the suicide bombers, and then toward the reconfiguration of the causes that produced such horrid desperation in the first place. Security for all people is yet a far fetched dream, because the war against bin Laden produces no guarantee that such acts of terror will not occur in future.

Unfortunately, this encroachment on the sovereign rights of Afghanistan took place without a specific mandate from the UN Security Council, and without much evident consideration and public explanation by the US government about such casualties was not an official priority, especially when compared with the huge attention given to individual Americans who died or were wounded in the combat. Secondly, there seems to be little efforts by the US to use its

influence to ensure its Afghan allies on the ground acted in accordance with the international law of war when dealing with the domestic adversaries. The American role in failing to restraint Northern Alliance forces from massacring Taliban prisoners of war, especially in the course of controlling the makeshift prison at Mazar-e-Sharif has been criticized by respective European journalistic observers, and the criticism seems convincing.⁴⁴

Like the anti-British protests of an earlier geo-political era, and anti-Soviet struggle of the 1980s, an increasing number of Afghans have begun to raise their voice against the American presence. With the increasing number of clashes between the American/Afghan government forces and the emerging Taliban/Al-Qaeda elements, Afghanistan seems to be again slipping back into chaos and confusion, and that the US troops face a clear prospect of a protracted war.

In early May 2003, about 300 Afghans chanted anti-American and anti-British slogans in the first such protest since the US led forces overthrew the Taliban in 2001. The protesters, who included government employees and university students, complained of growing insecurity, slow post-war reconstruction and delay in payment of state salaries by Hamid Karzai's US-backed government.⁴⁵ The protesters, however, seemed more concerned about the security situation in the country, improvements in the economy, and progress in post-war reconstruction.⁴⁶ The circulation of shabnamas ("night letters") has always marked the beginning of an internal resistance movement in Afghanistan.⁴⁷ This is normally the secret messages conveyed about the enemy and operational strategy, urging jihad or holy war. It has been reported that in almost all the Pushtun belt of Afghanistan, the circulation of shabnamas has become a daily affair.

⁴⁴ Adam Roberts, "Crisis in Kunduz: The Coalition Must Make it Clear That Surrendering Troops Will Be Treated Humanely," *The Guardian*, 24 November 2001.

⁴⁵ "Kabul sees anti-US protest," *The Times of India*, May 7, 2003.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Henry S. Bradsher (1983), *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., p. 106, 208, 214, 233, 247, 268 and 291.

The decisions shaping the US military campaign in Afghanistan show a remarkable continuity based on an ongoing, pre-11 September evolution in approaches to global system. It is argued that the Bush administration was seeking a war in Afghanistan as a means for achieving global geo-political goals. To see the whole picture we must return to the central fact of recent history- the fall of the state-socialist regimes in 1989. The way the US exercised its hegemonic power in the world politics in relation to its military operations in Afghanistan wars very much a continuation of a policy started at the end of the Cold War. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, the collapse of the Soviet power in world politics 'destroyed the system that had stabilized international relations for some forty years.'⁴⁸ Andre Gunder Frank, in an article written in June 1999, identified this strategic trend in post Cold War US foreign policy as 'Washington sees its military might as a trump card that can be employed to prevail all its rival in the coming struggle for resources.'⁴⁹

The dramatic and unprecedented events that took place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-91 radically transformed geo-political and geo-economic contexts of the world politics. The geo-political context was transformed because with the dismantling of Soviet Union in 1991, the bipolar structure of global politics disappeared together with the Cold War. In the absence of another superpower, the US now enjoys unassailable dominance. At a second level our major regional powers that are pre-eminent in areas of the world, but none is likely to match the US in the key dimensions of power-military, economic, and technological- that secure global political dominance. The US has the ability to control, through its military power, political leverage and its control over globe's significant economic resources. The leading position of the US stems from its ability to control the sources of, and transport route from, crucial

⁴⁸ Eric J.Hobsbawm (1994), The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991, New York: Vintage, p. 9-11.

⁴⁹ A.G. Frank, "NATO, Caucasus/Central Asia Oil," Fourth International World Socialist Website, 16 June, 1999, p.1.

energy and other strategic material supplies needed by other leading industrial states.

Coming to the other geo-strategic reasons compelling the US, after 9/11, beside not only to go after bin Laden but also to overthrow the Taliban regime, we find wider and deeper issues involved. Before moving onto these issues we need to look at the US involvement in Afghanistan prior to September 11 attacks on the US.

It has been critically argued regarding US war in Afghanistan that Bin Laden and the attack on WTC rather offered the an opportunity to overthrow the barely legitimate Taliban, install a regime friendly to the US, push forward the Central Asian pipeline, and, if all goes well, perhaps ensure that US-transnational such as UNOCAL gets the contract rather than the Argentine transnational, Bridas.⁵⁰ The war, after all, is a fuel's errand. It rather seems that the war is about the pipelines for Central Asian natural gas and oil through Afghanistan into South Asia; that the war is about an assault against the same radical political Islam that was once supported by the CIA; that the war allows the US to establish permanent bases in Central Asia, to further its strategic goal of the encirclement of both China and of Iran. Oil is a question of US national security, not just because of its vast appetite or addiction to oil (more than fifty percent of the world's consumption), but also on the behalf of the US-based multinationals.⁵¹ US interest in Iraq, today, is about the stability of Gulf oil fields, even as the US talks about democracy, rule of law and the need to overthrow their former ally, Saddam Hussein. In Central Asia the game is similar.

Within a week of the commencement of war in Afghanistan, the Bush administration discussed the shape of a post-Afghan government to do deals over oil and gas pipelines. The *New York Times* reported on 15 December that, "the State Department is exploring the potential for post-Taliban energy projects in the region which has

⁵⁰ Ahmed Rashid (2001), Taliban: Islam, Oil and the new Great Game in Central Asia, London, p. 170-182.

⁵¹ Ibid.

more than six percent of the world's proven oil reserves and almost forty percent of its gas reserves.⁵² President Bush's appointment of a former aide to the UNOCAL, Afghan-born Zalmay Khalilzad, as special envoy to Afghanistan, is particularly interesting in this context.⁵³ With so many business deals, so much oil and natural gas, all these huge multinationals with powerful connections to the Bush administration do indicate that there is a significant money subtext to the 'Operation Enduring Freedom.'⁵⁴ In the words of Zoltan Grossman, 'it is not a conspiracy; it is just business as usual.'⁵⁵

In December 2000 the US Government Energy Information Fact sheet on Afghanistan reported: 'Afghanistan's significance from an energy standpoint stems from its geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. This potential includes proposed multi-billion dollar oil and gas export pipelines through Afghanistan.'⁵⁶ John Pilger, the former chief correspondent of the British-based Mirror wrote, "Bush's concealed agenda is to exploit the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian basin, the greatest of untapped fossil fuel on earth."⁵⁷ The issue of energy really came to the forefront when President Karzai, and Pakistani and Turkmen leaders signed agreement in December 2002, paving way for the construction of gas pipeline through Afghanistan, carrying Turkmen gas to Pakistan.

It is far too soon to analyze the full meaning of the recent events, and the exact outcome of the maneuvers in Eurasia, and its impact on the global strategic equations is not yet clear. But, the increasingly heavy involvement of the US administration, significant regional powers, and transnational corporation in the area underscores the central importance of the oil and natural gas resources of the region

⁵² New York Times, 15 December 2001.

⁵³ K.Sengupta and A.Gumbel, "New US envoy to Kabul Lobbied for Taliban Oil Rights," The Independent, 10 January 2002.

