

2010

Political Economy of the Taliban

Umer Rahman

Florida International University, urahman@fiu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/honors-research>



Part of the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rahman, Umer, "Political Economy of the Taliban" (2010). *Honors College Research Collection*. 1.
<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/honors-research/1>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College Research Collection by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dcc@fiu.edu.

Political Economy of the Taliban

A thesis submitted to Florida International University
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts with Honors to the
Faculty at School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)
2010

Umer Rahman

Research Mentor: Dr. Ronald Cox (SIPA)

Abstract

The word 'Taliban' has become synonymous with terrorism in wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11. This study challenges the genealogies behind the word and how it has transformed itself and its meaning in discourse. The past and present usage of the term will be analyzed in the context of the local Afghan political economy and the effects and purpose of US military intervention. The origins of the term will be traced to the destruction of the Afghan economy after the defeat of the Soviets. The study will further try to understand the security failures of the Afghan state during the contemporary period of US military intervention and how such failures have contributed to a remobilization of the Taliban as a group of diverse political movements while goals relate to their particular historical, geographical, economic and strategic position with the context of different Afghanistan villages and provinces.

The analytical framework of this study will be the local political economy of the Afghan village. Village cultures have helped to shape the historical and contemporary political orientation of the Taliban. Gramsci's theory of 'cultural hegemony' will be employed to examine the growth of the Taliban in the context of the economic collapse of villages, which the Taliban has used to strengthen its position within Afghan village communities. Gramsci's theory is also useful for examining and critiquing the hegemonic and cultural biases of the US occupying army. The escalation of the US backed war in Afghanistan has coincided with a return of the Taliban to positions of influence and power, largely by intensifying the destruction and threats to many of the fragile security networks that exist within the Afghan village. The study will conclude with formal analysis and projection of the future of Afghanistan and how US foreign policy will influence the region in whole.

Chapter I. Genealogies of the word ‘Taliban’

The origins of the Taliban, an extremist religious fundamentalist group that took political power in Afghanistan by 1996 and now battles US and NATO military forces, should be located in the historical circumstances that gave rise to the group during the 1980s. These circumstances include the disintegration of the Afghanistan village, in particular the rural economy and localized political structures that had historically provided political stability in the country. In addition, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and the large-scale mobilization by the US and the Pakistani governments of religious extremists contributed to the creation of the Taliban. The war-time conditions and invasions of Afghanistan territory by foreign powers fueled the growth of religious zealotry epitomized by the Taliban, which then filled a vacuum of economic, political, and ideological space within Afghanistan. A vacuum within this context can be described as the destruction of physical space, which limits or eliminates the basic access to the necessities of life. This is further complicated by the occupying foreign forces that further destabilize the local Afghan village economy due to the importance given by the occupying powers to the centralization of governmental authority. The subsequent disintegration of the balance between rural and urban economies has had an adverse effect on the country as a whole, consequently creating an environment for radical ideologies to emerge. Through explaining the genealogies of ‘Taliban,’ this study seeks to locate the political and ideological tendencies of the Taliban movement within a larger context of power relationships within Afghanistan. This includes an examination of the historical and contemporary impact of foreign intervention on the Taliban, from the period of the 1980s to the present.

‘Taliban’ (*tālibān*) is often used incorrectly in various publications throughout the Occident as a singular noun which convolutes its meaning and direction severely.¹ On the contrary ‘Taliban’ is borrowed from the original word ‘Talib’ (*tālib*) which is Arabic and singular for ‘student seeking religious scholarship.’² Thus, ‘Taliban’ is the plural for ‘Talib’ that has evolved within the Afghan languages of Dari and Pashto. In Urdu, which is the one of the dominant languages of Pakistan, ‘Talib’ is referred to as talib-e-ilm (student seeking of knowledge).³ In Afghanistan the word is associated with religious scholarship of students in ‘deeni madrassa’ (religious institution) and thus highlights divide between standard and religious schooling within the society. The movement of Taliban is based upon madrassas that were opened during the Afghan-Soviet war. Before the war, Pakistan only had 900 madrassas throughout the country, but under General Zia-ul-Haq’s tenure the number grew to 8,000 registered and 25,000 unregistered with over half a million students enrolled.⁴ The high enrollment of the students mainly from poor families was due to the collapse of Pakistan’s state-run educational system.⁵ These madrassas followed the Deobandi School (Hanafi) which is conservative, but tolerant of the diversity within Islam.⁶ This movement gained more ground once the Pakistan Army and its Intelligence agency (ISI) realized the potential for usage to indoctrinate an Islamic front against Soviets and communists. The agenda of these madrassas was simple; educate the mujahedeen, their children, and foreign fighters through radical ideology and support the government’s stance against communists. There was a rift between two major Islamist parties within

¹ Various publications about John Walker Lindh by authors such as Richard Mahoney (Getting away with murder: the real story behind American Taliban John Walker Lindh), Sara Jess and Gabriel Beck (John Walker Lindh: American Taliban), etc. and media such as FOX, CNN, CNBC, BBC, and others both in print and on-air have misquoted Taliban as singular noun.

² Maley, William. Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 1. Print.

³ Matinuddin, Kamal. The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1999. 12. Print.

⁴ Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 89. Print.

⁵ Ibid. 89. 2000.

⁶ Roraback, Amanda. Islam in a nutshell. Santa Monica, CA: Enisen Pub., 2004. 32. Print.

Pakistan that later joined forces to form a united political front. The two parties were: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) led by Qazi Hussain Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) led by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman.⁷

Historical understanding of how the fundamental religious schools came about is imperative in comprehending the development of the Taliban movement). The United States funded many of the religious institutions along the Pak-Afghan border through Pakistan's elite intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), during the Soviet invasion.⁸ The goal was to bring together various Afghan tribes and Pakistani religious groups to form a united front.⁹ In this scenario the Pakistanis provided the teachers and the Mujahedeen provided the students (talib-e-ilms). The United States expanded this support to include Jihadi textbooks and curriculum that came from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, which received aid grants from the government.¹⁰ This support went into the mid 1990's with a sizable budget of \$51 million (University of Nebraska-Omaha) as United States felt it was important to keep the radical elements thriving within the region.¹¹ The extended aid from the US to the Mujahedeen was due to the direct Soviet involvement with the Najibullah government. The aid included weapons and cash at an estimate of 3-4 billion dollars a year until the end of 1991.¹² Soviets did not want Afghanistan to sway away from their influence and the US wanted to continue its fight against the communists. The essence of control through ideological consensus filled one basic role for the United States foreign policy; no communist

⁷ Shafqat, Saeed. *Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1997. Print.

⁸ Hussain, Zahid. *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 80. Print.

⁹ *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law*. 2001 ed. Vol. 4. New York: Asser, 2004. 7. Print.

¹⁰ Stephens, Joe, and David B. Ottaway. "From U.S., the ABC's of Jihad (washingtonpost.com)." *Washingtonpost.com - nation, world, technology and Washington area news and headlines*. 23 Mar. 2002. Web. 23 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A5339-2002Mar22>>.

