

## **Islamisation in Afghanistan and Afghan Jihad: A critical appraisal**

Muqarrab Akbar

### **The Geographical Importance of Afghanistan:**

Afghanistan has been a central focus of world power for the last two thousand years, notably from Alexander the Great in 330 BC to the current US invasion, due to its geographical location, landscape, social, economic and political perspective, but none of these forces gained success or was able to control its territory.(1) The Kandhar and Kabul were considered as the gates of Hindustan: as Sir Percy Sykes, former British Diplomat and historian, explained it, “He alone can be Emperor of Hindustan who is first Lord of Kabul.”(2) In ancient times, the great conquerors such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane had tried to conquer Afghanistan.(3) The British and Russia played the “great game” throughout the Nineteenth Century to gain control over the buffer state of Afghanistan, but failed. Moreover, it was a focus of bipolar rivalry due to its closeness to the Persian Gulf’s oil and the Indian Ocean’s ports in the 1970s. Afghans have always been a symbol of resistance against foreign invasions and were never colonised because “Pakhtuns, no less so than other groups, have available alternative moral maps to guide them in their life decisions.”(4) However, Afghanistan has always been a “rentier state”- heavily dependent on foreign assistance: and a rentier state always produced rentier revolutionaries.(5) Failed foreign invasions, the civil war and years of cold war conflict have brought a terrible tool of death and destruction for the people of Afghanistan. They have always been united against a foreign enemy and fought among themselves to rule the land. Edward suggests that this is because, “Afghan people have three different models of behaviour-Islam, rule, and honour and the concrete presence of these characteristics block the emergence of a coherent civil society, and by which the polity continues to be afflicted”.(6)

### **Islamisation in Afghanistan:**

It is often considered that the Muslim world, and notably Saudi and Pakistan, inculcated Islam as a decisive force in the 1979 Afghan war, whereas in fact the Islamisation of Afghanistan started in the 1950s when a group of professors at the faculty of Theology in Kabul University, inspired by the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, started to influence their

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Assistant Prof. Dept. of International Relations, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

students.(7) Professor Gholam Mohammad Niyazi and Burhanuddin Rabbani, which studied at Al Azhar University, Cairo, the Oxford of Islamic world, were the stalwarts of this movement. They declared the Afghan government illegitimate and corrupt, demanded reunification of Pashtunistan, and discarded secular Afghan Nationalism. Moreover, these students denounced the government's ties with the Soviet Union because of Communism and the westernization of culture: more notably the un-Islamic dress of women and use of alcohol.(8) Coll described that they were strongly against women's education and threw acid in the face of female students who came into the university without a veil.(9) They were convinced that only an Islamic revolution could bring change as an Islamic state. They were in favour of both Islamic culture and western science and technology: as described by Roy, "Islamism is the Sharia plus electricity".(10) They were willing to go for Jihad against non-Islamic elements, but they had no authority of Jihad at that time as only the state could declare it, Roy claimed.(11) So, it seems that the phenomenon of Islamism in Afghanistan was promoted by Afghan students, not by Pakistan and the Muslim world, and particularly from rural society. In 1973, the students of the State Faculty of Sciences or Polytechnic School such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ahmad Shah Massoud also joined them and formed the "Muslim Youth Organisation". Rabbani was its president, Sayyaf was vice chairman and Hekmatyar was political director of the group.(12) Later on, the most brilliant military commanders in the Afghan war came from this "Muslim Youth". Roy called them 'Islamists' or 'fundamentalists' to distinguish them from ulemas.(13) They were from an intelligentsia educated in modern schools of the twentieth century, not in religious madrassas, and they saw Islam as a political ideology rather than as centuries-old religious controversies. Ulemas were in favour of the status quo, while these "Islamists" did not want to compromise on a system which was not thoroughly Islamic in nature.(14) To counter the Islamists, a communist party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), composed of reformist intellectuals and active youth, was formed in 1965. These socialists wanted to change the system of state by overthrowing the political and economic hegemony of the feudal class, following pro-Soviet ideology through a national democratic revolution. Afghan society was divided, as these socialists were looking for the Soviet model whereas the Islamists were inspired by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, Iran was also interested in Afghanistan because the Sunni Pashtun rulers marginalised Afghanistan's Shia community by limiting their political participation.(15) Iran, being a US ally, also played an important role in anti-Communism in Afghanistan and urged Afghanistan to make good

relations with Pakistan.(16) In 1963, with the help of Iran, Pak-Afghan relations started to improve and the issue of Pashtunistan was side lined. Furthermore, even during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars, Afghanistan remained neutral in spite of Soviet pressure.(17)

