

The Rise and Fall of Taliban Regime (1994-2001) In Afghanistan: The Internal Dynamics

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Abstract: This study intends to analyze the Rise and Fall of Taliban Regime in Afghanistan. To understand the internal dynamics of the rise and fall of Taliban regime, this study elaborates the Ideological and Religious bases, Ethnic Composition, Geographical location, the causes of rise, Governance by Taliban, and The fall of Taliban seen through the lenses of domestic factors.

Key Word: the Civil War, Kabul, Khandhar, Taliban , Ethnic, Religious bases, Madrassa, Fall of Kabul, Bamiyan statutes,

Post -Soviet political Chaos: The Civil War in Afghanistan 1989

The Civil war and Afghan styled 'Buzkashi' between ex Afghan Mujahedeen Commanders and war lords confirmed the Soviet point of view that these Afghan Mujahedeen instead of bringing peace, stability and development, would drag Afghanistan into medieval ages, " from which by the late Twentieth century, it had barley emerged" (Tanner, Stephen, 2000,p.277). Besides, destruction and devastation, this civil war ushered the loss of faith and reverence for their leadership. After the withdrawal of Soviet Forces in 1989, a few of the Mujahedeen leaders, once the symbol of most sacred tenet of Islam "the Jihad 'were found involved into some heinous and unsocial activities, which later became the major cause of unprecedented change in traditional political anatomy of Afghan society. The loss of faith in Mujahedeen leaders also stemmed from the other two factors: first, they were seeing no end to their internecine infighting and second the incapacity and inefficiency of political leadership to eliminate prevalent famine conditions and economic deterioration, which really had been futile to their normal life. This had been yet part of their memory that even Soviet occupation could not affect so badly the lives of common Afghans as it was ruining now by the triumphant Mujahedeen' s rule. The major cities, during the Soviet occupation, generally remained secured where the normalcy of life was very much possible. Contrary to it, during the internal strife the major cities of Afghans became the epicenter of power struggle. As Michael Griffin (2001) stated that almost 300,000 Kabulis left Kabul for Jalalabad. In the end of 1994, approximately, 1000 people fled from the capital city every day. Majority of them took refuge in the SharShai camp. The migrants were highly qualified that "It was referred to as University of Kabul in Exile" (p. 26)

More than 500 experienced secondary school teachers, lot of Doctors, technicians, health workers, senior civil servants, and former Army officers left Kabul just to save their lives. Similarly, the situation in other cities like Kandahar, Baghlan, and Kunduz was not different from Kabul. The wide spread ferocity and violence, the unsocial leanings of Afghan Mujahedeen strongly created the hatred among Afghan people for their symbols of jihad who successfully expelled Soviet forces but failed to reconcile with each other. The Afghan ex commanders now were frequently involved into looting, raping and specifically drug trafficking with an excuse that the end users of these drugs are infidels. The armed gangs were commonly observable phenomenon. They, besides involving in criminal activities, were levying taxes on passer by trucks. The 400 US dollars by truck drivers and 2 US dollars were to be paid by passengers to these armed gangs at check posts which were seventy one between Chamman and Heart only.(Matinun-din-Kamal, 2002,p.23) Mullah Zaef (2010) confirmed these checkpoints in his book. By stating that ... many of the people who went to the city would comeback with tales of anarchy and chaos (pp. 59-60)

Situation in Kandahar

Before the rise of the Taliban movement, besides Kabul, Kandahar was also an important battlefield for warring factions. This city during the Afghan resistance against Soviets presented somewhat different pattern, as found by Ahmed Rashid (2000) "In Kandahar the struggle against the Soviets was 'jihad' led by clan, chiefs and Ulema (senior scholars) rather than by ideological jihad led by Islamists" (p. 29). As this city was under the influence of Harkat -e- Inqalabi Islami and Hizb-e- Islami respectively led by Nabi Muahamdi and MulaviYounas Khalis who also enjoyed support from other parts of south western Afghanistan.

Kandahar, historically, had been a trade route being located at the intersection of ancient route of eastwards across the Bolan Pass to Sind, the Arabian Sea and westward to Herat and Iran. This location made it

a transiting point for goods, Arts and crafts between Iran and India having famous Bazars for centuries. Its historical significance lies in another fact that The Durranis who instrumented the creation of Afghan State in 1747 were from Kandahar. Religiously it also commanded prominence because of the shrine of the Cloak of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him) which was rarely shown on certain occasions like once King Amanullah needed to muster the support of the Pushtoon Tribes in 1929 or when cholera epidemic hit the country in 1935. In 20th century, it was once again shown to common masses when Mullah Omer was declared Amir-ul-Momineen. (Rashid Ahmed, 2000, p. 21)

Kandahar by the year 1994 was true reflector of anarchic and chaotic Afghanistan. As there were illegal check posts established by the commander Nadir Jan and Slaeh Daro Khan on Kandahar- Heart road who had been immensely involved in all types of unsocial and criminal activities. (Misra, Amenlandau, 2004, p. 62). They were also damaging public assets like telephone wires, poles, trees, factory machinery and road rollers by selling to Pakistani trade and scrape merchants. (Matinuddin Kamal, 1999, p. 25)

They did not even spare the private property of common people, which resulted into widespread fear and uncertainty in the daily life of common Kandahari Afghans. The most quoted event, which became the immediate cause of Taliban eruption, was the harassment of a Herati family on 20 September 1994, which was stopped at a check point, their boys were molested, and girls were repeatedly raped, and finally were burnt down after brutally killing them. Mullah Omer was the first who reached at crime spot. Reportedly, he gathered some Madrassa students who helped him to bury the dead bodies of that family. Thereafter they turned up with all commitment to purge Afghan Society from these social evils. (Matinuddin, Kamal, 1999, p. 26 & Griffin, Micheal, 2001, p. 23 & Rashid, Ahmed, 2000, p. 20). At the same time, some veteran Mujahedeen were also in the same thought process as stated by Mullah Zaef (2010) the stories made me feel uneasy. I remembered the Jihad and the sacrifices we had made, it had been for nothing (p. 61)