⁵⁴ 'West Plans Oil Pipeline via Afghanistan,' Financial Times Limited, 25 December 2001.

⁵⁵ Z.Grossman, 'New US Military Bases,' ZNet, 5 February 2002.

⁵⁶ Sitaram Yechury, "America, Oil and Afghanistan," The Hindu, 13 October 2001.

⁵⁷ Salim Muwakkil, "Pipeline Politics Taint US War," Chicago Tribune, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/>, 18 March 2002.

and the potential for sharp conflicts over the control of resources.⁵⁸ The growth of regional antagonism will be heightened as the region is integrated more into the global system of production and trade.⁵⁹ The region has four nuclear-armed countries-Russia, China, Pakistan and India-making it a dangerous potential flashpoint of global significance. America's war in Afghanistan has already upset the delicate balance of enmity between old foes India and Pakistan, and increased the militarization of the entire Asian region.⁶⁰

A DISCUSSION OVER THE IMPLICATIONS OF PREEMPTION AND PREVENTION:

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, demands for revenge reverberated across the US. Essayist Lance Morrow (2001:48) gave voice to the nation's fury when he advocated a foreign policy of fierce and relentless retaliation against Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, US President George W. Bush articulated a new national security strategy based on striking terrorist organizations and the states that harbor them before they could endanger the US. Though expressed in the language of preemption, the Bush strategy embodied a far more problematic doctrine of preventive warfare. Whereas the grounds for preemption lies in evidence of a credible, imminent threat,⁶¹ the basis for prevention rest on the suspicion of an incipient, contingent threat.⁶² It is argued that an American national security strategy that embraces preventive war will set an inauspicious precedent, undermining normative restraints on when and how states may use military force.

⁵⁸ The Economist, "A Dangerous Addiction," 15-21 December 2001.

⁵⁹ Time Magazine, 12 November 2001; Observer, 7 October 2001; Explorer, February 2000.

⁶⁰ Henry Kissinger, 'New World Disorder,' Newsweek, 24 May 1999.

⁶¹ R.K. Betts, "Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost Opportunities," Ethics and International Affairs 17, 2003, p.17-24.

⁶² B.E. Carter and P.R. Trimble (1991), International Law, p. 1243.

The new national security strategy (NSS) has been described as candid and bold, perhaps the most sweeping reformulation of US strategic thinking in more than half a century.⁶³ President Bush first sketched its contours during his commencement address at West Point on June 1, 2002. "We must take the battle to the enemy," he exhorted, "and confronts the worse threat before they emerge." After urging Americans to be "forward-looking and resolute," the President concluded by calling upon them "to be ready for preemptive action." Building on the proposition that "nation need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger" (p.15 of NSS report), it argued that the acquisition of weapon of mass destruction by terrorist with global reach provided the US with a compelling case for engaging in anticipatory self-defense, even if it was not clear when and where an enemy might attack. Speaking in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002, for example, he warned that grave dangers were gathering in Iraq. Regime change was imperative, and preemption was a mechanism for removing the Iraqi leader from power. America, Bush insisted, must be proactive; it "cannot wait for the final proof-the smoking gun-that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

By asserting that the US could not wait for UN inspectors to find a "smoking gun," Bush was laying the groundwork for radical change in US policy governing the use of force.⁶⁴ The President was not "reserving a right" to counter imminent threats, noted one observer.⁶⁵ Self defense has been called one of the "fundamental principles" of international law.⁶⁶ Although states have a legal right to defend themselves against aggression, legal scholarship has not reached a consensus on when that right may be invoked. Traditionally, the right of self-defense has been understood as allowing state recourse to force

⁶³ Gaddis, J.L. (2002), "A Grand Strategy." *Foreign Policy* 133: p. 50-57.

⁶⁴ P. Zelikow, "The Arrogant Capital Empire." *Newsweek*, March 24, 2003, p.18-33.

⁶⁵ M.Byers, "Jumping the Gun," *London Review of Books*, July 25, 2002, p. 3-5.

⁶⁶ G. Schwarzenberger, "The Fundamental Principles of International Law." In *Recueil des Cours*, 1955, p.195- 383.

when repelling actual as well as imminent armed attacks.⁶⁷ In addition, the defensive reaction must be proportionate to the danger, should not sacrifice others to minimize one's own risk, and cannot serve as a reprisal. Self-defense is thus restricted to protection, not excessive or punitive measures aimed at redressing injuries.

Following the promulgation of the UN Charter, appeals to this customary right of self-defense became controversial. The Charter addresses self-defense in two places. First, article 2 (4) stipulates that "all members shall refrain in their international relation from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the UN." Second, article 51 states that "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security." One school of thought about the Charter interprets article 2 (4) and 51 as superceding customary law, and thus limiting forcible self-defense to cases where the Security Council has not yet responded to an armed attack. A second school of thought argues by highlighting the concept of "inherent right" in article 51 that pre-charter, customary rules of self-defense continue in place.⁶⁸ The language of the charter concludes Anthony Clarke Arend ⁶⁹ "admits to two interpretations about the permissibility of preemptive force". International practice, however, is unambiguous: states can claim an independent right to use military force in an anticipatory manner so long as the criteria of necessity, proportionality, and protection are met. The difficulty is determining what constitute an "overwhelming necessity."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ A.C.Arend and R.J.Beck (1993), International Law and the Use of Force: Beyond the Charter Paradigm, p. 72.

⁶⁸ J.L.Brierly, "The Law Of Nations", edited by H.Waldock, 1963, p. 417.

⁶⁹ A.C.Arend, "International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military force," Washington Quarterly 26, 2003, p. 89-103.

⁷⁰ G.A.Raymond, "Necessity in Foreign Policy," Political Science Quarterly 113,1998-1999, p.673-688.

The temptation to attack an adversary who may attack you sometime in the future is often overwhelming. Some historians believe anxiety over increasing strategic vulnerability is an important explanation of warfare in an anarchical, self-help state system.⁷¹ It is “the right of every sovereign state to protect itself by preventing a condition of affairs in which it will be too late to protect itself,” proclaimed US Secretary of State Elihu Root on the eve of the First World War.⁷² A significant body of scholarship wrestles with the questioning of whether preventive military strikes of the sort envisioned by Root are legally permissible. The scholarly consensus suggests that attempts to justify preventive wars are a “bottomless legal pit.”⁷³ Hugo Grotius, for example, argued that preemption was lawful when a danger became “imminent, and as it were, at the point of happening.” Conversely, preventive use of force was inadmissible. Taking up arms to weaken a rising power that might someday use violence was “repugnant to every principle of justice.”⁷⁴

Given the absence of a legal justification in both custom and the UN charter for preventive war, what is problematic about the new Bush security strategy is its framing of preventive military action as preemption. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. warns, “Rebaptizing preventive war as preemptive war doesn’t change its character. Preventive war is based on the proposition that it is possible to foretell with certainty what is to come,”⁷⁵ But predicting another state’s future behaviour is difficult because leadership intentions are hard to discern. Information on an adversary’s long-range goals may be obscured by its attempts to shroud policy planning in secrecy. Another drawback is divining whether projected capability enhancements are earmarked for offensive or defensive purposes. Weapons procurement by one state can provoke alarm in another, triggering round after round of

⁷¹ A.J.P.Taylor (1954), The Struggle For Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918, p.166.

⁷² C.G.Fenwick (1965), International Law, p. 275.

⁷³ M.A.Kaplan and N.Katzenbach (1961), The Political Foundation Of International Law, p.213.

⁷⁴ H.Grotius (1949), The Law of War and Peace, p.73, 77.