These improvements in bilateral relations were seen with scepticism by both India and Russia and the pro-Indian and Soviet-backed Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan overthrew King Zahir Shah in 1973. Daud revived the dormant issue of Pashtunistan, gave sanctuary to the Bugti and Marree insurgents in Afghanistan and armed them against Pakistan.(18) Furthermore, he sent thousands of Afghan soldiers in disguise as Pashtuns and smuggled arms into Pakistan to support the Pashtunistan cause, Schofield disclosed.(19) Afghanistan's uncompromising, rigid stance over Pashtunistan not only created a strong sense of national self-righteousness but also prompted Pakistan to pursue every possible option to pre-empt revival of Pashtun nationalism on its soil. Daud was sympathetic to the socialists and clamped down hard on the Islamists, expelling their leaders to Pakistan.(20) These "Islamists" planned to create a revolution, not a coup, through peasantry, as most areas were rural and most students had roots in peasantry. Alarmed by Daud's support for Pakistani secessionists, Pakistan reacted by devising the "forward policy" in Afghanistan, welcoming and assisting exiled Afghan Islamists with anti-Daud government sentiment.(21) Hence, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, ordered Brigadier Naseer Ullah Baber, IG Frontier Corps to arrange the training of around 5,000 anti-Daud Afghan Islamists, notably Rabbani, Massoud and Hekmatyar, to suppress the Pashtunistan issue and to gain political leverage in the anti-Daud political order in Afghanistan.(22) So, Pakistan was helping these Islamists as a tool to attaining foreign policy objectives: particularly, security for the Afghan border. They went back and fought against Daud's communist regime in Afghanistan in 1975 but failed due to two reasons; one, the people could not differentiate between Islamic revolutionaries and communist revolutionaries because PDPA was also struggling to change the Daud regime; and second, because they lacked the support of the majority of traditional clergy due to the status quo stance of the clergy.(23) Later on, Daud started to alienate himself from pro-Russian policy after realising that this was harming Afghanistan and that Russia was supporting PDPA, Daud's opposition.(24) He diverted towards pro-Muslim world policy by establishing relations with the Muslim world, and notably with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Moreover, Daud mended his fences by withdrawing support for Pashtunistan and recognising the Durand line as an international border, whereas Bhutto agreed to release the leaders of National Awami Party (NAP), alleged to have supported Afghanistan's

demand for Pashtunistan.(25) Daud's reorientation of pro-Soviet policy and disagreement with Moscow over the issue of the increase in foreign experts in Afghanistan threatened the last 25 years' Russian investment in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union started to consider Daud as another third world dictator, who, just as Sadat had done in Egypt or Saddam in Iraq, was slipping from their grasp by pursuing a foreign policy independent to Russia.(26)

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, Zai-ul-Haq, the army chief, toppled Bhutto's democratically elected regime on account of its unpopularity with the masses and due to an internal political uprising. Kheli describes that Zia clearly signalled that "Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and would survive only if it sticks to Islam."(27) Whereas in Afghanistan, the pro-Moscow PDPA under Nur Muhammad Taraki came to power in April 1978 as a result of the Saur Revolution. Moscow sent hundreds of Soviet advisors to advance socialism. Taraki urged Kosygin to help him, by sending Russian soldiers of different nationalities such as Turkmens, Uzbeks and Tajiks in civilian clothing, as they looked like locals, to stop the Islamic revolution. However, Kosygin refused this, calling the situation a 'complex political and international issue'.(28) Contrary to Daud's policy, the PDPA used brutal methods to impose socialism that ultimately led to a strong reaction and opposition from the population.(29) They attempted to destroy the state's religious infrastructure and tried to change the colour of the flag to red, the colour of Communist revolution, from green, the colour of Islam. Almost 150,000 Afghans fled to Pakistan and took refuge to avoid revolutionary turmoil. The country was in a civil war like situation and Afghan Maoists, the representatives of Shia Muslims and minority ethnic backgrounds, opposed the 1978 coup as Soviet imperialistic action and started hostilities against Pashtun domination and Pashtun nationalism.(30) Meanwhile, the pro-Moscow regime and the Islamists killed members of the Maoist organisation, and destroyed it in the early 1980s. In the aftermath of the Saur Revolution, Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan were strained again as Taraki revived the issue of Pashtunistan, started to help Baloch separatists on behalf of India and established connections with leftist forces in Pakistan to open the Khalq party office in the NWFP, but failed due to his short reign.(31) Other Islamic countries, and particularly Iran, took up the cry against the policy of Taraki. According to Russian intelligence, March 1979, a revolt against Taraki was reportedly supported by Iran.(32) Furthermore, Zia feared that a pro-communist regime in Afghanistan could endanger his own reign by encouraging leftist forces in Pakistan, Kakar opined.(33) Hence Zia tried to normalise the good diplomatic relations but failed, and then started to adopt a policy of backing Islamists against the