Therefore, Taliban who had already existed in the Afghan society made their mind to launch a movement for eradication of all the curses from Kandahar and surrounding areas. Mullah Zaef claimed that a host of meeting took place and finally a founding meeting convened in the late autumn of 1994. Initially forty to fifty Taliban attended the meeting at white Mosque in SangeSar. The prominent founding members were Mulvi Shaib Abduls Samad, Mullah Muahammad Omer Akhund and Abdul Sattar Akhund. The next night BBC announced the birth of a new movement in Afghanistan with a purpose to purify society from illegal armed groups. At the start, the movement did not issue any formal statement regarding their objectives or agenda. However, media started coining names for the movement (Zaef, Mullah, 2010, p. 65)

Mullah Omer later in an interview told that "We were fighting against Muslims who gone wrong. How could we remain quiet when we could see crimes being committed against women and the poor" (Rashid, Ahmed, 2000, p. 25)

The Taliban leaders initially sent verbal messages at different check posts. However, people at these check posts ignored them. Finally, as a last resort, they made an assault on the nearest check posts of Daro Khan. It was so much successful that it sent a strong message to other armed gangs who left their respective check posts without a fight leaving behind stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. Soon Taliban seized Kandahar when Mullah Naqib, the most prominent commander with 2500 men gave in without any resistance. On capturing Kandahar, Taliban did not lose much time in imposing their self-interpreted version of Islam. All girl schools were banned and working women were barred from going outside. TV sets were smashed and all other recreational sports activities were banned.

Ideological and Ethnic Composition of Taliban Movement

Afghanistan is a heterogeneous society, with multiple sources of identities for its population. To understand the ethnic and ideological bases of Taliban movement, we need to unearth the ethnic and religious intricacies of Afghan society. It has always been predominantly a Muslim state but sharply divided along ethnic and sectarian lines. The eighty percent of Afghans profess Sunni Islam, which is further sub-divided into four schools of thought with slight differences over the interpretations of Sunnah and Quran. These four sects include the Hanfite, Maliki, Shafi, and Humbali of which a little detail is given here. Majority of the Afghans follow the Hanfi school of Thought. The Shiites also take a considerable share in the faith of Afghan Muslims with subdivision of Ithnaashari, Ismailia, and Zaidiyas. These Shiites live close to Iranian border, Hazarajat and also in urban centers. (Dupree, Loius, 1980, p. 103)

It has been observed that "few Muslim Peoples in the world observe the rituals and the piety of Islam with such regularity and emotions as the Afghans" (Rashid, Ahmed, 2000, p. 82) So the Islamic education since its arrival has remained the part and parcel of Afghan Society, being imparted through many ways and resources. The Mosques schools specifically in the villages provide the elementary level of education, without having any regular and specific institutional or administrative rules. They provide basic learning for all the children in their neighborhood. After Mosques schools children usually start primary school or Madrassas. The Seekers or Talib-ul- ilms have remained a common phenomenon of Afghan society.

Curriculum and History of Madrassa Institution

The history of Madrassa institution starts from the eleventh century of Iraq when Islamic educational system was defined to acquire knowledge of religion and prepare Islamic clergy under the rule of Nizam-ul-Mulk. Madrassas provide a higher level of education. These madrassas are residential institutions, which sometimes also provide stipends to give financial support to students' families. The curriculums of these institutions are usually based on Dars-e-Nizami with little variation in both India and Pakistan. The traditional teaching in Islamic educational system is always based upon Islamic Law: Fiqh, Hadith, Sunnah, Tafseer and logic, however some institutions also include in their syllabi secular subjects as well. But, In KPK (NWFP) the Madrassas usually follow only these subjects. (International Crisis Group Asia Report ,2005,p.5 & Rehman Tariq, July 1998,p.5)

Taliban is the plural of Talib, which means seekers, generally associated with the knowledge of Religion. The students and Teachers of Islamic learning are always highly motivated and a main source of providing specialists in religious matters. Traditional Madrassas always existed at both village and city levels in Afghan Society. Usually the repute of the institution, they had attended determined the veneration and respect of Islamic scholars.

Traditionally, in Afghanistan, the more motivated seekers used to go for higher learning either to Bokhara, Egypt, Syria, or to India where Dar-ul-Uloom Deo-Band existed as a seat of learning with a repute of the best institution in traditional theological religious knowledge based on Sunni Islam with new educational methods. It was in 16th century when Madrassas started to flourish under Muslim Rulers. As there are three primary sub sects of Sunni Islam which became the source of establishment of madrassas. These sects' include Deobanis, Bravelis, and the Ahl-Hadith.

To understand the ideological background of Taliban Movement, there is also a need to focus on the role of Madrassas, their educational patterns and influences on society specifically in Pakistan. The growth of Madrassas in Pakistan shows the diversity in terms of sects. These sects include: The Bravelis, Deobanids, Ahal-e-Hadith. They all have their own specific interpretation of sharia and traditions. As Bravelis believe in tradition of the folk Islam, accommodate the veneration for Sufis, Pirs and Shrines; Deobandis and Ahl-Hadith criticize their respect for local influences. The Madrassas run by Bravelis also follow the Dars-e-Niazami course.