⁷⁵ A.Schlesinger, Jr, “The Immorality of Preventive War,”
http://www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2002_fall/schlesinger.html/ .

counter measures by each side, even when both have defensive motives. If present international norms allow preventive military action, these cycles of mutual suspicion could easily escalate to war.

A key factor in shaping the normative climate of different historical period has been the distribution of powers within the state system.⁷⁶ The interests of the powerful exert a significant impact on whether prevailing norms will be permissible or restrictive, whether they sanction preventive military action or proscribe its use. International norms do not exist in isolation. They fit together in a complex mosaic to form a normative order. At the base of every normative order is a set of foundational norms that define its axiology, or value orientation.⁷⁷ Simply put, international norms express a collective, socially sanctioned set of perspective on what ought to be done, a collective expectation as to what will be done, and pronouncements about the costs of compliant versus non compliant behaviour with respect to potential norm violation. They are more than modal regularities; they are inter-subjectively shared understandings about the obligations of international actors to behave in specified ways.⁷⁸ How the US acts is an enormous influence on the behaviour of others. When the reigning hegemon promotes a new code of conduct, it alters the normative frame of reference for virtually every one else. In anarchical systems, what the strongest do eventually shapes what others do, and when that practice becomes common, it tends to take on an aura of obligations. As Stanley Hoffmann has put it, rules of behaviour become rules *for* behaviour.⁷⁹

Therefore, we find that any state acting in a discretionary, preventive manner against some hypothetical attack from a latent adversary must make a subjective judgment about how much force is

⁷⁶ C.W.Kegley and G.A.Raymond (1990), When Trust Breaks Down: Alliance Norms and World Politics, p. 153-178.

⁷⁷ G.A.Raymond, "Normative Orders and Peace," in What Do We Know About War? (Ed.) (2000), by J.A.Vasquez, p. 281-297.

⁷⁸ G.A.Raymond, "Problems and Prospects in the Study of International Norms," Mershon International Studies Review 41, 1997, p. 205-245.

⁷⁹ Stanley Hoffmann, "International Law and the Control of Force." in The Relevance of International Law, (ed) (1971), by K.Deutsch and S.Hoffmann, p. 34-66.

needed to ensure a reasonable chance of success. Faced with such uncertainties, reliance upon worst-case analysis is likely. Yet the devastation wrought by an unbridled first strike emanating from worst-case assumptions might outweigh whatever benefits the initiator hoped to gain. The Bush administration's strategy thus raises anew the timeless moral and legal issues about the conditions under which, and the purposes for which, anticipatory self-defense is permissible to counter potential threats to national and international security. Proclaiming an exclusive right to determine when anticipatory self-defense is legitimate impugns the legal principle that no one may be a judge in his own cause.⁸⁰ This form of unilateralism will erode America's reputation and squander the "soft" power that is so critical for it to exercise global leadership.⁸¹

But the significance of the document (NSS Report) resides in its capacity to link some of the most familiar themes in the American history—freedom, democracy and entrepreneurship—to new perceptions of threat and a new inclination to exercise power. In fact, the most striking feature of the Bush administration is intermingling of democratic idealism with the exercise of pre-emptive power. Of the many great debates in the literature on international relations, one debate focuses on whether nations act to balance power or whether they act to balance threats.⁸² Another controversy asks whether power shapes policy or whether the perception of threat determines the accretion of power.⁸³ In the case of the Bush administration, we find the salience of threat perception. Fear has shaped policy.

Bush, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and their colleagues were altogether aware of the danger posed by Al-Qaeda, of the threats to kill Americans, and of the plethora of terrorist groups operating around

⁸⁰ O.Schachter, "Disputes Involving The Use of Force," in The International Court of Justice at a Crossroads, (ed.) (1987), by L.F. Damrosch, p. 223-241.

⁸¹ C.Dawson, Dynamics of World History, 2002, p.xvii.

⁸² Stephen.M.Waltz (1987), The origins of alliances, New York, University Press.

⁸³ Fareed Zakaria (1998), From wealth to power: the unusual origins of America's world role, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

the world and in the US itself.⁸⁴ The events of 9/11, therefore did not change everything; 'most fundamentally,' explained Condoleezza Rice, '9/11 crystallized our vulnerability.'⁸⁵ 'A new reality was born' on September 11, said Secretary of State Powell, a reality that linked terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, and rogue or failed states.⁸⁶ Thereafter, fear shaped strategy, elevating pre-emption to a new degree of importance. Bush's advisers wanted to mobilize power to thwart threats, foster peace and build freedom. 'After 9/11,, Condoleezza Rice stated, 'there is no longer any doubt that today America faces an existential threat to our security-a threat as great as any we faced during the Civil War, World War II, or the Cold War.'⁸⁷

The threat emanates from the nexus of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and aggressive tyrants in command of rogue states. Faced with threat, the Bush's National Security Strategy is said by its spokesperson to offer a 'bold vision' that 'captures new realities and new opportunities.' American power, they conclude, 'must be used to promote a balance of power that favors freedom.'⁸⁸ The history of American foreign relations is not about the struggle between power and ideals, as it is so often portrayed, but about their intermingling. America's ideals have always encapsulated its interests. In short, power, ideology, and interests have always had a dynamic and unsettled relationship with one another.⁸⁹ So today, in many respects, Bush's National Security Strategies are more firmly rooted in the past. Pre-emption has a long tradition in American history.

In 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt announced a new corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, unilaterally asserting the right of the US to intervene militarily in the Western hemisphere to preserve

⁸⁴ National Security Council, 'National strategy for combating terrorism,' February 2003, p. 6-10.

⁸⁵ Condoleezza Rice, 'A balance of power that favors freedom,' 1 October 2002, <http://www.manhattaninstitute.org/html>.

⁸⁶ Colin L. Powell, 'The administration's position with regard to Iraq,' House Committee on International Relations, 19 September 2002, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Rice, 'A balance of power,' p. 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1; National Security Strategy, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Peter S. Onuf (2000), Jefferson's empire: the language of American nationhood, Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

order. 'Pre-emptive imperialism' was designed to thwart prospective European interventions and protect the national security of the US.⁹⁰ Pre-emption, then, is not new; but it has a place of special importance in the thinking of Bush's defense advisers. It is 'fundamental,' Wolfowitz told a joint congressional committee.⁹¹

Foreign policy decision-making cannot be divorced from the normative climate in which it occurs. During turbulent times, mistrust is endemic and suspicion pervasive. Unsure of the aims of others, political leaders became fixated on the hostility they perceive, exaggerate the susceptibility of their opponents to coercion, assume that decisive military action will yield a bandwagon of support, and frequently overlook the deleterious side effects of their national security policies.⁹² Anticipatory self-defense is appealing to leaders in such circumstances. If the US embraces preventive warfare, states currently locked in bitter rivalries from the Korean Peninsula through South and Central Asia would have an inauspicious precedent to emulate. An American security strategy that cloaks preventive military action in the language of preemption "would invite imitation," warns Paul Schroeder. "A more dangerous, illegitimate norm and example can hardly be imagined."⁹³

IDEOLOGIES SHAPING THE PRESENT U.S. POLICIES:

The world has "changed dramatically" since September 11, 2001 and US Secretary of State Collin Powell would say, it is a "different place."⁹⁴ The response of the only Superpower to the apocalyptic attacks has sought to redefine international power matrix in emphatic ways. The American foreign policy since 9/11 has strayed the

⁹⁰ Frank Ninkovich (2001), *The United States and Imperialism*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 91ff.

⁹¹ Testimony by Wolfowitz, 19 September 2002, *Joint inquiry hearing*, p. 12.