¹¹ Ibid. 2009. Online.

¹² Rubin, Barnett R. *The fragmentation of Afghanistan: state formation and collapse in the international system*. Illustrated ed. Vol. 2. Connecticut: Yale UP, 2002. 147. Print.

leadership could thrive in Afghanistan in the immediate future. The United States did not want Najibullah to be the President of Afghanistan as he was deemed a communist due to his affiliation with PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan). After the US had left Afghanistan it was Pakistan who was left alone to deal with the Mujahedeen and extremist elements. Pakistan wanted to solve the Durand Line issue with Afghanistan and it needed a favorable government in place to achieve this goal.¹³ Pakistan also wanted to be a regional power and to project influence over Afghanistan to keep its focus on India as the enemy state. The madrassas (religious institutions) did not train or arm the students, but encouraged mobilization to join the 'Jihad' (Holy War) against the communists.¹⁴ This technique of mass mobilization could be the characteristic feature for the Taliban movement that came to play an instrumental role in their success both militarily and ideologically in the years to come.

The roots of 'Taliban' can also be traced to neighboring Pakistan which saw itself go through an 'Islamization' period during the Afghan-Soviet War. The ruler of Pakistan during the Afghan-Soviet War was General Zia-ul-Haq who was a conservative Muslim. He wanted to use Islamic parties to influence the war in Afghanistan and undermine democratic parties within Pakistan. Jamaat-e-Islami became a tool for Pakistani government under General Zia-ul-Haq as the antithesis to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). It also helped with the 'Islamization' policy of the 'State' as Zia highlighted Islam as the source of "national identity".¹⁵ He later legitimized his governance based on religion and put forth many reforms under the above policy. The promotion of Jamaat-e-Islami and other orthodox-Hanafi groups intensified sectarianism within Pakistan thus escalating anti-Shia

¹³ *Refugee Manipulation War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering*. New York: Brookings Institution, 2003. 85. Print.

¹⁴ Hussain, Zahid. *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 80. Print.

¹⁵ Esposito, John L., and John Obert Voll. *Islam and Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 109. Print.

militancy.¹⁶ The eventual goal of General Zia was to make Pakistan a ‘Sunni-Hanafi’ state with no challengers from within.¹⁷ General Zia-ul-Haq also saw the Jamaat (JI) as a national reconciliation front to keep order within Pakistan. In the early 80’s, despite very little influence in the national political affairs, the Jamaat (JI) was handed over to the Ministries of Education and Information by General Zia.¹⁸ This move was pivotal because it was the first time a Islamist party had been given a legitimate role in the government. This also introduced various reforms within the schooling system as ‘Islamiyat’ (study of Islam) was added as compulsory to graduate out of matriculation (10th grade). This led to the eventual demise of the public educational system thus leading many poor families to educate their offspring in madrassas. The Jamaat also played an important role in the Afghan Jihad as it was affiliated with Hizb-e-Islami and its leader Gulbuddin Hikmetyar.¹⁹ The Jamaat received various aid packages along with weapons and arms from the ISI to help with the Mujahedeens.²⁰ The Pakistan government supported the Ghilzai Pashtuns over the Durrani Pashtuns because of their stance against bring back King Zahir Shah.²¹

Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) is considered the origin of Taliban as a ‘movement.’ It is the JUI that gave the Taliban the education, training, manpower, and resources to become a force in Afghanistan. In the beginning Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) was politically ignored because it did not conform to the belief system of the President General Zia-ul-Haq and it did not have manpower to contribute for the Afghan Jihad. The JUI did receive aid to construct and manage hundreds of

¹⁶ Hussain, Zahid. Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 91. Print.

¹⁷ Ibid. 2007. 91. Print.

¹⁸ Ali, Tariq. Pakistan in the flight path of American power. New York: Scribner, 2008. 4. Print.

¹⁹ Matinuddin, Kamal. The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 1999. 114. Print.

²⁰ Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 89. Print.

²¹ Maley, William. Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 74. Print.

madrassas throughout NWFP (Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan) and Baluchistan.²² The aid also came from Saudi Arabia that brought the Wahabi ideals along with many foreign fighters.²³ The JUI was critical of the military regime because it felt left out of the massive donations that the Jamaat-e-Islami had received from Pakistan and the United States. Although JUI did not play any role in the Afghan-Soviet war it did operate the madrassas and gave aid to in the Mujahedeen refugee camps.²⁴ In the 1980's JUI had built up a sophisticated support system through their madrassas in Baluchistan and NWFP with the Durranis which irked the Pakistani government.²⁵ From its very inception the JUI had a strong resentment towards the United States; however the US government ignored this animosity because the madrassas conformed to the anti-communist policy of the 1980's.²⁶ These madrassas laid the foundation of both political and ideological mobilization for the movement which will eventually be called 'The Taliban.' Many of the Taliban including its leader Mullah Omar (Amir ul Momineen) were indoctrinated in these madrassas in the strict conservative ideals of Deobandi.²⁷ These madrassas provided shelter, food, clothing, and security for students who had very little to nothing. It also gave them a sense of direction with renewed hope for the future as they learned strict interpretation of Islam.

The JUI stayed isolated from political recognition in Pakistan as they opposed both the first Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff governments. JUI remained in the opposition of from 1989 to 1990 (Bhutto) and 1990 to 1993 (Shariff). There were many domestic reasons why JUI was in the opposition such as regulating finances of madrassas and reforms on religious institutions. The JUI did not want their finances which were mostly from donations by other states mainly Saudi Arabia

²² *Refugee Manipulation War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering*. New York: Brookings Institution, 2003. 84. Print.

²³ Esposito, John L. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 16. Print.

²⁴ Maley, William. *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 74. Print.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 1998. 74. Print.

²⁶ Firdous, Tabassum. *Central Asia, security, and strategic imperatives*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2002. 200. Print.

²⁷ Hefner, Robert W., and Muhammad Qasim Zaman. *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*. Princeton studies in Muslim politics. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007. 49. Print.

to be examined by the government. They were hiding these donations in the form of Zakat (donation) which in Pakistani law does not have to be disclosed. JUI was able to make a concession deal before 1993 elections with Bhutto's party on most of the reforms. One of the most important concessions was given on the finances of the madrassas which would be disclosed partially to the public/government. They aligned themselves with the PPP (Benazir) which eventually won the elections and became part of the ruling coalition.²⁸ This was important for the JUI as it now had the political 'stamp of approval' to expand its operations beyond the general education of Islamist ideology. Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman (leader of JUI) was made Chairman of National Assembly's Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs which gave him authoritative power in foreign relations.²⁹ He made numerous trips to the United States and Europe to gain support for the Taliban. His most important visits were to the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia where he asked for financial support for the Taliban and recognition of them as legitimate rulers of Afghanistan.³⁰ By July 1996, after a secret visit by Prince Turki al-Faisal Saud (head of Saudi Intelligence) Saudi Arabia became the principle financial sponsor of the Taliban.³¹ The ISI also started supporting the JUI with materials and arms and thus shifting the earlier policy of supporting Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizb-e-Islami as its proxy in Afghanistan. The change in policy was due to the ineffectiveness of Hikmetyar and his men in capturing Kabul. The PPP government wanted JUI to offset Jamaat-e-Islami for their national political ambitions. This juncture was crucial in establishing support for the Taliban and its adventures in Afghanistan.