Soviet government. Meanwhile, the KGB set up a spy network in Islamabad, Quetta and Karachi to monitor Pakistan's assistance to rebels in Afghanistan.(34) Moreover, the US was threatened by a left wing regime as the Soviets might use the Afghan crises to move south and cease the oil export of the Persian Gulf. In addition to this, the fall of the Shah in Iran, who for the US was the most trusted ally in the region, further threatened American regional interests. Feeling these threats, the US started supporting the anti-Communist elements even before the Soviet invasion against the regime of Taraki. President Carter authorised US funding for anti-Communist guerrillas by signing presidential funding on 3 July, 1979. (35) At a later point it was reported that Taraki was willing to recognise the Durand Line on the condition of Pakistan's withdrawal from Islamist support in Afghanistan.(36) Meanwhile, the Soviet backed PDPA government of Taraki became unstable in spite of Russian support. On September 1979, Taraki's number-two man, Hafizullah Amin, killed him and became President. There was unrest in the country and Amin launched a regime of terror by arresting and shooting opponents. Amin realised that the Soviets wanted him out and began to seek better ties with the West by allowing aid from the US. The suspected drift of Amin towards the US lost the faith of the Soviet leadership and the KGB started to consider him a CIA agent.(37) Moscow started to make a plan to remove Amin, just as they had successfully done in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the past. The Soviets were in fear of the spread of Islamic fundamentalism from Iran to Afghanistan which could influence the Russian Muslim population.

### **The Afghan Jihad: Pakistan, the US and the World:**

Fearing the loss of investment in Afghanistan, Soviet Union intervened by crossing the Amu Darya, in December 1979, to protect the considerable interests that the Soviets had been building up in Afghanistan for the previous 25 years. The Russians killed Amin and many other Khalqi leaders and installed Babrak Karmal, a Parcham leader who was in exile, as president. Soviet influence on him can be understood in the fact that Karmal aired his first message as president on a radio station from the Soviet Union. The Soviet invasion threatened Pakistan in the sense that the terminal stop of Afghanistan would be Pakistan, to capture access to the hot waters of Arabian Sea. On January 1980, the UN condemned the Soviet aggression by passing a resolution deploring the foreign invasion (without mentioning the Soviet Union) of Afghanistan with a vote of 104 to 18, with 18 abstentions.(38) The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the installing of a Communist government exacerbated Pakistan's security concerns and alarmed the Arab regime and the United States due to their own apprehensions regarding Islam and bipolarity respectively.(39) For the first

time in history, Pakistan was vulnerable to two-front wars. Moreover, the world regarded this aggression as a threat to peace and profoundly disturbing, and urged for Soviet withdrawal.(40) The British government, Islamic countries and non-aligned states condemned Soviet aggression through taking extraordinary steps. Although Iran could not make a comprehensive Afghan strategy at that time due to its preoccupation in the Iraq-Iran war and the Islamic Revolution, led by Khomeini, against the US backed Shah, yet it had noteworthy influence on Afghanistan's Shia community and provided support exclusively to the Shia groups by establishing its own loyal organisations.(41)