The Ahal Hadith school of thought is usually known as non-conformists as they do not follow any particular Fiqh or interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. The nomenclature associated to them is Whabi after Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1792) of Saudi Arabia. The Deobandi and this sect are ideologically very close to each other. The Deobandi school of thought manifested a conservative orthodox Salafist egalitarian model exemplifying the life and times of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) for the Muslims. Some well-known Muslim scholars established a Madrassa in 1866 in Deoband UP India with a well-defined organizational structure; the curriculum designed was to impart the knowledge of Sharia law and Fiqh. The Pioneers were Maulana Qasim Nauntwi (1833-1877) and Maulana Rasid Ahmed Gangohi (1829-1905) derived their inspiration from Whabisim, which emerged in 18th century and promoted the Puritanism of religious practices. Talibulilms from all over the world used to come to this institution. (Ralph Magnus, Eden Naby,2002, pp.75-76). Dars-e-Nizami was the main source of its curriculum. The most significant part of their teaching was anti Shiite views. The Deobandis forcefully rejected the folk Islam, which heavily relied upon saints and mysticism. In Pakistan Jamiat-Islami and JamiatUlma-e-Islam (JUI) believe in the Deobandi philosophy. Both these political parties run the largest numbers of madrassas in Pakistan.

The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan had a great ramification in terms of growth and the role of Madrassas and their students in Pakistani Political system. This invasion made millions of Afghans to flee from their mother land and get settled into Refugee Camps in KPKP(NWFP) and Baluchistan, where Deobanism was already very much influential, not only in faith but also in Madrassas education. Similarly the Afghanistan Mujahedeen leadership and later on Taliban leadership were the followers of Deobandi traditions, received their education in Deobandi influenced Madrassa located in Pakistan. As M .J. Ghouri (2001) mentioned in his book that The Mullah Omer and ninety percent of Taliban leadership like Taliban's former envoys to UN and their representatives in Islamabad were the graduates from Dar uloom Haqqania Binori Town Karachi.

The massive funding from the US, Saudi Arabia and parallel support from government institutions of Pakistan to knock down Soviet Union in Afghanistan instrumented in spreading radical Madrassas in Pakistan.(Chandran, Suba,2003,para.2). This proliferation began in the 1980's and continued, still no concrete figures are available about the madrassas. The curriculum was drastically altered by USAID and new version of textbooks based on violent Islam were issued to the elementary school children in both the camps and Pashto border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. As found by Leigh Nolan (2006) The University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO) made 50 \$ million contract with Education Center for Afghanistan (ECA) which was run by the seven mujahedeen organizations.(p.39)

These madrassas incubated the Taliban movement rather appeared as a massive source of fresh recruits whenever they needed in Afghanistan. The student of these madrassas fully participated in resistance against Soviets. Mullah Zaeef confirmed the role of Taliban in Jihad against Soviets by stating that

There is a common misconception that the ‘The Taliban’ only came into being in 1994. In fact, the word Taliban is the plural form of Talib meaning student. As such as long as there have been madrassas, there have been religious students or Taliban (p.10)

The Taliban’s role in political, economic and military spheres, traditionally pervasive and evident as Mullah Mushki and Mullah Shor Bazar were some well-known Talibs who inflicted heavy casualties on the British forces during the third Afghan War, (Jacob, Happymon, 2006, p.2). so this attire of resisting character of Taliban in Afghan Society during the foreign invasion continued and Taliban also fought against Soviet forces (Ghufran, Nasreen, 2001, pp.462-487 & Mullah Zaeef, 2010, pp.22)

After the Soviet withdrawal, the Taliban leaders eased their role in political life and went back to Madrassas to complete their education. However, they were not satisfied with what was going on in the country. (Ghufran Nasreen, 2001, p.467). In an interview with Rahim ullah Yousaf Zai, Mullah Omer said, “we began fighting with Muslims who had astray. How could we remain quite when we heard and saw crimes being committed against the innocent, the poor, and the women” (Magnus & Naby, 1998, p.194)

The Ethnic Background

Afghan’s ethnic identity is based upon multiple sources, as its population majorly comes from four main ethnic groups, it is estimated that Pashtun constitute 38%, Tajiks, 25%, Hazaras 19% and Uzbeks 16%. The largest majority Pashtuns have further division into 30 tribes who maintained their political power until 1992 since 1747. These tribes belong to two of major confederations: the Durannis and Ghilzais. Durannis are settled on the flat lands from Farah to Kandahar, while Ghilzais mostly reside in the Southeast, between Kandhar and Kabul, however their presence in the center and north of the country is also found due to coercive migration during the Durannis rule. (Riphenburg, Carol. K, 2005, p.37)