²⁸ Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 90. Print.

²⁹ Maley, William. Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban. New York: New York University Press, 1998. 76. Print.

³⁰ Ibid. 1998. 76. Print.

³¹ Ibid. 1998. 76. Print.

The Taliban revolution in Afghanistan had its foundation in the ideology, politics, and economics of Islamist groups fashioned in Afghan-Soviet war. Thus the unrelenting support from the United States and the Pakistani government throughout the Afghan-Soviet war provided much of the logistical and financial resources necessary for these radical groups to come forth as the dominant political movement in Afghanistan, filling a vacuum that existed due to the collapse of local village economies. Political leaders within the Pakistani state had their own ambitions to create a friendlier regional environment even by taking the risks of giving support to radical fundamentalist groups that could potentially harm its own interest in the future. The thinking of both United State and Pakistan was narrow and short term. They did not envisage the emergence of radical Islamist groups as a threat to their security; rather they used these groups as conduits for the attainment of short-term political and geostrategic interests. They had underestimated the power of ideology and how it can mobilize and militarize a movement well beyond the intentions of its original supporters. Gramsci's understanding of ideology is equipped to better understand how novel concepts such as Deobandi movement can be 'refined' once their concepts become 'more' universal.³² Deobandi was introduced in the nineteenth century to explain the relationship between Islam and the current political situation under the colonial rule. The argument was based on the separation of church and state which was carefully structured by the Deobandi scholars as 'baseless' within a Muslim society. The basic tenet of Deobandi is to seek an accord from classical text (Quran) with the current political fervor (colonialism). The writings and teachings are based on the nineteenth century colonial occupation and how Muslims can overcome the constraints in practicing Islam within the confines of occupying political, economic, and ideological colonials. The conservative Muslims felt that colonial ambitions were to neutralize Islam based on historical grounds which did not translate into the present political and economic language. The Deobandi movement was 'refined' by the

³² Barker, Rodney S. Political Ideas and Political Action. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2000. 94. Print.

Islamist (Taliban) as they replaced old foes (colonials) with a new enemy (Mujahedeens and later US, NATO, and allies) within its ideological confines which reflected their belief. They used this contextual understanding to their advantage in creating an autonomous and political sub-culture within a largely moderate society (Afghanistan). The resolve of this misstep resulted in a phenomena called the ‘Taliban,’ which continues to be a political and ideological force in Afghanistan to the present day, even as US and NATO troops are occupying the country with the objective of weakening, if not destroying, this movement.

Chapter II. Spheres of Dominance

In order to understand the emergence of ‘Taliban’ one needs to focus on the environment of Afghanistan, the land, the people, and its cultural and religious orientations. The total collapse of the political economy of the Afghan village created a vacuum which was filled by a radical ‘movement’ with promises of stability and traditional values. This chapter focuses on the importance of Afghan traditions and how these traditions affect the way of life of the Afghanistan population, especially at the level of the village political economy. The study will also highlight how dominant ethnic culture (Pashtuns) has overlapped ethnic boundaries in order to build a consensus on the social structure of Afghanistan. An ancient code of life called ‘Pashtunwali’ (social structure) is discussed to show how there is a national consensus of behavior model which predates Islam. Lastly the ‘spheres of influence’ within the Afghan village is explicated to better understand how Taliban have swayed the rural villagers to their side, either through the use of violent repression or through negotiated political maneuvers that are both products of the destruction of the Afghan village economy.

Afghanistan is a landlocked country with an estimated population of 28.396 million inhabitants.³³ The Pashtun are the most prominent ethnic group making up an estimated 42 percent of the population.³⁴ The other major ethnic groups are: Tajiks (27 percent), Uzbeks (9 percent), Hazaras (9 percent), Aimak (4 percent), Turkmen (3 Percent), and Baloch (2 percent).³⁵ An estimated 80 percent of all Afghans live in rural areas and work on agro industry or related fields.³⁶ Through 1978 the Afghan economy was heavily dependent on agriculture as its primary mode of economics. The relationship between urban and rural is of dependency to provide means for growth through agriculture. Afghanistan is based on an agrarian society which over the years has developed its urban cities (Kabul, Kandahar, etc) through cultivating cash crops. The village and their inhabitants are still the most important factor in Afghanistan as they control the economics, food supply, and the majority of the population. Thus the urban-rural divide is very important to understand for economic and social stability as it is an instrument commonly used by the Taliban and its predecessors the Mujahedeen to win over the majority of the populace. Neamatollah Nojumi describes how instrumental the rural areas were in winning the Afghan-Soviet war:

*"In a country such as Afghanistan, pressure directed at the cities from the rural areas is the most important military and political strategy of winning a war; because of the country's economic and social system and geographical features, the bulk of Mujbadeen's economic resources (financial and food supply) came from local communities, in particular the rural areas."*³⁷

³³ "CIA - The World Factbook -- Afghanistan." Washinton, DC: CIA, 2009. Web. 30 Dec. 2009. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>>.

³⁴ Ibid. 2009. Online.

³⁵ Ibid. 2009. Online.

³⁶ International Monetary Fund. "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: poverty reduction strategy paper." *IMF Country Report* 08/153 (2008): 88. Print.

³⁷ Nojumi, Neamatollah. The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, and the Future of the Region. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 18. Print.

The importance of the Afghan village and its system of governance is vital to understanding how the ‘Taliban’ movement established itself in Afghanistan. It is important to identify what the ‘spheres of influence’ are within an Afghan village and how the ‘Taliban’ manipulated them to their advantage. Another important aspect is that the Afghan village is a decentralized component of the state. Historically the Afghan villages seldom relied on the central government in Kabul to provide any assistance for local governance. The Afghan village is an independent body which governs its own affairs through a moral code of laws called Pashtunwali and Islam is its unifying factor. The spheres of influence are embedded within the Afghan village and if neutralized they can be bent into shaping a new society within its confines. It is imperative to comprehend how this system (Pashtunwali) operates in a *modus operandi* context within the village structure of Afghanistan.

Literal translation of Pashtunwali is, “the way of the Pashtun” and it is an unwritten “code of life” that predates Islam.³⁸ It has shaped the Afghan society of today and even non-Pashtun ethnicities abide by its central ideas and societal practices. This has become a symbol of unity amongst Pashtun Jirga and non-Pashtun Shura throughout Afghanistan.³⁹ Although Pashtunwali was well established before Islam, it coincided with many of the beliefs of the Sharia through the Hanafi School of law.⁴⁰ This made the adoption of the new religion (Islam) more harmonious in Afghanistan. For Pashtuns there is no distinction between practicing Pashtunwali, being Muslim, or being Pashtun.⁴¹ The concept of Pashtunwali overlies the ideology of the Sharia. While the Sharia

³⁸ Banting, Erinn. *Afghanistan: The People*. New York: Crabtree Pub. Co., 2003. 13. Print.