The USA and Pakistan regarded the Soviet invasion as the part of Soviet expansionist policy, aimed at controlling the oil Rich Gulf States and gaining access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean through Pakistan. The Gulf was much concerned about the capture of the "choke point"— the Strait of Hormuz, which was not far away from Iran's port of Chah Bahar that was only 300 miles away from the southern border of Afghanistan. However, later on, much evidence and many de-classified documents revealed that the attack was neither pre-planned nor a step toward Russian expansion in the Gulf or Asia.(42) Rather, Brzezinski, the national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, revealed that the USA had instigated Soviet Union in this attack to make it a Vietnam for the Russians.(43) So it was not the coastal access which compelled the USSR to invade Afghanistan, but rather it was the effort to avoid humiliation, in terms of Soviet backed Afghan government defeat, on an international front. However, it is an undeniable fact that the Russian and communist threat was on the doorstep of Pakistan. Initially, Pakistan described the Russian invasion as "a serious violation of the norms of peaceful co-existence and the sacrosanct principles of the sovereignty of states and non-intervention in their internal affairs, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations."(44) The long, porous border with Afghanistan made Soviet invasion an alarming development for Pakistan, and particularly from a strategic and security perspective, because USSR was capable of using Afghanistan to destabilise Pakistan by encouraging insurgencies in NWFP and Baluchistan to gain access to the warm waters of the Indian Oceans.(45) Pakistan's apprehension was based on the possible application of a 'pincer movement' to attack Pakistan from two fronts.(46) So, the inability of Pakistan to roll back the Soviets out of Afghanistan provided an opportunity to the CIA to make a partnership with ISI to drive the 'red menace' out of the region. The Red Army invasion of Afghanistan provided a twofold opportunity to Pakistan: first to reshape the Pashtun movement by uniting the Pashtun tribes; and second to gain a foothold in Kabul to counter the Indian threat

by achieving strategic depth.(47) Rashid pointed that Pakistan also wanted to establish an Islamabad-friendly government in Afghanistan for twofold reasons: first, to get strategic depth in case of conflict with India; and second, to secure the Zia's Islamic vision of Muslim brotherhood because the leftist forces within Pakistan could threaten the Islamic identity of the state by the promoting Communism in Pakistan.(48) Moreover, Zia also had the opportunity to gain international legitimacy and recognition of his own dictatorial regime both on the domestic and international front. General Akhtar Abdur Rehman, Director General of ISI, urged Zia to pursue the military option against Soviet Union in Afghanistan because it was feared that hot pursuit of the Mujahideen could lead the Russians into Pakistani territories.

Insofar as Pakistan was stretched and overcommitted, it was seemingly without alternative choices but to step forward in Afghanistan to stop USSR and by looking for strategic depth against India, Haqqani commented.(49) Pakistan's foreign and defence policies over the previous 67 years had been Indian centric and shaped on the basis of Indian threat perception. Interestingly, India was concerned over US assistance and Narasimha Rao, Indian Foreign Minister, objected to the US aid by warning of a destabilising effect on the region as these weapons would end up being used against India. This statement can be explained in the assertion that Pak – India relations are full of obsession with threat to the national security of both states.(50)

It was obvious that the threat from Soviet Union, and most notably access to the Indian Ocean, had provided a convergence of interests for both allies of the Afghan war. Both regimes had their own agendas and Pashtun Islamists were the beneficiaries by getting assistance from them. This intervention was seen as Moscow's Vietnam and as time for the US to pay back the Russians for what they had done in funding the North Vietnamese against them.(51) The US supported the Afghans in pursuit of the containment of communism, due to its anti-Soviet stance, and for the containment of Iran. Ahady believes that Saudi Arabia, followed by the Iranian Revolution of 1979, started backing young militants against the Soviet Union due to its own vested sectarian interests of inculcating anti-Shia Wahhabi doctrine in Afghanistan.(52) However, it does not seem true that Saudi Arabia helped Jihad only in fear of Iran, because Communism had always been considered as an enemy by the Saudis. For this purpose, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia offered \$100 million for Al-Azhar University to support the intellectual struggle of Islam against Communism in 1971.(53) In the case of Afghanistan, ISI and Prince Turki, the Saudi Intelligence Chief, collaborated because they believed in the importance of