⁹² O.Schachter, "Disputes Involving The Use of Force," in *The International Court of Justice at a Crossroads* (ed.) (1987), By L.F. Damrosch, p. 23-241.

⁹³ P.W. Schroeder, "Iraq: The Case Against Preemptive War," *American Conservative* 1, October 21, 2002, p.8-20.

⁹⁴ Colin Powell's address to The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC on September 26, 2002, on <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2002/13757.html/>

traditional grooves and rolls on a track that leads international community away from the consensus which defined the basic principles of international relations since the Second World War. The move from 'soft-headed multilateralism of Clinton' ⁹⁵ to aggressive policy of containment by force rather than diplomacy was made easier by the terrorist attacks on the twin towers on September 11, 2001. It is as if an ideology seeking justification for its operationalization was supplied with a timely excuse.

The strategy of "preventive" or "preemptive" use of force that the Americans recommend and execute emit a radical impulse that shakes the foundations of a United Nations driven international political order and consciously works towards ushering the world into an era dominated by the ideology of 'a distinctly American internationalism' consisting of 'idealism without illusion', 'confidence without conceit' and 'realism in the service of American ideals.' Giving vent to the idealism that inspires this internationalist agenda one of the foremost advocates of this ideology, William Kristol, son of Irving Kristol, the godfather of neo-conservatism, would say: "A humane future will require an American foreign policy that is unapologetic, idealistic, assertive and well-funded. America must not only be the world's police man or its sheriff, it must be its beacon and guide. The spirit driving such an impenitent force required closer study and analysis.

The Presidential campaign of the Republican Party for 2000 had isolated different strands of Republican Conservatism which included the neo-isolationism of Pat Buchanan, 'Crabbed realism' of many conservative Congressmen (together they are termed paleo-conservatism by the neocons) and spirited 'American internationalism' of George W. Bush.⁹⁶ The election of Bush as President encouraged

⁹⁵ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, 'A Distinctly American Internationalism,' in Weekly Standard, November 29, 1999.

⁹⁶ Ashok K. Behuria, "Understanding American Neoconservatism," Journal of Peace Studies, Vol.10, no.2, April- June 2003, p. 21.

the neo-conservative agenda but the Americans were still skeptical about the real intent of the neocons and their agenda and Bush administration was little tentative in following its own agenda and was in fact looking for a historic opportunity. In fact, a sharp observer of American politics, Seymour Martin Lipset had said in 1996 that neo-conservatism had “ceased to exist.”⁹⁷ The 9/11 provided the neocons with that historic opportunity. Rather it is the globalised informal network through which the contemporary form of terrorism moves has made it legitimate for US to expand its area of intervention and some Americans even characterized the American war on terror as a Third World War.

It is important here to understand what neo-conservatism is. The neo-conservative lobby in America has attracted worldwide attention. As a new shade of conservatism combining political conservatism, Christian rightism, Trotskyism and, an all-American nationalism, neo-conservatism has emerged as a spurious combine unable to define itself too clearly. But its subtle ideological distance from traditional conservatism can lead one to identify its core and definition. The neocons are a strange blend of political conservatism, Christian rightism, Trotskyism and, an all-American nationalism. This spurious combine has been there in the American political horizon since the 1960s-right since the Vietnamese engagement. The hold of radical liberalism on popular consciousness in America had disturbed many conservatives. This reaction to radical liberalism had drawn quite a diverse group of concerned intellectuals together to reflect on the theme of violent political protest and they were firmly together in their rejection of radical opposition for they held that such position wrecks the foundations of the state and problematizes the very context that disregard human freedom. In fact, Americans, as conservatives, have shuttled between John Locke and Edmund Burke. As Lockeans, they believe in contractual government, i.e., the

⁹⁷ Lipset as cited in Ashok K. Behuria, “Understanding American Neoconservatism,” *Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol.10, no.2, April- June 2003, p. 21.

Declaration of Independence and subsequent Constitution, and hold on to the idea that it is legitimate to rise in armed rebellion if the government breaks the contract. But the sway of Burke is very much there which persuades them to believe that armed revolutions are never justified, not even when the governments are deemed to be thoroughly unjust.

The aversion to radical politics acted as the core idea uniting a disparate band of intellectuals who had sympathy for left, toed a liberal agenda in politics and economy and sometimes shared the guilt complex of many fellow Americans in the Vietnam debacle. But as the movement became radicalized afterwards, they were disillusioned with liberalism and held it proper to fight the radicalization of liberalism. They championed an ideology, which wore conservative trappings and was soon known as neo-conservatives. People all over the world now know this expanding constituency as 'Neoconservatives' or in its acronymic form as 'neocons.' One of the neocons, Mark Gerson, would like to put his 'ism' this way: "Neo-conservatism is marked by strong anti-Communism, a deep appreciation of America, a critical celebration of capitalism, a stress on the importance of religion and virtues, a sense of tragedy about the effects of social action and a constant aversion to individualistic heresies-either on the libertarian right or the licentious left."⁹⁸

Soon their reflection on other aspects of public policy like social, economic, theological, political, juridical, etc., started providing basis for the growth of a distinctly different political ideology. They are conservatives but opposed to conventional, mainstream conservatism. They are for greater American involvement in world affairs, for big and powerful governments and reluctant advocates of laissez faire economy. They endorse corporate capitalism yet they are sympathetic to the role of government as provider of Social Security for the elderly and relief for the unemployed. Another distinguishing difference from other shades of conservatism is the emphasis the neocons put on

⁹⁸ Cited in Ashok K. Behuria, "Understanding American Neoconservatism," p. 23.

'culture.' Classical liberal conservatives would stick to the laissez faire agenda and hope capitalist economy and political freedom would take care of culture and thus they would leave moral issues to the individual as private affairs. But neocons would grieve for the moral decay that conservative capitalism has dragged the American nation towards and would say that this has led the society to anarchy and allowed the left to thrive on such moral anarchy. The neocons thus seek to diagnose the erosion of traditional culture in the US and strive towards protection and ultimate survival of American culture, which they hold as crucial to American success in the world.

During the tenure of George Bush Senior, the neocons were also actively influencing the Bush agenda and were great supporters of the Gulf War. However, with the fall of Soviet Union in the early 1990s the American foreign policy looked decentred and people like Kristol were worried about America losing its major inspiration for intervening in world affairs. The end of Cold War thus wrenched the Americans out of their cold war inertia and unable to resituate themselves properly in the emerging terrain of international affairs, the domestic political arena saw the emergence of culture wars, divisive politics, a strange shade of isolationism championed seeking to combine paleo conservatism with Christian moralism, which only limited Republican electoral prospects. Bush senior perhaps did not know how to combine different shades of conservatism and lost the elections even if he won critical acclaim at home for his Gulf War.

The early 90s also saw serious economic depression, which had its impact on electoral choice also. The democrats won and started borrowing few elements of neo-conservatism like limiting welfarism, rolling back social policies, supporting big governments and emphasizing on economic progress. They also gained from sidetracking moral issues, which the Republicans fought onto their electoral disadvantage. The divisive influence of Christian moralist policies indeed hampered the Presidential prospect of the Republicans in 1996 despite their spectacular performance in 1994 Congressional

elections. Newt Gingrich's conservative agenda spelt out in his 'Contract with America' in 1994, with its emphasis on withdrawing finance for public education, ending welfare for immigrants, and eroding the separation of church and state etc alienated many Republican sympathizers and eroded the Republican constituency resulting in Clinton's second win in spite of the scandals against him.