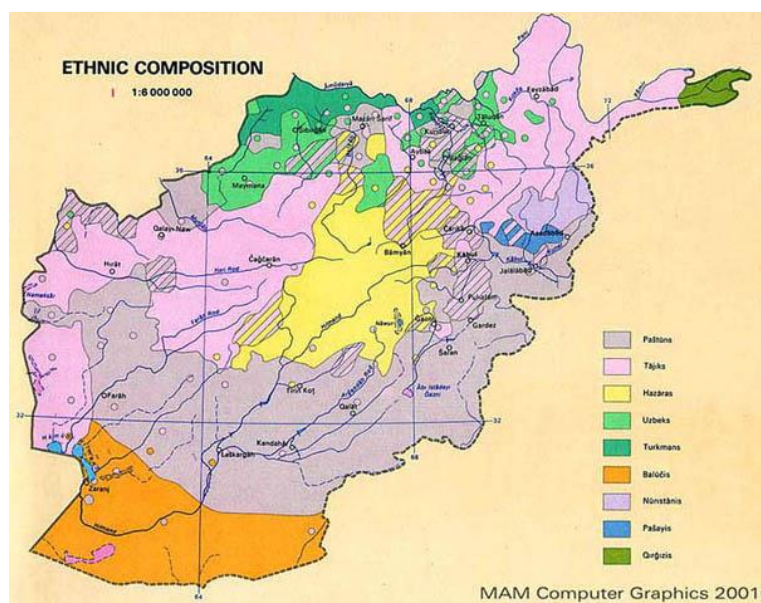


Figure 5.1: Ethnic Composition of Afghanistan

The Duranni rule strengthened Pashtuns so much that their traditions, cultural patterns, and mores have become the major source of Afghan national identity. Pashtuns remained the major recipients in the distribution of land and property; they were also preferred for military recruitments. They enjoyed institutionalized dominance. The first blow to their power came into 1929 when Kabul was in the hand of a Tajik Habib-Ullah; however, Pashtun Nader Shah father of Zahir Shah recaptured it very soon. Pashtuns either Ghilzais or Durannis had been at the core of power in one way or the other in all the regimes. Burnet R. Rubin (1992) analyzing Afghanistan from rentier state perspective found that social structures in Afghanistan reflect kinship or religious identities. Afghanistan national society, he pointed out, however had been based upon ethnic stratification. He stated that the head of state (king until 1973, president from 1973 to 1978) was from Muhammadzai clan of the Barakzai tribe of the Durrani background. (p.79).

Anwar -Ul- Haq Ahdy (1995) pointed out towards the changing trends of interethnic relations that according to him began with the constitutional decade (1964-1973). In constitution no ethnic group was granted any privileges that others do not enjoy” (p.622) Likewise, the communist rule specifically Khalaq faction

(1978-79) was also marked by the changing trends of interethnic relations when Uzbeki, Turkmani, Baluchi, and Nuristani were recognized as official languages. The same continuity in interethnic relations can also be seen during Parcham period when a large number of ethnic minorities were recruited into armed forces and the bureaucracy. Ahdy (1995) viewed these changes in these words that "this policy not only drastically reduced the dominance of the Pashtuns in state institutions but eventually caused the breakdown of the state after Soviet forces withdrew" (p.623)

Since April 1992, the decline of Pashtuns was quite visible when Pashtuns were under control of only two-fifths of the country despite being the largest majority of the country. The rise of the Taliban generated a sort of optimism among the Pashtuns about a reversal of their decline process. The ethnic cleansing in North of Taliban and in Kabul of non-Pashtuns during 1996-2001 virtually divided Afghanistan along the north-south and Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns lines. (Dawn, December, 5, 1996, UN Report: Afghanistan now divided on ethnic lines). The main stream leadership of Taliban Movement and its rule were self-evident of Pashtuns' dominance at the core of Power. Out of 29 Taliban leaders, 14 were Ghilzais, 8 Durranis, 7 non Pashtuns. (Ahmed, Rashid, 2000, p. 64) Nasreen Ghufraan (2001) pointed out towards the Taliban's efforts to integrate non-Pashtuns and Pashtuns into political realm. As given the names and ethnic identity of Central Shura in Kandahar. This has been opined that Taliban regime was accused to have been structured along ethnic lines, however, they made some efforts to bring non-Pashtuns into their Shura, "have not been considered as impartial regarding other ethnicities" (p.437)

The Fall of Kabul to Taliban

After capturing Kandahar, they moved towards north of Kabul where local warlords surrendered to them. Urzgan and Zabul provinces came under their sway without even a shot fired by November and December 1994 respectively. In January 1995 a brief fighting took place at Helmand valley, finally it was conquered. Similarly, after one day fighting, the Taliban ceased Ghazani province when Mullah Abdul Salam Rocketti, despite having all skills to use Scud and Stinger missiles surrendered with weapon and territory. In continuation, the Feb 1995 marked another victory for Taliban and the important positions of Hikmatyar at Chaharsayab and Maidanshahr outside Kabul captured. Because of this victory over HizbeIslami Kabulis heaved a sigh of relief who had been victim of severe casualties and deaths (Griffin Michael, 2001, p.44-45)

Taliban also opened all the roads for food convoys to reach at Kabul so transport people felt relieved because of Taliban. The year 1995 also saw new balances of power and remaking of alliances. In March 1995, Rabani forces pushed out Hizbe Wahadat e Islami, the most powerful Shiite group in Afghanistan. This made them to join hands with Taliban and decide to surrender with their weapons and positions to Taliban. But, this collaboration soon ended in dismay, when the leader of Shiite group Abdul Ali Mazari died in Taliban custody. After this incidence, Hazaras could not come close to Taliban; rather both groups became bitter enemy to each other. (Khalilzad Zalmay, 1996). & Ahmed Rashid (2000) have reviewed this incident that the Hazaras never forgave the Taliban for Mazari's death and because of this incident a bloody ethnic and sectarian divide between Pashtun and Hazara Sunni and Shia, bubbling just below the surface, now came into open, (p.35)

In March 1995, Taliban faced a major setback since their birth when Masood forces launched a heavy attack when they left Kabul leaving behind hundreds of dead bodies so by the end of March Taliban seemed to disappear because they were losing rapidly. After this defeat Taliban advanced towards North West where by late 1995, they captured Nimbroz and Farah. Ismail Khan could not stop their advances. The Kabul regime of Burhan-ud-Din Rabani, fearing of un-checked victories of Taliban, sent two thousands Tajiks fighters to defend Sindh and Herat. Ismail Khan launched an offensive strike against Taliban and captured Dilaram on 23 Aug 1995, and some parts of Helmand, which apparently looked threatening power base of Taliban; however, Ismail Khan Governor of Herat was facing some problem in terms of supply payment and corruption. His Army indulged in harsh treatment with civilian population, made him unpopular among the Herat and surrounding areas. Due to these reasons, Ismail Khan had not been in the position to sustain his strength against Taliban. In the meantime, Taliban mustered their resources with twenty thousand men well equipped with arms and ammunition and cut the supply line of Herat. Finally, in the first week of Sep 1995 Ismail Khan fled away towards Iran. With the fall of Herat, Taliban were in complete control in Western Afghanistan. Taliban killed hundreds of Heratis, closed down girl's schools and threw out thousands of women from work places. The fall of Herat became a prelude to ouster of Rabani government from Kabul. Taliban launched another attack on Kabul during October and November but Ahmed Shah Masood forces successfully pushed them back. Before the last offensive over the Kabul by Taliban, it was massed by multitude of warring factions like force of Kabul government along with the bulk of left over equipment of the Former Communist Army and this was the strongest military force in the country. Abdul Rashid Dostam had twenty thousand men in his force. All these forces were engaged in fighting at one or the other place. In the Hazarajat at that time government forces and Shiite were contesting for the control of Bamiyan (Magnus Ralph H, 1997, p. 113)