“an Islamic brotherhood which ignored territorial frontiers” Marwat claimed.(54) Moreover, Pakistan was the only option as a conduit for weapons to Jihadists because neighbouring states of Afghanistan, and notably China and the Khomeini’s Iran, were hardly sympathetic towards the US against Russia. Hence, the US Congress, who had earlier cut US aid to Pakistan due to the poor human rights record of Zia, supported Pakistan. President Carter declared, “we will provide military equipment, food and other assistance to help Pakistan defend its independence and national security against the seriously increased threat from the north.”(55) In mid-1980, the Carter administration offered Pakistan \$400 million in aid to get Pakistan on board in the Capitalism camp against Communism. However, Zia rejected the Carter administration’s aid offer by calling it “peanuts”, and exploited the situation skilfully by manipulating American interests in the region and in the Cold War. Although the aid was rejected, the CIA was increasingly cooperating with ISI on the Afghan war.(56) For the initial six months, Pakistan fought the war alone without any external assistance successfully. Feeling the need at the time, in 1981, the new incumbent Reagan administration announced heavy military and economic aid to Pakistan worth US \$3.25 billion, with the suspension of the uranium-enrichment sanction provisions of the Glenn-Symington Amendment and the selling of 40 F-16 fighter planes.(57) Pakistan was the essential character and playing a vital role in connecting the western world and the Mujahideen by assisting them with finances and armaments. Charlie Wilson, the Texas Democrats representative, was an ardent supporter of the Mujahideen. He pursued congressional committee members on the vote to fund by claiming,

“It is our sacred duty to make valuable the lives that these people are laying down...The US had nothing whatsoever to do with these people’s decision to fight. The Afghan made this decision at Christmas and they are going to fight to the last, even if they have to fight with stones, but we will be damned by history if we let them fight with stones.”(58)

The CIA performed the job of arming the fighters by using American and Saudi funds to purchase weapons from Egypt and China, so that the US support could not be traced.(59) The US national security advisor, Brzezinski, disclosed in an interview that they provided weapons to the Mujahideen from various sources: notably Soviet arms from the Czechoslovakian communist government and from the Soviet army to the Mujahideen because their army was increasingly corrupt.(60)

Within NWFP (now KPK), there was a split among the ANP, the major political party and once champion of Pashtunistan, on the issue of the Afghan war. Some members wanted to favour the Mujahideen whereas

others wanted to favour the Kabul regime due to their pro-Pashtunistan stance. Some criticised Pakistan's Afghan policy due to its role as proxy for US interests to counter Russia in the bipolar world, whereas the above mentioned facts clearly indicate that it was in Pakistan's national interests to stop Russian expansionist policy. In fact, Aga Shahi, Pakistan's foreign minister, categorically made it clear that Pakistan wanted to use the aid in such a way that the state would not look like "a tool of Washington." (61) Moreover, it was Pakistan who controlled the supply of weapons and training to the Mujahideen, and not the CIA. Yousaf and Adkin disclosed that Pakistan sent military personnel to fight along with the Mujahideen secretly. (62) Pakistan was not in favour of US direct involvement for two reasons: one, because if the Soviets captured US men, there would be severe consequences for Pakistan; and second, because the concept of Jihad would be harmed if the Mujahideen saw Americans and they would understand it as an American war to drive the Soviets out instead of Jihad. Likewise, both the CIA and the US did not want their direct involvement, for two reasons; first, due to fear of Soviet blame on seeing American personnel operating on Afghanistan's soil; and second, the Afghan Arabs did not like Westerners and had always demonstrated 'pathological dislike' towards them. (63) Brigadier Yousaf, who ran ISI's Afghan operation between 1983 and 1987, revealed that the CIA was supporting the Mujahideen by spending the money for buying arms, equipment and ammunition. (64) Moreover, the US was not allowed inside Afghanistan due to Zia's mistrust of the US. Although the CIA was not involved directly, it secretly enrolled some Mujahideen and paid agents to access details of the ground reality. (65)

As a quid pro quo, Pakistan received heavy economic, military and diplomatic support from across the capitalist and Muslim world, and notably from the US, Saudi Arabia, the UK, China, Israel, the Gulf States, Egypt and the European countries. Pakistan, being a geostrategically important country, became a frontline ally in the war against Soviet Union and recruited Mujahideen from all over the world. The Afghans fought the war, whereas the foreigners built roads, guarded buildings and assisted local forces. (66) Bearden, the former CIA station chief in Pakistan, commented that "the idea that the Afghans somehow needed fighters from outside their culture was deeply flawed and ignored basic historical and cultural facts." (67) This was the time when the seed of Jihad was sown in Pakistan and Afghanistan with the help of the USA, Saudi Arabia and many other Muslim countries. To prevent the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the US government continued to support the presence of Jihadists, and notably bin Laden and his lieutenants, from across the Muslim world. (68) Bergen pointed that Abdullah Azzam, Ph.D. in Islamic Jurisprudence from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, known as the Oxford of the Muslim world, based in Pakistan, played vital role in Afghan Jihad by declaring the defence of a Muslim land as an obligation for every Muslim. (69) Azzam travelled all over the world to convince people to support Afghan Jihad and as a result of