The neoconservatives shift from Democratic Party towards Republicanism in the 1980s and especially during the Reagan era brought about many revisions in its political and economic agenda. Even some neocons analysts would argue that neo-conservatism provided "the engine that has galvanized and driven the Republican Party since Ronald Reagan's Presidency." Bill Bennett, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Larry Kudlow, David Horowitz, Charlton Heston and numerous others switched their loyalties as neocons to the 'Republican Party' and were termed "Reagan Democrats." The thin margin of Republican victory in the presidential elections in 2000 suggested that neocons had a long way to go. However, much more than the victory of George Bush Jr., the terrorist attack on the world trade centre has now provided the neocons with yet another opportunity to execute their agenda and the American interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq indicates that the neocons ideology might be having a field day now. The neocons agenda is very much contained within the Middle East Policy Initiative seeking to promote democratic values in the Middle East after the victory in the Iraq war.

The conservatives like Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft and James Baker III would denounce the idea of bringing democracy to the Middle East as an impossible task likely to backfire with tragic consequences. However, true to the neocons emphasis on promotion of American values in the world, the Bush administration seeks to promote liberal democratic values, for the simple reason that liberal democracies rarely fight one another, sponsor terrorism, or use weapons of mass destruction. If Americans do not want another 9/11, they argue, they need to liberalize the Middle East- a difficult

undertaking but worth taking. The neocons are fairly represented in the Bush administration. In a recent address to the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), supposed to be the centre of neo-conservatism, Bush expressed his obligations to the Institute and said that he had the privilege of having almost twenty experts from the Institute assisting his administration in various capacities. AEI is known for its neoconservative agenda and has supported research on various issues from a neocons perspective. AEI is not alone in enjoying the patronage of the administration. There are other organizations like Hoover Institutions, Heritage Foundations, Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, The Cato Institute and Citizens for a Sound Economy, the Hudson Institute, the National Bureau of Economic Research, the Manhattan Institute and the Ethics and Public Policy Centre. These organizations provide intellectual capital for the conservative movement and are mostly associated with the Republican Party.

However, it is perhaps unfair to say that the neocons have seized the Bush administration and sought to project it as the ruling ideology in recent years. In fact, as the above discussion suggests that they have sought to influence the policies of every administration since Nixon. They have succeeded in different ways. Most interestingly, the neoconservatives in America have already found echoes in Europe across the Atlantic. The recent paper, "The post modern state and the new world order" by Robert Cooper, Foreign Policy Advisor to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, tends to borrow many elements of American neo-conservatism. The emphasis on cultural superiority of Western culture, however, may provoke similar mindsets in different context of power play in non-western world and give rise to spurious ethno-centrism that could threaten the state system and give rise to chronic instabilities which may, through the feed-back loop add to the issues of international insecurities. The influence of neo-conservatism on international political matrix may thus be much more disturbing than imagined so far.

AFGHANISTAN IN THE POST TALIBAN ERA:

It is significant to ask, in the light of the evidences coming up so far, that has the Taliban and Al Qaeda been a completely decimated force? From all indications, it is not. While it may be true that the air force, armour, and almost all immovable infrastructures were destroyed, more than half of the Taliban and Al Qaeda cadres could not be captured who slipped into the countryside with all their arms and ammunitions.⁹⁹ This happened because the Taliban did not fight a major battle with the Northern Alliance or with any American or multi-national forces except at Kunduz and Kandhar. Obviously, they fled with all their arms intact. Many of these fighters, including leaders of the fundamentalist militia also fled to Pakistan, a country where they command tremendous support from the people as well as from the governmental authorities.¹⁰⁰

The increase in number of terrorist attacks in different parts of Afghanistan, Consulate offices, Christian Community, etc. in Pakistan, in the temples, Parliament Building, and other significant targets in India, and various Western targets in different countries starting from Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines to Mombassa in Kenya are examples of the same. One former Pakistani ISI chief, who was directly responsible for Pakistan's Afghan operation, and one of the leading voice in support of the Taliban said, "They (Taliban) are not going to go away. They are integral, organic, and historic."¹⁰¹ Later in January 2002, addressing a seminar in Islamabad, General Hamid Gul said that the jihadi forces would carry on their agenda of terrorism despite US presence in this region. Even American officials are not sure about the elimination of this jihadi forces and terrorists.

⁹⁹ Michael E.O'Hanlon, A Flawed Masterpiece, p.55.

¹⁰⁰ The Economist, June 1, 2002.

¹⁰¹ Douglas Frantz, "Pakistan Ended Aid to Taliban Only Hesitantly," The New York Times, December 8, 2001.

As late as July 2002, the US saw “all kinds of signs that they (Taliban/Al Qaeda) continue to try to regroup and reorganize, and we’ve got to keep them on the run.” US Deputy Secretary of Defense remarked that this war was as big as any fought by the US and that “victory is going to be measured by what doesn’t happen as opposed to what does happen.”¹⁰² So the stakes were very much there. Given the world wide network, they could always regroup themselves and pose a threat to the US and its allies. In the long rugged terrain of the Pak-Afghan border they can not be completely eliminated due to the local support extended by the mullah infested Pakistani army and the intelligence. Taliban government is not there in Afghanistan, but Mullah Omar’s as well as Osama’s followers along with the Pashtun militants of the outlaw organizations are very much visible. Western commander of coalition forces recently insisted, “The enemy remains dangerous. Although it had difficulty massing its forces, recruiting new members and moving freely in Afghanistan, it could still carry out operations.”¹⁰³ From all accounts, it could be inferred that the US government is conscious of the fact that their forces have failed to smoke out cadres of the Taliban and the Al Qaeda. American as well as Afghan security forces have arrested dozens of suspects who allegedly conspired to overthrow the Karzai government in May 2003. US officials have pointed their fingers at exiled warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar behind the coup attempts. Even after two years of the fall of the Mullah Omar’s Taliban regime, remnants of the militia continue to launch regular attacks on American and pro-government targets. Killings and clashes are the order of the day mostly, off late, focused in southeastern Afghanistan, especially in Nangarhar, Paktia, Paktika, and Kandhar provinces.

In this way, “a vicious circle is being created where insecurity prevents development, and that in turn breeds more insecurity.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² International Information Programs, US Department of States, July 10, 2002.

¹⁰³ The Economist, May 18, 2002, p.36.

¹⁰⁴ Simon Denyer, “Off US radar, Afghanistan slipping back into chaos,” The Indian Express, April 4, 2003.

Recent developments in Afghanistan's security situation indicate that the country is passing through a very thin edge of civil war.

Secondly, as far as the question of preventing the poppy cultivation and checking of narcotic trade from financing terrorism are concerned, it is almost the business as usual. There is no doubt that with the removal from the government, the Taliban hands are tight. They have to operate clandestinely. But since no state authority, so far, has initiated any serious measures to contain this drug menace, most of the areas are under the control of the warlords, who have links with the Taliban, and a bulk of proceeds from this go to weapon purchasing. In the Afghan countryside and tribal territories of the Pak-Afghan borders many people who had strong linkage with the former Taliban regime, and present supporters and sympathizers of the fundamentalist forces, still control a bulk of country's drug trade. The continuation of drug powered politics and economics in the context of arms market and terrorism could spell disaster for not only the Karzai government but also for the overall attempts of the US government to bring peace to the country.

Thirdly, the undeclared American objective of promoting its geo-political interests in the backdrop of the 9/11 tragedies has led to strong disapproval and resentment among the countries in the region. They look at Washington's motive, as if the events worked as alchemist for the US foreign policy towards the region. US geo-political drive is motivated by twin objective of the containment of China and extracting Central Asian oil and gas to the world market. For a long time, American strategic eyes are focused on China's economic and military strength, and its claim on Taiwan in the Pacific, which tends to confront US interests. American strategists believe that it would be convenient for them to deal with unruly China while based in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Washington can have a close watch on the developments of the communist China and the position would give access to more strategic mileage to the US foreign policy interests in the geo-politics of the region.