³⁹ Nojumi, Neamatollah, Dyan E. Mazurana, and Elizabeth Stites. *After the Taliban: Life and Security in Rural Afghanistan*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009. 251. Print.

⁴⁰ Olesen, Asta. *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies monograph series, no. 67. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1995. 33. Print.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 1995. 34. Print.

represents the moral authority over humanity, Pashtunwali represents honor (*izzat*) and integrity to a Pashtun.⁴²

There are nine concepts within Pashtunwali that are essential to its structure. These nine ideals are: Melmasti (hospitality), Nanawati (asylum), Badal (revenge), Tureh (bravery), Sabat (loyalty), Imandari (righteousness), Isteqamat (persistence), Ghayrat (right to defend “their property, their honor and their family’s honor”), and Namus (men defending honor of women).⁴³ Pashtuns must adhere to the beliefs of Pashtunwali in order to preserve their honor (*izzat*). Pashtuns without honor is not considered part of the Pashtun community thus relegating their identity, privileges, security, and support. These moral laws are governed through a council called Jirga which works as a legislative body of governance on a regional and village level. The members of the Jirga are men with high honor and integrity. Most of the time they are the village elders who practice Pashtunwali and its principles to the core.

There are two socio-economic classes within Pashtuns and they both define Pashtunwali within their own setting. The wealthy urban landowners are called qalang (“tax”) group while the rural Pashtuns consider themselves as nang (“chivalrous”) group.⁴⁴ There are differences between the two social classes yet the Pashtunwali code is universal and thus followed beyond any spatial boundaries. There are various principles of Pashtunwali that overlaps one another. The concept of Melmastia (hospitality) overlaps with Nanawati (asylum); Pashtun are very hospitable people and they will go as far as to defend the honor (*izzat*) of their guests. Hospitality entails various different things along with providing food, shelter, living space, money, etc. for strangers and friends alike. The more hospitable a Pashtun the more respect he gains amongst his peers and community. The

⁴² Roy, Olivier. *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War*. Princeton, N.J., USA: Darwin Press, 1995. 52. Print.

⁴³ Banting, Erinn. *Afghanistan: The People*. New York: Crabtree Pub. Co., 2003. 13. Print.

⁴⁴ Ahmed, Akbar S. *Millennium and Charisma Among Pathans: A Critical Essay in Social Anthropology*. International library of anthropology. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976. 76. Print.

Nanawati (asylum) rule applies as long as the guest is within the confines of the host. The host will repel any advances of the enemy against his guest thus protecting his honor.

Ghayrat (chivalry) and Badal (revenge) also overlap each other within the confines of Pashtunwali. Ghayrat has two main concepts which are defined as honor within a battle and proper defense of one's honor. There are also norms within battle and/or defense of one's honor such as no civilians should be targeted and distribution of war booty must be equally dispersed. Within the Ghayrat framework Pashtuns have a right to defend their property, family, and honor and thus by protecting these facets one can start a feud with another family thus engaging in Badal (revenge). Badal gives Pashtun families the right to defend their honor without any legal ramification from the Jirga (council) as long as it is not extreme. Majority of the Badal (revenge) cycle within Pashtuns revolves around murders and thus it gives the other family every right to defend the honor of the deceased. Within the Afghan society Badal serves as mode of deterrence for murderous propensities thus creating a systematic order within the community.

Another important concept is Namus as it is relatively defined as men defending women's honor at 'all cost.'⁴⁵ This introduces the gender segregation within the Afghan society and thus introduces the concept of *Purdah*, which is from the Urdu language which means "veil." The concept of *purdah* came from Greeks, Persians and Byzantine societies which maintained the same gender boundaries particularly in 'urban' environment.⁴⁶ If one offends these gender boundaries in an Afghan society this provides ample reasoning for defending their namus. The boundaries are for both male and females and it reflects the dignified image of Pashtun within the society. In the western society people often think that purdah (veil) is a way of controlling women yet it also

⁴⁵ Banting, Erinn. *Afghanistan: The People*. New York: Crabtree Pub. Co., 2003. 13. Print.

⁴⁶ Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. 23-37. Print.

controls men. These social structures were never meant to be institutionalized but due to the lapse in security over decades of war Taliban enacted strict spaces for women and men. The norm of namus restricts men as much as women because within the Afghan society spatial boundaries cannot be infringed upon. Men cannot intrude on women spaces just as much as women cannot enter any male confines. This was more social than physical gender boundaries and over the years Afghan society had adopted and structured these norms through collective order. The villages were far stricter in its governance yet never enacted extreme judgments against accusers of crossing social restrictions. Kabul, Herat, and other cities were far less intrusive of women and their role within the society and thus enabled varying roles for females in government, schools, hospitals, and other social activities.

It is important to understand the concept of Pashtunwali to grasp the ‘spheres of influence’ within an Afghan village. An Afghan village has many intricate concepts working within each other that lay the foundation of order, security, and ideology. This discernment was carefully illustrated by Mark Sexton and William S. Lind in an article titled, “On War # 325: *How the Taliban Take an Afghan Village.*” Although the article does not detail an Afghan village life it highlights how the ‘Taliban’ can take over a village and make it their own with very few challenges. An Afghan village is made up of three influencing bodies that at times intersect with each other on various issues. The three ‘spheres of influence’ are Jirga (council), Mullah (religious leader), and Lashkar (village security/militia).⁴⁷ These three form the basis of Afghan village society and create a political structure to maintain order, offer social services, and provide security. Any hindrance of these three essential roles within the village can have a devastating and adverse affect on the populace. At various times throughout the history of Afghanistan the central government has tried to influence these three ‘spheres of

⁴⁷ Sexton, Mark, and William S. Lind. "On War #325: How the Taliban Take a Village (Lind/Sexton) - LIND." *Global Guerrillas*. 07 Dec. 2009. Web. 29 Dec. 2009. <<http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com/lind/2009/12/on-war-325-how-the-taliban-take-a-village-lindsexton.html>>.

influence' with limited success. An Afghan village is highly decentralized in decision making, economics, and ideological resolve. It does not like interference from national government nor any foreign occupying forces. This pits the village system at odds with the state as the structure of the 'spheres of influence' becomes an entity rivaling the centralized government.



The Jirga (council) comprises village elders and are mostly men who practice Pashtunwali and are highly respected within the community.⁴⁸ The Jirga literally means "circle" and rules over the village affairs through consensus.⁴⁹ This is a much decentralized entity of an Afghan village where

⁴⁸ Rubin, Barnett R. *The fragmentation of Afghanistan: state formation and collapse in the international system*. Illustrated ed. Vol. 2. Connecticut: Yale UP, 2002. 42. Print.