his efforts, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Yemen provided the lion's share of Afghan Arab fighters and Saudi Airlines gave a 75 per cent discount to Mujahideen going to fight the Holy war. Nixon paid tribute to these holy warriors by revealing that "the independent Moslem tribesmen launched a jihad, or holy war, in a struggle to the death for control of their country and of their lives. Insurgents sold their cattle and their wives' jewellery to buy ammunition." (70) Bin Laden set up offices in Pakistan, the US and Afghanistan to raise funds from Saudi Arabia, recruited fighters from all over the world, and used the financial resources of his family business in building a base in Afghanistan. Badeeb, a Saudi intelligence officer involved in the Afghan war and teacher of bin Laden, disclosed that bin Laden did not trust the officials of Pakistani intelligence: hence he preferred to deliver his charity through private political and religious networks. (71) Saudi Arabia supported the Mujahideen and gave them the same money in dollars as given by the US as they were not good at military operations but at the signing of cheques. Saudi gave aid directly to some groups: notably Sayyaf, and indirectly to both Pakistan and to the CIA for the Afghan operation. Furthermore, Saudi established religious seminaries (madrassas) across Pakistan and Afghanistan, and particularly on their bordering area, to recruit and train fighters and Zia ul-Haq supported this policy. These madrassas were the places in Afghanistan from where the Taliban emerged and were later joined by their counterparts from Pakistani madrassas.

Both the US and USSR were pouring money into Afghanistan indirectly and directly respectively. The Soviet Union was investing money in Afghanistan by providing technical assistance, school teachers, food aid, and different projects of major road building, brickworks, and construction of factories, battery farms, local fish hatcheries, and free medical care. (72) However, these efforts were not successful in bringing any socio-political change in attitudes towards the USSR. Giustozzi revealed that these fighters destroyed schools, hospitals and energy facilities and killed teachers. (73) It is very important to mention that these Mujahideen were never condemned by the western world: rather the West supported their activities by encouraging and supporting them during the Afghan war. However, they were termed as brutal, inhuman and terrorist when they burnt schools or tried to close them down after the US invasion of Afghanistan. This dualistic policy created distress in Pakistani society that when they were burning schools for US interests, they were Mujahideen and later on, when they were forbidding girls to join school, they were called terrorists and Islamic extremists.

The US funding to the Mujahideen rose from almost \$30-\$60 million in 1981 to almost \$400-\$600 million annually in the mid-1980s. (74) According to a rough estimate, until the late 1980s, almost \$3 billion was funnelled to the Afghan resistance. (75) The CIA was paying money to Pakistan for the salary of officials and employees, rent payment of refugee offices, maintenance and construction of warehouses, and transport. (76) The CIA and ISI both coined the slogan of "Holy War" and "Islam in

Danger” to motivate the Mujahideen against the godless foe, the Red Army. The number of Mujahideen who took active part in combat had grown to 150,000 in 1986 from only 45, 000 in 1981-83.(77) Ahmed Rashid, an expert Pakistani journalist on Afghan affairs, reported that some 35,000 foreign Islamists served in Afghanistan between 1982 and 1992.(78)

Unity among factions within Afghan groups appeared after the 1979 Russian invasion, when the rulers fled to exile, the local people fought along with foreigners who were against the foreign occupation not only to defend the state itself but also to save Muslim Ummah from foreign invasion. However, the Afghan resistance against the Red Army had never been a purely Afghan affair. Both Pakistan and the USA had been immersed in Afghanistan since the initial days of the Afghan war, Pakistan, by providing shelter to Afghan refugees and safe havens to Mujahideen, and the US by providing arms and money for the Mujahideen. Pashtuns along with Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara shifted to Pakistan for semi collaborative efforts against the Soviet Red Army. The border area had become a centre and decisive force of Anti Kabul resistance because the Durand line was playing same role for the Mujahideen that Ammudraya was playing for Russia. The US encouraged Pakistan to use the term “Pashtun” in order to use Afghanistan’s and Pakistan’s tribal ethnic affiliations to get Russia out of Afghanistan.(79) Later on, the Taliban exploited the same term, for Pashtun unity, to pursue their objectives by gathering support in FATA to get America out. The Pashtuns have rarely acted as a collective and coherent society and all efforts by the different leaders to unite them in previous eras had been futile, but their nationalist solidarity and coherence could be observed whenever a foreign power invaded.