The second objective is to extract oil from the Caspian region to the world market. Through its military presence and economic and political support in the Central Asian Republics, Washington hopes to get access to the regions tremendous untapped reserves of oil.¹⁰⁵ The strategic significance of these oil resources are estimated in view of the depleting oil reserves in the Middle East, and the energy security of the America's allies and friends-especially the West European countries and Japan. And in that case, "Central Asia will become the biggest oil supplier to the world in the foreseeable future and Afghanistan will become a transit for the supply of the oil to the rest of the world."¹⁰⁶

These strategic and geo-political ambitions of the US have led to considerable resentment among the countries surrounding the region. Russian, Chinese, Iranian unhappiness is particularly visible in this context. For instance, Chinese will continue to be perturbed by expanding US presence on its South Western Frontiers and support the anti-US forces, Russians to Tajiks and Uzbeks, and Iranians to their Shia minorities' ethnic groups in the North Western part of the country. Because these countries perceive that through its military presence in the region, the US is unduly interfering in their "sphere of influence." In this sense, the overarching American geo-political objective in the region will be kept off balance by the regional powers, and that will continue to keep Afghanistan fragile and fragmented. In the process, America might get bogged down militarily in this land locked country that has a long history of fighting against the foreigners.

Like the anti-British protests of an earlier geo-political era, and anti-Soviet struggle of the 1980s, an increasing number of Afghans have begun to raise their voice against the American presence. With the increasing number of clashes between the American/Afghan

¹⁰⁵ V.D. Chopra (2002), "Strategic Role of Afghanistan," in his own edited book, Global Challenge of Terrorism, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, p.2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.221-225.

government forces and the emerging Taliban/Al-Qaeda elements, Afghanistan seems to be again slipping back into chaos and confusion, and that the US troops face a clear prospect of a protracted war. In early May 2003, about 300 Afghans chanted anti-American and anti-British slogans in the first such protest since the US led forces overthrew the Taliban in 2001. The protesters, who included government employees and university students, complained of growing insecurity, slow post-war reconstruction and delay in payment of state salaries by Hamid Karzai's US-backed government.¹⁰⁷ The protesters, however, seemed more concerned about the security situation in the country, improvements in the economy, and progress in post-war reconstruction.¹⁰⁸ The circulation of shabnamas ("night letters") has always marked the beginning of an internal resistance movement in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁹ This is normally the secret messages conveyed about the enemy and operational strategy, urging jihad or holy war. It has been reported that in almost all the Pushtun belt of Afghanistan, the circulation of shabnamas has become a daily affair. Recent developments indicate the stabilization efforts in Afghanistan remain fragile. People in many parts of the country still live in a Hobbesian state of nature.

Another significant reason, for which American operation would be considered to have failed so far, is the lack of consistency and persistence in the US policy towards a post-Taliban Afghanistan. President Bush, who once put the capture of Bin Laden and Mullah Omar "dead or alive" at the top of his war aims, later said that his main priority was a stable Afghanistan. But within a year since the Afghan campaign began, Washington's foreign policy focus shifted from Afghanistan to Iraq, leaving behind a trail of uncertainty and perplexing future in this war-torn country. Without successfully bringing the 9/11 culprits into justice, without disarming (rather

¹⁰⁷ "Kabul sees anti-US protest," The Times of India, May 7, 2003.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Henry S. Bradsher (1983), Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., p. 106, 208, 214, 233, 247, 268 and 291.

rearming) hundreds of warlords, without any check on poppy cultivation and drug trade, without doing any harm¹¹⁰ to the country (Pakistan) which is primarily responsible for most of the ongoing uncertainties in Afghanistan and which is itself the real epicenter of international terrorism, the shift in US policy indicates that America's priority was to fulfill its geo-political ambition in Afghanistan and Central Asia, rather than "hunting down" the terrorists. Washington's policy shift exposes that the 9/11 incident and the subsequent "war on terrorism" came as an opportunity for the US to enhance its military presence to further its geo-political and economic interests in the region.

Despite declaratory American policy to help revive the Afghan economy and infrastructure, it is yet to be seen how willing the present US administration is to rescue this near-moribund state¹¹¹ from reverting to anarchy and civil war. Along with other donors (EU, Japan, Saudi Arabia, etc), the US maintains that Washington would contribute substantial, long term assistance, but that was subject to the interim government maintaining peace. It shows American disinterest in reviving economy and society and isolating the cause of terrorism. In reality American aid is very limited, and restricted to few areas like transportation, agriculture, education and health.¹¹² With the American attention diverted to Iraq, Washington is also taking very little initiative to push other international donors to come forward generously.

This inexcusable delay by the west in providing funds for reconstruction, failing to help the Afghans improve security and take a firm position against warlordism were all criticized by elected Afghanistan representatives in the Loya Jirga which was convened in Kabul in the second week of June 2002.¹¹³ In fact, many

¹¹⁰ The Asian Age, New Delhi, May 10, 2002.

¹¹¹ See www.eurasianet.org, May 21, 2003.

¹¹² See the joint "Statement between the United States of America and Afghanistan," Weekly Compilation of President Documents, Washington D.C., March 3, 2003.

¹¹³ Ahmed Rashid, "Freedom Isn't Easy," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 27, 2002, p. 18.

representatives pointed their fingers at Washington, which still runs its Afghan policy out of the Defense Department and treats the country as a war zone rather than one needing an economic and political strategy. The problem of lack of funding, in a sense, is the result of “Afghanistan fatigue” of the international community and particularly of the US. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s Special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who also heads the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), said, “Afghans are impatient, very understandably- we are all because the country which has been neglected so dramatically for 23 years needs everything today, not tomorrow.”¹¹⁴ In the words of a European Ambassador in Kabul, the Americans have to “treat the Afghans better than just surrogates for hunting Al Qaeda.”¹¹⁵

From the collapse of the former Yugoslavia and various post-Yugoslav wars, to American/NATO responses to numerous political and economic crises in the post-Soviet space, and more recently to America’s ‘War on Terrorism’ in Afghanistan, there is an important underlying continuity. All have been connected to one big central course of action: the maneuvers of the US, and its allies in Europe, over the division of resources and political/military control of Eurasia. The strengthening of this global control is as much about politics as economics. As William Wallace summarizes, this ‘hegemony rests upon a range of resources, of hard military power, economic weight, financial commitments, and the soft currency of hegemonic values, cultural influence and prestige.’¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ UN Weekly Newsletter, April 6-12, 2002.

¹¹⁵ Ahmed Rashid, “Freedom Isn’t Easy,” p. 18.

¹¹⁶ W. Wallace, ‘Living with the Hegemon: European Dilemmas,’ Social Science Research Council, ‘After 11 September,’ <http://www.ssrc.org/sep11/essays/wallace>, p. 9.

CONCLUSION

Quite often wars, unless they are civil wars, are not of a country's own making. But civil wars do become military and military conflict has far reaching civilian implications. In sum, warfare and identitarian conflict reinforce each other. The impact of foreign domination on the conquered people is generally immense. Invaders impose unbearable cost on the invaded and justify invasions on various grounds. Modern invasions, like the American occupation of Vietnam and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, have been carried out in the name of democracy in the former and socialism in the latter case. However, the social, economic and cultural consequences of foreign invasion, irrespective of ideological justifications, remain the same everywhere. In turn, popular responses to such invasions are conditioned by specific histories of the region invaded.