These state of affairs facilitated Taliban as they on 11 Sep marched towards Jalalabad facing minimum resistance, ousted Haji Abdul Qadir who was accused of getting bribe from Pakistan and Taliban and fled away to Peshawar without fighting. After this capture, they moved towards Laghman and Kunar provinces where they also met with little resistance. These victories gave enough confidence to Taliban to attack Hikmatyar's controlled strategic city of Sarobi in Kabul province. Taliban occupied the city of Kabul without being a shot fired on 27 September 1996. Griffin has commented that Kabul was not won by arms but through strategic checkmate because the member of Ningrahar Shura left battlefield without fighting.

The Kabul, 27th, September 1996

On 27 September, this newly emerged rebel force occupied Kabul, the Capital of Afghanistan. The sitting President Burhanddin Rabbani and his allied Ahmed Shah forces abandoned it. (Dawn, September, 28, 1996) The first measure taken by them was the public hanging of ex-communist president Najibullah and his brother accusing them to be brutal and un-Islamic, as in the words of Mullah Muhammad Rabbani, "He was against Islam. He was communist. He was a criminal" (Dawn, 28 September, 1996 & Megan, Arney, 1996)

The bodies of Najibullah and his brother remained hanged for full 24 hours, but no sign of protest appeared at societal level because majority of population felt relieved on the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban in the hope of peace. The Kabul city had been prey to 80 percent destruction and devastation since very long, causing 30,000 deaths and complete economic collapse. (The New York Times, September, 29 1996,)

Taliban's Governance

Taliban came with an objective to purge Afghan society from criminals and make peace at large. The Islamist orientation was the inspirational and guiding force in Taliban's governance. Mullah Muhammad was declared Amir-ul- Momineen by the 1200 Islamic scholars in 1996. Taliban changed the name of Afghanistan from the Islamic State of Afghanistan to Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan. The Bureaucratic structure was patterned under the nomenclature of Shura, indicating the Islamic dimension of governance and system of consultation. Peter Marsden (2002) quoting Taliban's Liaison officer presented Mullah Omer vision that "his main goal was rid Afghanistan of corrupt, western oriented time servers"(p.61)

There were three bodies of Shuras, one in Kandahar as Central Shura, the Kabul Shura, and a Military Shura. The Supreme Shura at Kandahar actually authorized to take all decisions. The Provincial governors were also appointed. A unique feature of Taliban governance was that there was no line of demarcation between Military commanders and Ministers, as the same person had to go for fight in the battlefield and head an administrative department (Ghufran Nasreen, 2001, p. 74)

In pursuance of their Islamic inspiration, their first and foremost task was to declare Islamic Sharia as Law of Land of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. To eradicate crimes and infighting from society, a powerful unified and all pervasive Islamic government was considered vital across the country. The Taliban Government comprised twenty ministries, which worked to implement Sharia Law in all spirit and soul. The most important ministry was of Religious Affairs, which meaning fully achieved its targets. This ministry instituted a law enforcement agency under the title of 'Amar Bin Maroof Nahi Anil Munkir'. This agency was responsible for the extensive implementation of Islamic punishment system, though sometimes excessively used these punishment to suppress common people unjustifiably. Sher Muammad Stankzai, the acting foreign minister speaking on Voice of Sharia on 20th November 1996 declared that Sharia 's Hudood had ensured the safety of the lives and property of common man. Form Herat to Jalalabad and Kabul no one could dare to commit theft or crimes. He also declared that God has revealed these laws to Muhammad (AS). "Those who consider imposition of this law against human rights are insulting all Muslims and their beliefs. (Peter, Marsden, 2002, p.63)

This reflects the stern belief of Taliban regarding the inevitability of Islamic law for ensuring the peace, security of life, property and dignity of people. The public hanging, speedy on the spot trial was rampant during the Taliban rule believing that these would bring far-reaching consequences. Even their opponents recognized that "robbery, rape, and murder had virtually vanished from Kabul since the first accused thief has been amputated". (John, F Burns, The New York Times, October, 22 1996, para.5 & Ghorri, M.J, 2000, p.57)

Though William Maley disagreed with this myth of peace by giving example from the writing of a Roman historian Tacitstus in the Agricola "they make a wilderness and they call it peace"(Maley, William, 1996, p.275)

Taliban formulated their policies under their own self-styled interpretation of Sharia; a great number of decrees were issued. These decrees specifically focused upon the role of women in society. The women fully denied from education, employment and any other social, recreational activities. However, men were made subject to strict dress code as western clothing and shaving became a prohibited act. On 5 December, 1996, the department for the promotion of virtues and prevention of vices, issued a verdict "since the Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon Him did not trim his beard all his life, therefore all government employees are hereby informed that they should grow their beard within a month and half" (Marsden, Peter, 2002, p.63)

All schools were closed down right after the assumption of power as Nancy Hatch Dupree (2001) mentioned in 1996, "The Taliban closed all schools in Kabul depriving 102,000 girls of education and 7,800 teachers of employment." (Maley, William, 1996,p.277). Another decree made veiling mandatory for women which virtually secluded them minimizing their role in daily affairs. On December 6, 1996, it was announced that the department of promotion of virtues punished 225 women for being unveiled, which, according to them, was an act against women dignity. (Dawn, September, 30, 1996) For enforcement of Sharia in true spirit, the extensive check posts were installed, where women were beaten or actually flogged.