⁴⁹ Sodaro, Michael J., and Dean Walter Collinwood. *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004. 223. Print.

locals come to seek advice and counsel on problems emanating from village disputes, including marriage, land, farming, etc. The council serves as a political and administrative entity for the village thus helping with family feuds (badal) and keeping in line with the Pashtun traditions. The Jirga does not have 'permanent members' thus illustrating its decentralized structure and value system.⁵⁰

The second 'sphere of influence' in an Afghan village is the Mullah (religious leader). The literal translation of Mullah is a "priest" and he leads the daily prayers (local mosque) and conducts Islamic education (local madrassa) within the Afghan village.⁵¹ The role of the Mullah is very important as he serves the community in various aspects including funeral ceremonies, Sharia advisor, education, marriage ceremonies, etc. Over ninety percent of all Afghans are of Sunni Hanafi sect which is the most liberal of the four schools.⁵² The highly decentralized structure of Sunni Hanafi school of thought made it extremely difficult for the centralized entity to govern over village affairs. It was the village Mullahs who were against any centralized structure to overtake the 'spheres of influence' as they deemed the Mosque as the center of Afghan village life.⁵³ Although the Mullahs in the village are generally 'not' educated, their influence is far and wide.

The last 'sphere of influence' is the Lashkar (village security/militia). The literal meaning of Lashkar is "tribal militia."⁵⁴ The Lashkar is comprised on men from the village who provide security from within as well as against outsiders and is mobilized on orders of the Jirga. It also functions as the enforcement apparatus for the Jirga. The village Lashkar provides an ordering principle for the other 'spheres of influence' to function without any external pressure. This gives autonomy over

⁵⁰ Epstein, T. Scarlett, and Rosemary A. Watts. The Endless Day: Some Case Material on Asian Rural Women. Women in development, v. 3. Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, 1981. 58. Print.

⁵¹ Duran, Khalid. *Children of Abraham An Introduction to Islam for Jews*. New York: Ktav House, 2001. 253. Print.

⁵² Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 83. Print.

⁵³ Ibid. 2000. 83. Print.

⁵⁴ Chand, Attar. *Defence modernization, secret deals, and strategy of nations a global study of army, navy, air force, and para-military forces*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications, 1989. 130. Print.

local affairs to the other entities (Jirga and Mullah) to do as they please without any hindrance. The Lashkar also serves as deterrence within the Afghan village to minimize family feuds (Badal).

The 'spheres of influence' are a very important part of an Afghan village. Various entities have tried to centralize these 'spheres' to no avail. The Soviets tried to dismantle the Afghan village by numerous bombing campaigns and killings yet the three spheres held together and defeated the much stronger adversary. The United States have tried various different tactics including forward recon bases outside of many rural Afghan villages. This has also netted no gain for local Afghan sympathies as it seems to negate the local order rather than work within the framework. The total destruction of the local Afghan village would be instrumental in the rise of the 'Taliban.' The gaps within security, stability, and economic welfare will lead locals to radical resolve thus enabling 'Taliban' style governance to hail supreme.

Chapter 3: Disrupting the Spheres of Influence

The behavior of the Soviet Union after the invasion to undermine the local Afghan village economy severed the intricate balance between rural and urban. The Soviets wanted to preserve power within a centralized government much like the US and its allies three decades after. By centralizing power in Kabul it gave rise to the minority population of the urban society (20%) which was outnumbered by the rural (80%). There are three important facets to the occupiers and their ideological stance on projection and preservation of power within Afghanistan. First both the US and Soviets wanted to sustain power from a centralized hub (Kabul) so it can be manageable. Second they both focused on a military solution that involved attacking insurgents in the rural areas which contributed to the destabilization of the village economy. Third the Taliban (and before them the Mujahedeens) proved remarkably adaptable in responding to each shift in foreign military strategy with corresponding shift in guerilla tactics.

The vacuum that was created diluted the 'spheres of influence' within the Afghan village. This led to the radical alignment of ideological warfare between the Mujahedeens and the Soviets along with Afghan communists which eventually led to the military conflict. The framework is important for this study to understand how foreign powers can destabilize a complicated system thus leaving room for radical thoughts to emerge or re-emerge within the State. The 'Taliban' is not self-defining in its interest rather it is an organization that is created due to the vacuity of political, economical, and ideological order. The Soviets wanted to preserve Afghanistan under its umbrella of influence thus undermining the 'ground realities' of Afghan villages. The same premise is being highlighted by the allied forces currently occupying Afghanistan. The re-emergence of the 'Taliban' is a clear proof that 'ground realities' of the Afghan villagers are not being examined by the central government or the foreign occupying armies. Consequently, the 'Taliban' are infiltrating the local Afghan villages with the promise of stability and order with the re-emergence of its own government that speaks loudly to the traditions, (Pashtunwali) and histories of Afghanistan. This chapter will focus on the Soviet invasion and its similarities to the current conflict with the US and NATO occupying forces. The chapter will also discuss how the occupation is disrupting the Afghan village economy and has created a vacuum that is leading the re-emergence of the 'Taliban.' Further, it will highlight the mass exodus of refugees to neighboring Pakistan and Iran which will create an environment for radical ideologies to breed. The migration of refugees to Pakistan will be essential in the emergence of 'Taliban' (movement) as the antithesis to the state in the coming years. The refugees make the bulk of the 'Taliban' who had to leave Afghan villages' in-order to survive the bombing campaigns from Soviets and Afghan communists. The refugee camps will become the honing ground for radical ideological indoctrination that will eventually lead to a strict interpretation of Sharia under the 'Taliban' regime in Afghanistan. This chapter will further underline how Pakistan

wanted to use the refugees in its regional and domestic policy to give political and military depth within the region.

The first category of centralizing power within Kabul can be traced back to the early invasion by the Soviets. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) was in direct support of Babrak Karmal government to quell opposition to that government at local level. The Soviets did not intend to stay in Afghanistan for an extended period as it wanted to give power back to the regime and its armed forces.⁵⁵ In the early stages Soviet troops did not engage in fighting and kept a low profile as advisors, trainers, and organizational supporters of the regime. Due to the rapid rise of the Mujahedeens within the rural population the Soviets started engaging in combat operations by the late 1980s.⁵⁶ This led to the demise of the local Afghan village economy as the brunt of the fighting took place on the farm fields and villages. The Soviets devised a plan to subside the rebellion by destroying crops and engaging in the systematic killing of farmers. This strategy was undertaken because it spread “terror” amongst the local villagers and destroyed the “food supplies” which was used for “sustenance” and feeding of insurgency.⁵⁷ The Soviets also destroyed the irrigation systems, (qanats) which were essential to the farms, in order to depopulate the villages.⁵⁸ Wheat is the central food source which was grown on “fifty percent” of the “irrigated and dry-farmed land” in Afghanistan.⁵⁹ Wheat was also one of the main crops destroyed by the Soviets to control the insurgency.

The destruction of farms would be crucial in the coming years as Afghanistan went through various droughts which led to the over reliance on foreign imports of agricultural products and gave

⁵⁵ Griffiths, John Charles. *Afghanistan: A History of Conflict*. London: Andre Deutsch, 2001. 177. Print.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 2001. 177-178. Print.