Some argue that the anarchy in Afghanistan resulted from mistakes in or sabotage of the peace plan. Some regret that the UN acquiesced to U.S. and Pakistan pressure to force Najibullah from power prematurely, creating a power vacuum before an alternative was prepared to fill it. Others blame the attempt by the US and the UN to sideline Hekmatyar, which inevitably provoked confrontation. But if the US and Pakistan had not initially aided Hekmatyar and other such party leaders, this problem might not have arisen, and Afghan nationalist forces might have reasserted control as in the past. If the Soviet Union had not supported the PDPA and invaded Afghanistan, the US might not have devoted such resources to building up an Islamic resistance. If Pakistan had not denied the right of self determination to Pashtunistan, Afghanistan's rulers might not have turned to the USSR. If Afghan rulers had followed Islam rather than nationalism, they might not have

provoked the nationalist conflict with Pakistan that pushed Afghanistan into the sphere of Soviet influence. If UK, pursuing divide and rule colonial tactics, had not separated the tribal territories from Afghanistan, the Pashtunistan conflict might never have arisen. Such arguments lead everywhere and nowhere. In strategic interactions, causality at any moment ultimately lies in the structure of interests and capabilities left by the history that has resulted from a continuous series of such moments, none of which enjoys a privileged place. And these historical legacies often leave all too little room for escape from conflict.

Washington today wields considerable power in the international front. The US will need to beware of embarking impulsively upon military adventures that can not be concluded satisfactorily. The US leaders need to take full account of the two truisms that 'power corrupts' and absolute power corrupts absolutely and 'with great power comes great responsibility.' With no sovereign superpower to check and balance US policies and actions, the burden of responsibility borne by today's White House administration is probably greater than at any time since 1949.

In foreign and defence policy matters it has the potential to ignore allies, coalitions, and the UN alike. Today American political and military leaders alike know that they can respond to their perception of any threat with relative impunity; the short campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan illustrated this. Therefore, to the more obvious sites and causes of future conflicts must be added the reality of the US superpower monopoly i.e. yet another legacy of the Cold War. The main risk involved in this is of National isolationism, paranoia, and a feeling of victimization by the rest of the world, which could lead Washington to oversimplify its foreign policy responses by premature resort to military options. The concept of 'regime change' proposed by President Bush in 2002 is but one indicator of this. American will need to understand this that their military and economic superiority will be the focus of envy and extremism so long as the US occupies that privileged position and it has

a great responsibility to carry out especially in the current phase of insecurity and threat to human lives across the globe.

Coming to Afghanistan and U.S. involvement in the region, we find that the recent developments in the region need to be dealt with cautiously and more importantly in a just manner. The U.S. must work towards a viable political alternative in Kabul. It does not mean an alternative to the Karzai government in Afghanistan but reorientation and readjustments of government forces aimed to bring about stability and security as the immediate requirement. It can be assessed whether Afghanistan can be reconstructed through negotiations among representatives of its various republican segments. In some regions of Afghanistan, representative shuras have brought civil peace and collected weapons. In Herat, Panjsher, Ghazni, Kandhar, and Jalalabad, most people go about their business in peace under weak but representative administrations that are barely linked to the Central State. According to national myth, this is what Afghans have always done, and there are times to mobilize myths rather than debunk them.

Options for Afghanistan are few while challenges are numerous. Afghanistan is a diverse nation-state in terms of ethnic, linguistic, regional and other differences. The ground reality is that the existence of the warlords and tribal lords marks the different power centres in Afghanistan and hence any attempt to neglect these units of power may lead to further chaos and instability. Thus, the present government in Afghanistan is seized with the problem of restoring peace and security though it faces threats at large.

Firstly, the internal strife between various ethnic groups and its leaders continues. They are vying for representation and share of power. This ethnic conflict is mainly between the Pashtuns led by Karzai with the support of King Zahir Shah, and the Tajiks. The Hazaras too are trying to assert themselves. Gen. Dostum, Uzbek leader feels isolated and grieved with the kind of struggle for power. There are frictions in the

administration and impediments in implementing the programs.

Secondly, there are certain local warlords who maintain their own local militias. These include Gen. Dost Mohammad and Ustad Atta, Ismail Khan, Gul Agha, etc. All these warlords pose a direct threat to Karzai and challenge to his authority. Beside, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was supported by the CIA to rally the Pashtuns, appears to be exploiting this link to consolidate his own cadres and the remnants of the Taliban.

In the absence of any organized Afghan National Army and Police Force, the regime is totally dependent on the international Security Assistance (ISAF). This force level is inadequate. That is why two ministers have already been assassinated and there was a serious attempt on the life of Hamid Karzai at Kandhar on 5 December, 2002. Presently, the security is being looked after by the ISAF-NATO Forces deployed at Kabul, Kandhar, Jalalabad, and Bagram.

The remnants of the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda are largely intact and dispersed along with its top leader, Osama bin Laden. These forces are lying low especially in the Pashtun belt bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan. They could be rallied to conduct guerilla warfare and strike when the opportunity comes.

Other major challenge is the reconstruction which involves revitalization of agriculture, infrastructure development, educational institutions, health and transport services, etc. another major challenge is the rehabilitation of a large number of displaced persons staying as refugees in Iran and Pakistan. The houses of these refugees have mostly been destroyed, and the land has become unfit for agriculture, as most of it is covered with extensive minefields. The intellectuals and the rich have migrated to the European countries. The clearing of mines, which have been laid extensively for over a decade, is another big challenge faced by Afghanistan today. A special task force would need to be earmarked with adequate resources so that the agricultural land can be

reclaimed. Another major challenge, much more difficult to resolve is the dismantling of the narcotics trafficking. This a wide network of mafia who flourished with this lucrative trade. Unfortunately, opium cultivation has shot up in Afghanistan, the largest producer, despite attempts at containment.

The question involved here is 'what the Americans should do.' The U.S., with its huge economic resources, political leadership in the world, and military capability; can certainly influence people, institutions, and nations to its own democratic ideals and judiciously in terms of a long-term strategy to contain the threat of terrorism. But to do this, the Americans need to reassess their perception and Cold War mindset in their dealings with other countries, especially with the Islamic world.

Afghanistan's attempt to draft a new constitution, Bonn agreement of 2001, could prove a meaningless exercise without concurrent efforts to improve security in the country's provinces. The most important step U.S. can take is to create the conditions that will make it possible for the constitution to mean anything. Washington should help not only mobilize public opinion within the country but also strike a strategic balance among the internal forces.

The U.S. also needs to make some changes in its policy towards the warlords in the domestic politics of Afghanistan. During the anti-Taliban war in 2001, American and allied forces accepted support from even the most notorious warlords like Rashid Dostum. Indeed, many Afghan commanders and warlords who helped American led forces are now considered the main threat to the Karzai government's peace building process. Therefore, the U.S. needs to evolve a new strategy where its support is with the government rather than dividing it between the warlords and the government. The lessons not only of Afghanistan but of Angola, Cambodia, Nicaragua and other conflicts show that some preconditions must be met before a National Assembly can make enforceable legitimate decisions. The breakdown of agreements in

Afghanistan argues that disarming contending militias must precede national elections or power sharing.