Elaheh Rostami Povey (2003) observed that barring women from taking active part in day-to-day life activities deeply affected the economy and virtually lessened economic activities in the society. Resultantly the hunger and poverty made many women prostitute. One most noticeable thing was that women were also forced to marry Taliban to end the prostitution. (p.267). The decades' long war and civil war fully distorted the social face of Afghan society, smashing the life pattern of Afghan women as a new type of women-headed family appeared. There were "approximately 35,000 women-headed households and these women were called "Zanane Bee Sarprast unprotected women". (Rostami, Elaheh Povey, 2003, p.267 & Ghuffran, Nasreen, 2001 & Rubin, Barnett .R 1997). Because of Taliban's policy of women seclusion, these women were deprived of any livelihood which added their sufferings. International community strongly condemned this policy. Though, initially the United States of America did not show any concern towards these repressive policies but due to growing condemnation and lobbying by women organization, the US government had to show their displeasure towards these policies when Madeline Albright in Nov 1997 first time condemned Taliban's policies. Nevertheless, a meaningful response could come only after the attacks on the US Embassies in 1998 at Kenya and Tanzania and Taliban refused handing over of Osama Bin Laden to USA. The Taliban regime granted sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden.

The UN Security Council also passed a resolution in condemnation of Taliban's policies in Oct 1996. The Taliban regime rejected this resolution in a statement on Voice of Sharia Radio saying "there are dozens and even hundreds of states in the world that do not comply in any way with genuine standards of human rights followed by the in the West" (Marsden, Peter, 2002, p.122)

The North Offensive by Taliban

The North offensive immediately started after the fall of Kabul. The Taliban first came across with Dostam forces at Salang pass joining Northern and Southern Afghanistan. (Chapman, Graham P, 2008) and then Ahmed Shah Masood troops at Panjsher valley. Taliban had to retreat due to solid resistance by well-experienced lion of Panjsher Ahmed Shah Masood in his own battle field.

To counter the growing threat of Taliban, Dostam and Ahmed Shah Masood forgetting their long lasted enmity decided to form an alliance, which was also joined by Khalil iHazz -e-Wahdat. New fronts opened up in the end of 1996 when the Taliban captured Badghis province. During the early months of 1997 as Taliban had to encounter at South of Slang pass where the Hizbe Wahadat did not let them cross the Shibar Pass. Similarly Masood kept on fighting with Taliban in and around Panjsher valley resulting high casualties on both sides (Burns John F, the Newyork Times 8th oct 1997 & Ahmed Rashid 2000: 52)

Capture of Mazar-e- Sharif

Mazare Sharif was the power base of General Rasheed Dostam and Uzbek Militia. Northern Afghanistan is a prosperous area with 60% of resources and 80% of its farmer industry. Historically North Afghanistan has remained the source of economic development of Afghan state. Traditional north had been the center of Tajiks Turkmans and Uzbeks but a Pashtun element was also present who in 1996 helped Taliban (Marsden, Peter: 19)

General Abdul Rasheed Dostam during the entire winter stayed at Qila Jangi near the Mazare Sharif preparing to combat with Taliban. he had unlike other war lords efficiently administered all the provinces under his control with a properly instituted educational and health systems as eighteen hundreds girls were studying in Bulk University at Mazare Sharif. The North offensive started in spring 1997 and the Northern provinces fell one after another because of the personal feuds of Dostam and his second in command General Malik Pahalwan. On 19 May 1997 Taliban were invited by Malik Pahalwan to help him against Dostam forces. Malik with his three co-aides Uzbek Generals facilitated Taliban to move into north swiftly. Dostam had to flee first to Uzbekistan then to Turkey. Ahmed Rashid has concluded that Malik was wrong in this decision or to thinking of any benefit from his alliance with Taliban (Ahmed Rashid 2000, p. 58)

Taliban first time entered into Mazar-e- Sharif with the strength of 2500 men under the command of Mullah Abdul Razaq. As soon as they entered, they started disarming Uzbeks and Hazaras. Barbra Crossett reported from Afghanistan that Taliban fiercely killed Hazara people as almost 53 civilians of various ages in one village and 30 in another the (Newyork Times 1997). However, Hazras rose against Taliban, who later joined by other people as well, within fifteen hours of fighting between Taliban and local people of Mazar-e-

Sharif some six hundred Taliban killed in streets and almost one thousand were captured at airport. There are reports that almost ten top political and military leaders of Taliban were either killed or captured (Ahmed Rashid, 2000, p. 59)

A United Nation investigating team had reported that two thousand Taliban were, killed captured or might have been thrown into wells alive. (New York Times, Dec 1997, para.s 1). Malik Pahalwan soon disassociated himself from Taliban rather double-crossed them and retook Northern provinces Faryab, Jowzjan and Sari Pull. There was heavy fighting at the same time for other three provinces namely Balkh, Samangan and Kunduz. (Mullah Zaeef, 2010, p. 88). The situation in Southern and North Eastern Afghanistan was not also favorable for Taliban, where Ahmed Shah Masood was trying to recapture some very important strategic positions around Kabul like Jabal Saraj at the Southern entrance of the Slang tunnel. Ahmed Shah Masood was trying hard to enter Kabul after Taliban defeat at Mazare Sharif front. Hazara's at Hazarajat also counter attacked Taliban to break nine months long blockade of their homeland. During May and July of ten weeks' tensed fighting, more than seven thousands civilian and forces people had been killed or either wounded on both sides. This defeat caused soaring anxiety among the high ranks of Taliban. Mullah Umar first time publically spoke to his fighters to raise the morale of his people. A fast recruiting activity started from Gilzai Pushtun Tribes in Eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan. The anti-Taliban forces also reconstituted themselves into a new form. On 13 June 1997, the United Islamic and National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan was established declared Mazar their capital Burhanud Din Rabani President and Ahmed Shah Masood Defense minister. Soon this unity shattered as personal feuds and divergence in the interest of Dostam Ahmed Shah Masood and Khalili prevented them to work together. In mid-July Masood recaptured Chaikar and Bagram Air base, which improved his strategic position. By September, he was only twenty miles away from Kabul; heavy bombardment of rocket forced one-lakh eighty thousand people to take refuge in Shomali valley. (Ahmed Rashid 2000, p. 62)