Furthermore, Washington’s military supplies and economic aid to Pakistan nourished Zia ul-Haq’s Islamisation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The primarily Pashtun-dominated Islamist groups were supported by the main Islamist parties: notably Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), predominantly in Pakistan’s Pashtun regions.(80) The Hezb-i-Islami of Hekmatyar was patronised by JI and JUI and supported the groups of students which later turned into the Taliban.(81) ISI consolidated the multiple Afghan splinter groups into seven major parties known as the “Peshawar Seven”, of which six were dominantly Pashtuns, and distributed money and arms among them.(82) Three of the groups were moderate or traditionalist, favouring the pre-Daud status quo, and the re-emergence of monarchy, whereas four were Islamists or fundamentalists, favouring the establishment of an Islamic state, not a monarchy.(83) However, Weinbum and others asserted that Pakistan gave the major share of aid to Hekmatyar, but, in fact, the lion’s share, around 67-73 percent, went to Islamist groups/fundamentalist parties, but not more than 20 percent to single party.(84) As a result of this, the fortunes of the Islamists became stronger and the royalist and traditionalist groups in Afghanistan declined. The local Afghan leaders were also forced to ally with one of these groups to gain assistance and armament.(85) Resultantly, Hezb and Jamiat emerged as the leaders of exile

groups. The US, refugee leaders and most Afghan experts claimed that Pakistan sponsored fundamentalist groups due to political reasons. Wilson, a US representative, also claimed that, "Pakistan was totally committed to Hekmatyar because Zia saw the world as a conflict between Muslims and Hindus, and he thought that he could count on Hekmatyar to work for a Pan-Islamic entity that could stand up to India".(86) Marwat defended this policy by arguing that Hekmatyar's Hizb was a favourite of the Pakistani government because it was the most organised party, and praised western scientific rationale but rejected western values and had bias against Pashtun nationalists and Islamic nationalist groups.(87) Massoud criticised that the arms were not distributed fairly and "Pakistan had given them only eight missiles, despite military successes: For two years they cut all the aid to my group. The Pakistanis had their own agenda." (88) However, Brigadier Yousaf, who was involved in Afghan affairs, claimed that, "we allocated arms to the parties on the basis of operational effectiveness, but not as our critics claimed (including the US and CIA) on the basis of Islamic fundamentalism... A party got weapons allocated not on the basis of size or religious fervour but purely on operational efficiency."(89) In addition to this, ISI distrusted Massoud because of his dubious attitude as he made a truce with Soviet during Afghan war in 1983 and he also had links with Britain's MI6 and with the French, who were playing their own game, Coll unveiled.(90) Whereas, Massoud justified this ceasefire as allowing him to bargain for more time to build his forces against the Soviets. However, America claimed that Massoud did not fight against the Russians: rather he spent more time in setting up a vast political organisation across northern Afghanistan to prepare for future civil war.(91) Moreover, Hekmatyar not only had close associations with Pakistan, but also with Iran and the Egyptian Ikhwan-ul-Muslemeen (Muslim Brotherhood). It is pertinent to mention that Hekmatyar was also the CIA's favourite. Moreover, the Washington Post in May 1990 disclosed that Hekmatyar was a major heroin manufacturer and that the US had turned a blind eye on this issue "because U.S. narcotics policy in Afghanistan has been subordinated to the war against Soviet influence there."(92) Moreover, every party was supporting its favourite group, as the Saudis were giving money to Sayyaf, because of his personal contacts in Saudi Arabia.(93)

In a broader context, the Afghan resistance movement can be classified into three categories; one, The Peshawar-Based Seven, second, the Tehran Based Eight, and third, those without a base outside Afghanistan.(94) Pakistan's policy of giving more money to Islamists was criticised by many, but Pakistan justified it by winning the war and was praised for this by the US. In 1993. Robert Gates, CIA Chief, defended the ISI's Afghan policy by stating, "Their approach (the Pakistanis) was that the assistance would be funnelled to those groups that were fighting most effectively against the Soviets. A lot of them (the Afghan Mujahideen) weren't people you'd invite home for dinner. The reality is that you had to make do with the strategic situation you found in Afghanistan."(95)