⁵⁷ Laber, Jeri, and Barnett R. Rubin. *"A Nation Is Dying": Afghanistan Under the Soviets, 1979-87*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988. 58. Print.

⁵⁸ Griffiths, John Charles. *Afghanistan: A History of Conflict*. London: Andre Deutsch, 2001. 178-179. Print.

⁵⁹ Laber, Jeri, and Barnett R. Rubin. *"A Nation Is Dying": Afghanistan Under the Soviets, 1979-87*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988. 60. Print.

rise to the Afghan opium trade. It is important to understand the breakdown of the village economic system to grasp why the 'Taliban' movement came into being. The collapse of the rural economy also destabilized the central government of Babrak Karmal because it could not sustain itself under the immense pressure. These voids within the village system came from the invading Soviet army much like the bombardment after the September 11 attacks by the allied forces. The Soviets wanted to shift the balance of power to the Karmal regime yet it destroyed the structure of Afghan villages which would eventually bring down the central government. Again the emphasis from the Soviets was on the centralized government much like today as US and its allies rally around the Karzai government while ignoring the village economy. These mishaps led the way for groups of 'Mujahedeens' to take up arms against its own people (Afghan communists) and fight the 'power' on their level (guerilla warfare). The Mujahedeens adapted to various changes in occupying military tactics and emerged victorious due to the inability of the centralized government to quell uprising in the rural Afghanistan. The re-emergence of 'Taliban' in Afghanistan is being shaped within the same context as United States and its allies have taken place of the occupying army much like its predecessor three decades earlier. The US, NATO, and other allies including non-government organization have supplied the central government of Hamid Karzai with billions of dollars to stabilize the country and undermine its indigenous economy. Since 2001, the allies have provided over \$38 billion dollars in aid and another \$10 billion is expected in 2010.⁶⁰ Due to the enormous amount of aid along with ground troops the Karzai regime is sustaining itself for now while the 'Taliban' are waging guerrilla war which is gaining momentum. The Afghan villages again are in the central role for the 'Taliban' much like they were for the Mujahedeen against the Soviets. The adaptability by the Taliban against the occupiers shows their resolve to the shifting policies of the

⁶⁰ Maddox, Bronwen. "Billions of dollars in aid but nothing in return from Afghanistan | Bronwen Maddox: World Briefing - Times Online." *Times Online | News and Views from The Times and Sunday Times*. 03 Nov. 2009. Web. 08 Jan. 2010. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/bronwen_maddox/article6900133.ece.

US, NATO and its allies. US and its allies are still trying to find a military solution to the problem thus keeping focus on centralizing power in Kabul and ignoring the dynamics of village politics, economics, and ideological grounds.

It is imperative to understand the occupation in three broad categories as stated earlier and the second is military solution to domesticated problem. At the peak of the war the Soviets commitment was “90,000 to 104,000” yet despite the large occupying force the total security envisioned by Moscow was never achieved.⁶¹ The security apparatus was limited to major cities and townships and ignored thousands of villages which were essential to the power make-up of Afghanistan. This structure is based on centralized power which is imperative for the strategy to work properly. The commitment to centralizing power and not giving in to the demands of stability through decentralization produced a vacuum in governing structure which the Soviets thought could be overcome by coercion.

The third category underlines the adaptability of Soviet and Afghan troops to the unconventional ways of their adversaries. The Soviet troops were trained for conventional armed conflicts and did not possess expertise on guerilla warfare. This gave an advantage to the ‘Mujahedeens’ who were well versed on the surrounding terrain and used ‘hit and run’ tactics against heavily armed Soviets.⁶² On the contrary the U.S troop level in Afghanistan for the year 2010 is estimated at over 100,000 with no direction or end to conflict in retrospect.⁶³ The ‘Taliban’ much like their predecessors (Mujahedeens) are using the same guerilla tactics to engage coalition troops

⁶¹ Clements, Frank. Conflict in Afghanistan: A Historical Encyclopedia. Roots of modern conflict. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2003. 237. Print.

⁶² Grau, Lester W. The Bear Went Over the Mountain Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996. 197. Print.

⁶³ Bumiller, Elisabeth. "4 Afghan War Veterans Look Back, and Ahead." *NYTimes.com*. New York Times, 03 Jan. 2010. Web. 06 Jan. 2010.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/world/asia/04soldiers.html?pagewanted=1&sq=100,000%20in%20Afghanista&st=cse&scp=1>>.

with much success to the dismay of the occupying forces. The coalition troops are abandoning many village outposts to concentrate their power in large cities and its surroundings. According to NATO, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) is taking a backseat due to lack of deployable troops and security conditions on the ground.⁶⁴ NATO had plans to deploy 22 teams of PRTs yet only five are operational. These teams are providing security and undertaking infrastructure projects which will help stabilize Afghan economy and increase political powers of the central government.⁶⁵ Due to lack of manpower and operational conditions the Afghan villages are struggling and the re-emergence of ‘Taliban’ is gaining valuable impetus. This highlights the similar policy used by the Soviets thus undermining the village economy and its structure to safeguard the minority of the urban dwellers.

The ten year occupation (1979-1989) of Afghanistan by the Soviets was very costly and some scholars believe that it was one of the main reasons for the collapse of the Soviet state.⁶⁶ The cost of war was severe for Soviet Union not just militarily but also in politics and economics. The Soviet military was shocked at how easily the mighty ‘Red Army’ succumbed to a guerrilla outfit that called itself the ‘Mujahedeens.’ By the end of the war senior analysts and military personnel of Frunze Military Academy (Moscow) detailed the tactics of Mujahedeens in a report. It is important to understand the reasons for an eventual defeat of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. The report stated the following:

“Several combat principles lay at the heart of Mujahedeen tactics. First, they avoided direct contact with the superior might of regular forces which could have wiped them out. Second the Mujahedeen practically never conducted positional warfare and, when threatened with encirclement, would

⁶⁴ Clausson, M. I. *NATO status, relations, and decision-making*. New York: Novinka, 2007. 10. Print.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 2007. 10. Print.

⁶⁶ Cohen, Saul Bernard. *Geopolitics of the World System*. Regional geographies for a new era. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. 86-89. Print.

abandon their positions. Third in all forms of combat the Mujahedeen always strove to achieve surprise. Fourth the Mujahedeen employed terror and ideological conditioning on a peaceful populace as well as on local government representatives.

The Mujahedeen knew the terrain intimately, were natural scouts, and were capable of transmitting the necessary information about secret Soviet unit and subunit movements over great distances using rudimentary communications gear and signaling devices. [Echoes of the nineteenth-century heliographs that tracked the British army's retreat from Kabul].

Among the guerrilla forces tactical strong suits were all types of night actions, the ability to rapidly and clandestinely move in the mountain, and the fielding of a very broad agent reconnaissance network.”⁶⁷

The ‘Taliban’ inherited all of the Mujahedeen’s tactics and reinforced them with new weaponry and training. The most important line of this report is how the Mujahedeen used ideology or coercion as a tool to garner support from the ‘friendly’ local villagers and government officials. Although the coalition troops are heavily armed and outnumber the ‘Taliban’ there are many disadvantages. Due to lack of manpower (ground troops), corrupt central government (Karzai), security concerns and slow progress on rebuilding infrastructure the ‘Taliban’ are enjoying the same environment as did the Mujahedeens three decades before.