The anti-Taliban forces at that point of time fully cordoned off Kabul city. In the West and North of the city, Masood forces were in control, Khalili forces were in East and South of Kabul. There were rumors around that by joining hands they would launch massive attacks on Kabul, however Taliban successfully curtailed them twenty-five kilometer away from Kabul. The North offensive of Taliban fully caught Afghan society into ethnic and sectarian morass. The ethnic and religious divide became acute and all the parties got indulged themselves into ethnic and religious persecution widely and extensively against each other. From the defeat of Taliban in 1997, until their takeover in 1998 of Mazare Sharif, all the area had been the victim of intense fighting between the Malik and Dostam forces. There was a wide spread looting from the Tajiks due to which, forces of UN agencies had to abandon Mazare Sharif.

On 12 July 1998, Taliban crushed Dostam forces, eight hundred soldiers were captured majority of them later killed. On 1 August 1998 Taliban ceased Dostam head quarter Shiberghan by bribing his commanders. It also happened near Mazar city when Uzbek commander accepted bribe and left Hazara forces un-aided, surprisingly surrounded by Taliban. These Hazara forces fought bravely but failed to stop Taliban entry into Mazar city on 8 Aug 1998.

Massacre in Mazare Sharif

After the fall of Mazar Sharif, there was a horrific phase of mass killing carried out by Taliban. Everybody on the street was shoot down. Soon the dead bodies became the dog's food, as Taliban did not allow their burial. All this was done with the help of local Pashtuns. They knew the city very well and helped Taliban search parties to locate Hazara's home for killing. Taliban were on the way to clean the North from Shia presence. Through Mosques they announced that now Shia had only three choices that "convert to Sunni Islam, leave for Shia Iran or die" (Ahmed Rashid, 2000, p. 74). The estimated deaths were eight thousands but no independent, factual based information could come out due to Taliban closed-door policy.

The Bamiyan Fall

Since August 1997, Taliban cordoned off the Bamiyan city, closing all the roads from South West and East. There was no relief possible from the North where snowy winter, law and order situation made impossible for the food convoys to reach Bamiyan. Hundred thousands of people in Bamiyan, Ghor, Wardak and Gazni were the victims of acute food and grain shortage. Bamiyan was attacked from three direction which lastly conquered by 13th Sep 1998 by Taliban. Before the fall of Bamiyan on 5 Sep 1998, Taliban also captured Tolqan province, which was the political head quarter of Ahmed Shah Masood. Finally, Ahmed Shah Masood fled to Badkhashan province.

The Bamiyan Statues' Issue

Initially Taliban showed no hostility towards cultural objects. In August 2000, the Taliban authorities granted permission to National Museum officials for the display of cultural objects despite the fact that this

cultural inventory included Neolithic figures, Hindu goddess in Toga like robes, intricate ivories combined with Indian and Greek style and excavations of gold coins from the Alexander the Great time. This Art repository also included tons of early Islamic Art articles with a library and a basement filled with tens of thousands of pottery shards spanning ten millennia. However, it is believed that Ex- Mujahedeen plundered seventy-five percent of this ancient art treasure during the infighting between the different factions of Ex – Afghan mujahedeen. The harbingers of this civil war stolen 40,000 gold coins from the museum. As stated earlier during the early days of their rule, Taliban had shown no disliking for cultural objects. with the passage of time a change crept into their policy, and on 26, Feb 2001 an edict was issued with the clear cut message about their non -tolerance policy towards all cultural icons, that's all shrines must be annihilated so that no one can worship or respect them in future" (Christian Manhart, 2001,p.387).

In pursuance of this policy, they inflicted heavy damages to cultural images, as Omer Khan Masudi, the National Museum Director mentioned, "From afternoon until evening they broke statues... A few days later, they came back and they followed the same procedure. They came back many times." (Lawler Andrew, 2002, p. 1202) At this point of time, an international condemnation roared up against Taliban. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan termed it to be a lamentable act. OIC and other International organizations did their utmost to save these relics, declaring Bamiyan Statutes the Part of Human tradition. Japan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan as well requested Taliban not to destroy these cultural icons of Afghanistan, but all went in vain. An Egyptian Scholar Mufti Sheikh Nasar opined that the statues never had any negative impact on Islam. Throughout Islam's history in Afghanistan, these relics were kept save and no Muslim doctrine never demanded their destruction. But Taliban showed no leniency in this regard, as the Foreign minister of Taliban Mutawakil Wakil Ahemd said that no statues would be left undestroyed (ibid)

UNESCO also launched an extensive campaign to save Bamiyan Buddha form destruction. Besides press releases and personal letters to Mullah Muhammad Omer, UNESCO Director General held a series of meetings with the ambassadors of Muslim countries, specifically the countries who recognized Taliban Regime. On UNESCO persuasion, an eleven member's delegate of Muslim leaders went to Kandahar to convince Mullah Omer that "Koran does not prescribe the destruction of Statutes" (Manhart, Christian.2001, p.387) .All these efforts could not save Bamiyan Buddah, they were smashed.