The main lesson is that resolution of conflicts in states that have been failed by the international community requires a sustained cooperative effort by that community. But the region around Afghanistan is itself going through the turmoil of revolution and state building. Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan-all are to different degrees insecure states, warily eyeing each other. Any power shift in Afghanistan disquiets some and pleases others. The resulting security dilemmas render extraordinarily difficult the construction of a demarcated domestic political arena in Afghanistan, let alone a stable one. The continued lack of effective engagement by the major powers that provided aid and weapons makes such agreement even more difficult. Skilled and energetic mediation by an envoy of the UN security General is necessary but probably inadequate by itself.

If the international community seriously wants to rebuild Afghanistan, it must start with a framework for regional cooperation. Intelligence and political action must combine to shut down the sources of money and fuel for the combatants. On the other hand, a more generous program of aid for reconstructing the country is necessary to give the combatants incentives to cooperate; to offer the fighters an alternative livelihood. Some form of peacekeeping to oversee disarmament is also required.

It was being said that what the world is witnessing today is a 'clash of civilizations,' between a secular, modern 'West' and a fundamentalist, backward-looking 'Islam.' Paradoxically, with the attacks on New York and Washington, Huntington has retreated from many of the positions he took in *The Clash of Civilizations*. In his article in *Newsweek*, published on the eve of 2002, he says that such "instances of Muslim violence *could* congeal into one major clash of civilizations" but that this is "*not* inevitable" and that it is "*more likely*" that Muslim violence "*will remain*

dispersed, varied and frequent” (Huntington, 2001” 42). This is different to what he concluded in his article “When Cultures Collide”-that clashes “among the civilizations are *just as real* now as the *Cold War* was from the 1950s to the 1980s” (Huntington, 1997: 76). This new analysis is very much opposite to what he believed, expressed in *The Clash of Civilizations*, that “Islam from that start was a religion of the sword,” a religion that “glorifies military virtues.” He finishes off by saying that the “Koran and other statements of Muslim beliefs contain few prohibitions on violence, and a concept of non-violence is absent from Muslim doctrine and practice” (263).

The point being made here is that much of the western thinking rested on this pre-dominance of the Western culture and values as compared to a more medievalist and backward-looking Islam. Huntington’s article had created lot of ideological underpinnings and paved way for much of Western policy analyses and formulation over the years. Though there is another side to Huntington’s findings. The title of his book does not just consist of *The Clash of Civilizations*, but *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. By accounting for the deleterious effects of globalization on world security, Huntington also contributes to our knowledge by updating realism. His thesis can also help us understand the tragic events of September 11 attack and provide retrospective advice on how it could have been avoided. He persistently condemns ant attempt by the West to interfere directly in the internal affairs of any civilization. Advice for more substantive changes to U.S. foreign policy can also be found in Huntington’s recent writings. In *Newsweek* he advises the U.S. to take a more even-handed approach to the Middle East peace process while making a greater commitment to improving the social, economic and political conditions Muslims face. He further reminds us that the “age of Muslim wars” will only end “when its

causes change or are changed,” and that the U.S. has a responsibility to change those causes (46).

It is evident here that Afghanistan is in the grip of a situation where power still remains seriously fragmented and the American pre-eminence has once again proved that rarely in modern Afghan history has a government come to power and remained in power without a foreign force backing it. The Karzai government has little writ outside Kabul and its authority is limited by various power-holders, ranging from local charismatic and religious leaders to armed commanders and straight-out warlords in different parts of the country. These power-holders have roots in and control over various parts or the whole of micro societies, whose boundaries and modus operandi may have changed as a result of years of warfare but whose internal dynamisms to enable them to reassert themselves in the context of traditional social divisions and vulnerability to manipulation by both domestic opportunists and outside forces remain very much in place.

US must work towards a viable political alternative in Kabul. It does not mean an alternative to the Karzai government. It means reorientation and readjustments of governmental forces aiming stability and security as the immediate requirement. If the US continues to only focus on the hunt down of Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar, and does not extend a helping hand to the Kabul government, that would not help in Afghan peace. “Afghanistan’s attempt to draft a new constitution could prove a meaningless exercise without concurrent efforts to improve security in the country’s provinces,” said Barnett Rubin, an Afghanistan expert who helped draft the 2001 Bonn process for Afghanistan’s political reconstruction. What is required is a concerted and sincere effort on the part of Washington, not only to help mobilize public opinion within the country, but also to strike a strategic balance among the internal forces. So the US should work towards minimum and short term troop deployment in case of genuine necessity, and should stress on political

stability of the nations. Washington should understand the fact that the current trends in the US foreign policy have a direct bearing in Afghanistan and its Muslim neighbours. Through their commitments and actions, Americans must prove that they want genuine peace in the country and that they are not anti-Islam. Such an effort would appear credible if the UN is allowed to play a more pro-active role in the reconstruction of this war-ravaged country. In addition, given the fact that the US involvement in Afghanistan has been more motivated by America's war on terror than what might be best for the Afghan people in the long run, one cannot but be skeptical of the US commitment to rebuilding the war-torn country, and empowering the Afghans to run and protect their country independent of any foreign military involvement. US must work towards a viable political alternative in Kabul.

The Karzai government seems to be overwhelmed by politics of ethnicity and factionalism. The Taliban and the Al-Qaeda cadres have complete freedom of mobility in Pakistani territory with much of the supports and instigations coming up from the army and ISI. So the prime requirement is that the US must ensure that there is no undue Pakistani interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Unless terrorists, their infrastructures, and their organizations are dismantled within Pakistani territory, Afghan peace is unimaginable.

On the national reconstruction front, the task seems even more daunting. It is a common view within and outside Afghanistan that the country's future peace and stability rests very much on how rapidly its economic and social life is rebuilt as a precondition to prompting the Afghans to change their culture of the gun to that of peace. The US needs a new strategy putting its weight with the government rather than dividing between the warlords and the government. One positive area of development in this context is the US support of building a national army, which would weaken warlords' legitimacy in the long run. If the US continues to play the Cold War game of 'containment' and 'encirclement'

against the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, then no cooperation would be forthcoming for any Washington sponsored regional peace initiative. Since containment of terrorism is the main objective, the US must look at the problem in terms of domino impact of American policy.

US can also contribute towards the economic developments of the region both by pushing the poverty-stricken economies through moderate aid programs as well as giving and implementing ideas, as poverty and illiteracy are among the several chronic types of problems interlinked with terrorism. Expansion of trade ties among the nation is one option, especially in terms of Central Asia's huge oil and gas resources. Such an arrangement would involve the participation of so many countries and international financial institution (like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) simultaneously, and help restore the economy in the region. US has also to bear the responsibility to organize among other rich nations to come forward with moderate financial assistance for the ongoing reconstruction process. The international community must understand that the problems of terrorism cannot be solved unless Afghanistan's war-ravaged economy is stabilized. The US has come under severe criticism for its very low-level and marginal aid program in Afghanistan as its focus was shifted to Iraq. After nearly two years since 9/11, though the US liberated Afghanistan from the domination of the ultra-fundamentalist Taliban rule and dismantled the Al-Qaeda terrorist's camps and infrastructure, Washington has not done much to bring about a qualitative change in the Afghan life, society, and economy. So far, Afghanistan only lives on hopes and promises.

In the final analysis, it may be inferred that the US is not going to leave Afghanistan any time soon. It may face a low-intensity guerilla war, may have to encounter traditional Afghan resentment against the occupying forces, or may be criticized for a low-level aid program for the reconstruction efforts, and much more. The hard fact is that Washington

would not be in a position to backtrack from its current Afghan commitments. Also, Americans will not leave the country because of their own strategic reasons. In a briefing to the UN Security Council on 6 February 2002, Ambassador Brahimi rightly warned that “the road is still very long and fraught with danger.” The threat of violence still continues to haunt the Afghan people.

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