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, many proposals for neutrality were discussed because Karmal had no popular support in Afghanistan and was completely dependent on the Soviet Union.(96) Pakistan, under economic pressure from Afghan refugees and political pressure from the Soviet Union, was also in favour of political settlement. The Soviet Union had growing concerns over increasing use of drugs by its forces and wanted multilateral treaties between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran before completing withdrawal of its forces, to end arms incursions, further effecting East-West relations and allow recognition of the Karmal regime.(97) Reagan was convinced that the Russians wanted to retreat, but the hardliners in the US wanted to take revenge for Vietnam. Meanwhile, under pressure from Congress, Reagan urged the Mujahideen to go for victory during a meeting with a delegation of Mujahideen in the White House. In April 1985, Reagan issued a National Security Decision Directive (NSDD No. 166) directed specifically at the Soviet presence in Afghanistan to drive the Soviets out of South Asia. To defeat Soviet air supremacy, the US decided to try its latest sophisticated stinger missiles by equipping the resistance forces, and those shoulder-launched anti-air craft missiles proved to be a turning point of the Afghan conflict by eliminating Soviet air superiority. The possession of stinger missiles by the Afghans was notably controversial, as some were concerned about technology transfer and some about Soviet aggression following US direct involvement in the conflict. Facing difficulty and losing the war, USSR pursued withdrawal from Afghanistan.

It was the first military defeat since the Second World War, and which resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was the first liberation war won by a movement which proclaimed Islam, and neither socialism nor nationalism, as its goal.(98) For Olesen, "The present Jihad is not for the watan (fatherland), but for Islam- the watan is only khak (dust)."(99) Pakistan executed the strategy in an efficient manner to defeat Soviet Union by supporting fighting groups in order to gain the strategic goals of Islamabad. The Russian defeat was celebrated as the victory of the US in the Cold War: notably in Afghanistan, as the US had spent billions of dollars in financing the resistance against Russia with the help of Pakistan.

Many in Pakistan still believe that the current extremism and terrorism is due to giving more power and money into the hands of these Islamist parties. The Islamist parties at the present time consider the US invasion in a similar manner to the way in which the US and these parties considered the Russian invasion in 1979. Harrison, a leading US expert on South Asia, recorded the same worry by claiming that, "I warned them that we were creating a monster... The CIA made a historic mistake in encouraging Islamic groups from all over the world to come to Afghanistan."(100)

Within Pakistan there has been debate on the issue of Afghan war since then, regarding whether the Afghan war was Pakistan's war or if Pakistan was acting as a mercenary to promote the narrative of Jihad for US

security and global interests. One school of thought argues that the promotion of the phenomenon of Jihad to counter the Russian threat by establishing Islamists and madrassas had destabilised Pakistan, and later this turned into sectarian violence and caused the current proliferation of violence and terrorism in Pakistan. In contrast, the other school of thought believes that it was Pakistan's state policy to counter the Indian and Soviet threat, because in the light of previous experiences of wars with India, Pakistan could not afford a two front war. Hence, it was in Pakistan's national interest and furthered its security needs to help Afghanistan against Russian invasion. Notwithstanding which school of thought seems more persuasive, there is general consensus that the roots of militancy, extremism, and sectarianism in Pakistan are due to its response to the Afghan war. However, the prevailing Indian threat and the Indian role in the dismemberment of Pakistan pushed Pakistan to adopt such a policy to avoid Soviet dominance in bilateral conflicts: notably Pashtunistan and the Durand line. So, it can be concluded that Pakistan was not acting as a tool of American policy, but rather that its policy was a reflection of defined national interests of that time. The US double standards were also revealed, as on one side, the US was disapproving of the Iranian revolution on the basis of its militant Islamic stance, whereas on the other hand the US was engaged with people who were used as militants against Soviet Union. This idea also created confusion among Pakistani society, with the view that the US only pursued goals for its national interests.

### **Conclusion:**

Afghan Jihad was not pulley an Afghan affair rather it was an international issue in which almost every major state of the Islamic and Western world contributed to counter the Soviet aggression. Soviet invasion over Afghanistan did not only threatened Pakistan's territorial sovereignty and integrity but also endangered Islam in Afghanistan. United States raised and promoted the slogan of "jihad" in Afghanistan to get determined support from Muslim world against godless Communism. It can be concluded that Afghan Jihad was not only a Jihad but also a political struggle between Capitalism of US and Communism of Soviet Union. Pakistan had no other options at that time due to the fear of pincer movement.

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