Various reasons have been pondered over by analysts; some viewed it in the background of Islamic Iconoclasm (Flood, Finbarr Barry,2002,p.) and some linked it with the timing of UN sanctions against Taliban.(The Nation, 25 , Dec, 2000 & The Hindu,25,Jan 2000).However Taliban never accepted this version. Muttawakil, the Foreign Minster stated, "There is no link between this or any political issue. It is our internal issue and has no political justification".Retrieved from(http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1214000/121414.stm)

Finbarr argued that Taliban disliked Western pressure on the ground that Western institution had been hypocritic that they were ready to give millions of Dollars to save un- Islamic stone statues, but unwilling to spend one cent to save the lives of Afghani men, women and children.(Finbarr, Barry. 2002,p.) Syed Rahmat-ullah Hashmi, an envoy to the States justified Buddah destruction in these words "when your children are dying in front of you then you do not care about a piece of Art". (ibid) However the Director of Kabul Museum commented on Taliban policy towards cultural icons in these words "first you heard of people burying their children, then they buried their history" (Lawler Andrew,2002, pp.1202-3)

The Human Rights Violations

The human rights violation was also one of the major causes of international condemnation of Taliban Regime. The closure of roads to Bamiyan to cordon off Hazarajat resulted into acute shortage of food, which cost heavy human casualties combined with the suffering of frosty winter, which made it virtually impossible for food convoys to make available the food for starving population of Bamiyan. This was heavily criticized. similarly public humiliation of any blamed convict also created a wave of hate against Taliban rule. John F. Burns reported about two boys of 13and 18 years; they were caught while gathering scrapings from a ruined place. Taliban forced them for standing hours with blackened face at a public place. Such scenes were rampant during their rule. This style of governance eventually brought unpopularity to Taliban at large... it's not 1996, its 1375' used to become a " common wise crack , but it is spoken only out of the Taliban ear shot with their shoulder slung rifles."(Jhon F. Burns, 1996)

The physical assault on UN aid workers forced UN aid agencies to halt their programs in all areas, specifically it badly affected food supply, removal of land mines, repairing of war devastated irrigation system and building of houses. (The New York Times, March, 25 1998) Taliban did not bother about the human sufferings, which increased manifold due the closure of these programs. Taliban projected a perception as expressed by Taliban Planning Minster, alien to all human standards. He said, "We Muslim believe that God,

the Almighty will feed everybody one way or the other. If the foreign NGO's leave, it is their decision we have not expelled them." (Ahmed Rashid, 2000, p.23)

Human rights violations were not confined to Afghan people, it was handed on to even visiting Pakistani football players when during a match, they were arrested and shaved by Taliban authorities on the accusation that they were wearing shorts which was considered violation of Taliban dress code (News).

Fall of Taliban Regime, 2001

Taliban regime was at its lowest ebb with The US and International community due to its persistent human rights violations, Bamiyan Statute issue and their denial to hand over Osama BinLaden to the US authorities. He had been the prime suspect of attacks of the US embassies at Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998. The US initial stance towards the victories of Taliban was based on an optimism that finally a force would be in the position to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. In a statement, the acting state Department representative on the 27 September announced that US see nothing objectionable about their version of Islam. The US initial approach was conditioned by the prospective role of the US and Western Oil companies to squeeze their commercial interests regarding oil and Gas Reserves of Central Asian States. The major issue, which these companies Bidas, Delta and UNOCAL faced, was the safe transportation of energy resources via Afghanistan as the alternative routes to Russia.

The Fall of Kabul to Taliban was seen as an opportunity to screw maximum commercial interests by US policy makers for UNOCAL and Delta, as this was presumed that Taliban would restore a traditional Afghan society instead of exporting Islam. Soon this positivism disappeared when media swarmed with the news of maltreatment with Afghan women and their strict interpretation of Islam. A phenomenal change crept into US policy towards Taliban when US alleged Taliban for giving sanctuary to the terrorists and patronizing their camps in Afghanistan.

Table 5.1: Terrorists Camps in Afghanistan

Al Badar
Asadabad
Chehrbagh(Heavy Weapons Trg)
Ghazni
HikmatYar camp
Jaibal camp(Heavy weapons Trg)
Jalalabad(Heavy Weapons Trg)
Kabul
Kandhar
Kantara
Khalid Markaz
Khost(Muton)
Kunar(AdvTrg)
Markaz-e-taiba
Pakhtia(Paktya)
Pashad(Kunar)
PharsiGund, Khost
Sarkanar
SalfiaMarkaz
Tremangal (three months special course)
Yawar (three months special course)

Source : K Wariko.(2007) Afghanistan Factor in Kashmir Crisis,p. 213

The US attacked on August 20, 1998 at Khost, Ghazni and Jalabad to destroy the camps. The US officials also started pressurizing Pakistani and Saudi governments to influence Taliban for handing over of Osama bin Laden. UNOCAL also backed out from the pipeline project; President Clinton visited South Asia in March 2000, where he expressed US concern over the plight of Afghan people and human rights violations. Until then Osama Bin Laden had fully become the main irritant for US officials. Finally, the fateful day of 9/11 came when US and World media shown to the millions of observers that America was attacked by invisible enemy from the Air, but soon the invisibility was dashed, and the US Intelligence Agencies identified the attackers and their connection with Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda organization. The suicidal attackers of Twin Towers and Pentagon, the emblem of American power Elite, were nineteen Arab hijackers. They had close links with Al Qaeda. The US Senate immediately and unanimously authorized President Bush to take all necessary actions. In consequent of the preceding events of large-scale condemnation of Taliban's refusal to comply with the US demands to hand over Osama bin Laden, on 7 October 2001, British and American forces

attacked Afghanistan. Finally, in early December 2001, the Council of Afghan leaders in Bonn named Hamid Karzai as the head of new interim government in Afghanistan ending the four years rule of Taliban. (Tanner, Stephen 2002, pp.290- 295)

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