In the course of the occupation the Soviets lost 14,263 troops and 49,985 were permanently wounded.⁶⁸ Over one million Afghans were killed during the war and more than five million fled to

⁶⁷ Polk, William Roe. Violent Politics: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism & Guerrilla War, from the American Revolution to Iraq. New York: Harper, 2007. 199. Print.

⁶⁸ Griffiths, John Charles. Afghanistan: A History of Conflict. London: Andre Deutsch, 2001. 181. Print.

the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran as refugees.⁶⁹ Pakistan received the bulk of the Afghans with an estimate of 3.3 to 4 million which were located in “344 refugee villages.”⁷⁰ A majority of the refugees (70 percent) were encamped in NWFP (North West Frontier Province) and FATA (Federal Administered Tribal Area) region, while Baluchistan (25 percent) and Punjab (5 percent) also greeted many Afghans.⁷¹ The two countries had very different foreign, domestic, and regional policy goals in regards to the refugees and Afghanistan. Pakistan gave the Afghan resistance an opportunity to create a ‘state in exile’ and wage guerilla war against the Soviets and Afghan communists. This idea was heavily backed by the US, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, and other anti-communist states. Afghanistan became the proxy for the larger ‘game’ that will entail the ‘west’ against the communists. In Pakistan the refugee camps were maintained by government (Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps), non-government, and Islamist network. The Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) emerged with a sophisticated network of madrassas from FATA to Baluchistan. The goal for JUI was to educate the Mujahedeens and their children in a Deobandi conservative Islam.

On the other hand the Iranian regime prevented the Afghans to build a ‘state in exile’ thus integrating them into the society to become self-sufficient.⁷² Most of the refugees in Iran lived in urban areas while in Pakistan they were limited to the camps. Iran also prevented Afghan refugees from political and military actions against Soviets because they saw United Nations and other NGOs as ‘western tool’ to destabilize their regime. Iran was also pre-occupied with Iraq at the time the occupation began in Afghanistan. On the contrary, Pakistan wanted a friendly neighbor in

⁶⁹ Cohen, Saul Bernard, and Saul Bernard Cohen. Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009. 83. Print.

⁷⁰ Goodson, Larry P. Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001. 148. Print.

⁷¹ Ibid. 2001. 148. Print.

⁷² Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid. Cornell studies in security affairs. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. 45. Print.

Afghanistan and put forth a welcoming policy as an important national and regional security interest.⁷³

Lastly another foreign actor within Afghanistan was its immediate neighbor Pakistan. The strategy of Pakistan was to support the government in exile (Peshawar Shura) and help militarily set up camps for Mujahedeens with the help of US and Saudi funds.⁷⁴ Pakistan treated the Afghan refugees as a political extension of their regional and domestic policy. They felt that Afghans gave them depth on military and political grounds against their arch enemy India. The refugees gave the Pakistani state manpower that could be directed to other theaters, most importantly Kashmir. The Afghan nationals gave Pakistan the 'deniability' of interfering thus enhancing strategic options within the region (mainly against India).⁷⁵ Zia wanted Afghan Mujahedeens to continue their fight long after the complete withdrawal of the Soviets. He envisioned that the ISI would redirect their attention from the Afghan jihad to help Kashmiri separatist against their struggle with India based on ideological grounds.⁷⁶ Pakistan also wanted to quell domestic insurgency that was being waged on by Baloch separatist in Baluchistan. They wanted the refugees to overwhelm the province in sheer number to subdue the separatist without raising any eyebrows from international or domestic community leaders. Thus tensions between the Pashtun and Baloch had risen throughout the Afghan-Soviet war and subsequently with the Taliban takeover as more refugees (Pashtu-speaking) barged into Baluchistan.⁷⁷ The refugees were treated very well and they had access to the state and provincial resources. Pakistan did not want the refugees as a militarized entity rather they wanted to make a case for the world how well they were being treated for the massive aid packages. The

⁷³ Ibid. 2005. 46. Print.

⁷⁴ Burki, Shahid Javed. Pakistan: Fifty Years of Nationhood. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999. 199. Print.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 2005. 86. Print

⁷⁶ Hussain, Zahid. Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 25. Print.

⁷⁷ Coakley, John. The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict. The Cass series in regional and federal studies. London: F. Cass, 2003. 157-158. Print.

refugees were free to travel and resettle anywhere in Pakistan and had access to local resources. Although the recruitment for various militias (Mujahedeens) was from these camps, the training was far outside the premises. Pakistan wanted the refugees to go back once the withdrawal of Soviet troops has taken place and rally around the Mujahedeen group of their choosing. They also felt that through Pakistani education and good gesture the territorial dispute and nationalistic goals of Pakhtunistan will be lost due to this new generation who has a positive image of Pakistan as its neighbor. Pakistan wanted a friendly government after the withdrawal and was willing to back some radical elements such as Hizb-e-Islami (Gulbuddin Hikmetyar) for this purpose. Eventually this miss-step would lead to vacuum in Afghanistan which will be later filled by the 'Taliban.'

Chapter 4: Filling the Vacuum

The chronological order that can sum up the eventual demise of the political economy of the village system along with the old governance can be broken down into four groupings. The first underlies the importance of the complete withdrawal by the Soviets from Afghanistan. The withdrawal did not encompass the end of aid from Moscow which led to the immediate survival of Najibullah government much to the dismay of US and its supporters. Although there were significant divide within the Najibullah government it still survived long enough for the west to question the Mujahedeen and their political ambitions. Second the government in exile (Peshawar Shura) did not come up with a conclusive agreement of leadership amongst the Mujahedeen groups. This led to the infighting amongst Mujahedeens contesting power of one another for the control of Afghanistan. Third, one of the most powerful Mujahedeen leader, Gulbuddin Hikmetyar did not abide by the Peshawar Shura ruling of joint government thus civil war broke up again for the control of Kabul. Lastly, the students who had helped the Mujahedeen fight the Najibullah government were again faced with fighting which hampered their religious studies. The students were very upset about the criminal and non-Islamic activities of Afghan Mujahedeens and saw themselves as the

“cleansers of the war gone astray and social and political system that had become derailed.”⁷⁸ This group of student will eventually become the ‘Taliban.’

The withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1989 marks the first important facet on the chronological order that will eventually lead to more conflict and struggle for power within Afghanistan. The U.S. and its allies thought the Najibullah government will fall into the hands of Mujahedeens which will lead to a unified government. The U.S. and their allies had recognized the Peshawar Shura (government in exile) prematurely and did not completely understand that the Mujahedeens were not conventional fighters. The Najibullah government was still being heavily supported by the Soviets with arms, materials, and cash. The Soviets were determined in formulating a friendly government in Afghanistan to keep them under its umbrella of influence. Accordingly, they spent 3-4 billion dollars per year immediately after withdrawal till 1991 when an armistice was signed between U.S. and Soviets to end military aid packages to Afghanistan.⁷⁹ The great powers were still at play under the notion of defeating ‘others’ ideology (communism/capitalism) within the state. Regional actors such as Pakistan were eager to appoint leadership within Afghanistan that will extend their influence to rectify various disputes and have a friendly government on the Western border. The immediacy of an armed struggle against the Najibullah government was apparent as various different factions of Mujahedeens wanted to preserve power for themselves. Some of these factions were strong armed by the policy of regional actors such as Pakistan and Iran. To add, there was no consensus within the Mujahedeens groups and the Shura (council) in Peshawar (state in exile) did not come to conclusive agreements on power sharing. This led to anarchy within the state with

⁷⁸ Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2009. 58. Print.

⁷⁹ Rubin, Barnett R. *The fragmentation of Afghanistan: state formation and collapse in the international system*. Illustrated ed. Vol. 2. Connecticut: Yale UP, 2002. 147. Print.

no cohesive ordering mechanism in sight. The government of Najibullah had lost its enforcement mechanism in Soviet Army thus it had to play a 'social' role to gain acceptance.

Najibullah projected himself as a practicing Muslim and an ardent nationalist after the withdrawal within his own country yet to the outsiders (West) he was a stern anti-Islamist.⁸⁰ After the withdrawal, Najibullah set aside a national reconciliation agenda which forwent the earlier ideals of PDPA communist/Leninist takeover by political, ideological, and economic norms. The new principles were much more inclined to nationalistic ideals which reflected his Pashtun ancestry but the Afghans were very skeptical. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) changed its name to Hizb-e-Watan (Fatherland Party) which was more aligned with the nationalistic image.⁸¹ Some of the reforms were of bringing Islam and Pashtun nationalism to the forefront of party politics. Even with these reforms there was much conflict within the inner circles of the party which had strong divisions amongst Khalqis and Parchams. The divide was amongst rural and urban popular fronts which sought political integration and recognition. The Khalqis were all from rural Afghanistan thus representing the village political, economics, and ideological system.⁸² Most Khalqis belonged to Pashtun tribes yet there were some minority groups (non-Pashtun) that were aligned within the party. They belonged to poor rural grouping which made 80% of Afghanistan and thus wanted more say about their affairs. The Parchamis were 'urbanites' who were wealthy and belonged mostly to non-Pashtun minority groups. The Parchamis were less inclined to nationalistic and societal ideals and thus supported the more liberal 'internationalist' position.⁸³ They also worked within the framework of the government rather than oppose like the Khalqis. Both parties were well

⁸⁰ Ewans, Martin. *Afghanistan A Short History of Its People and Politics*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002. 239. Print.

⁸¹ Olesen, Asta. *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies monograph series, no. 67. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1995. 268. Print.

⁸² Kakar, M. Hasan. *Afghanistan The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1997. 58. Print.

⁸³ Ibid; 1997. 58. Print.

educated and choose variants of Marxist ideology from the Soviet/Leninist and the Tudeh Party (Iran) literature.

Najibullah replaced the Supreme Council with Perchamis as the majority which led to the ouster of many non-PDPA and Khalqis members. The Perchamis were loyal to the Najibullah government and the Khalqis were close to the military establishment of Afghanistan. This division also represented the rural and urban divide as the administrative side of the government being held by Perchamis and coercive side by Khalqis. Najibullah came under immense pressure within his inner circles as there was a coup led by General Shahnawaz Tanai, Chief of Staff of Afghan armed forces. The coup was in response to the arrest and trial of 124 Khalqis members. In March 1990, Tanai aligned himself with Hikmetyar and tried to overthrow Najibullah government.⁸⁴ The coup was more on the lines of ethnic and personal tensions between the Khalqis and Perchamis rather than ideological.

The US wanted Najibullah to resign as the President of Afghanistan and recognized the Peshawar Shura and its government in Pakistan. According to undersecretary of state Robert Kimmitt, “a stable political settlement is not achievable so long as the Najib regime remains in power. This is not a US demand; it is a statement of Afghan reality.”⁸⁵ On these premises the U.S. provided arms and support to the radical Mujahedeen groups to undermine Najibullah and his Soviet allies. US had the belief that Kabul will fall immediately after the withdrawal of Soviet troops because of all the military successes of the Mujahedeens. What the US failed to understand was that the Mujahedeens were guerilla outfit and did have the technical knowledge on how to engage enemy through conventional means. To add, Mujahedeen groups did not have heavy arms to attack a well

⁸⁴ Racioppi, Linda. *Soviet policy towards South Asia since 1970*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge UP, 1994. 159. Print.

⁸⁵ Lansford, Tom. *A Bitter Harvest: US Foreign Policy and Afghanistan*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2003. 141. Print.

fortified position like Kabul. US also failed to recognize the deteriorating factor of unification between the Mujahedeens which were now showing ethnical divisions. The divisions were 'coming of age' because various warring factions wanted power to be preserved within their sphere of influence. Once the US recognized the complexity surrounding its Afghan policy it tried to approach Soviet Union with proposals to eliminate aid bilaterally. The shift came in recognition by the Bush Administration that the Afghan government in exile was in no position of power over the warring factions. US also believed that arming anti-American Islamist in Afghanistan can destabilize the entire region thus an immediate call to end arms supply to Hikmetyar along with other radical Islamists were put in place. Although the arms supply was halted by 1991, no mention of ending aid to madrassas was made either publicly or in private. This kept the operation of Jamaat-i-Ulema-Islami on track and progressing throughout the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan had also recognized the government in exile and had supported them on various levels. Pakistan's Intelligence Agency the ISI was the architect on aid disbursement and training which gave them enormous power over various Mujahedeen groups. Saudi Arabia was one of the main financiers of Afghan jihad and groups like the Hikmetyar faction received special treatment. Hikmetyar also had special relations with the ISI and the government of Pakistan because of his political ideals which were in line with the latter. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia both 'quietly' accepted the U.S. manifesto on the elimination of arms aid to Afghan Mujahedeen.⁸⁶ Both countries did not officially acknowledge their intentions in public because they would not be able to justify the position. Pakistan had heavily invested in Afghan jihad and did not want to leave it alone until a favorable government was in place. Pakistan wanted a Pashtun backed government which can alleviate the refugee problem and help with the border dispute (Durand line). Pakistan's ISI had

⁸⁶ Shain, Yossi, Juan J. Linz, and Lynn Berat. Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions. Cambridge studies in comparative politics. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 227. Print.

helped broker the ties between General Tanai and Hikmetyar for the coup against Najibullah.⁸⁷ Pakistan also believed that by backing Hikmetyar and his militia it will extend their influence within Afghanistan and help bring about a stable and friendly government.

Najibullah had his own reservations about the Afghan armed forces due to the general make-up, as Pashtuns from the rural areas made up the majority. In 1988, Najibullah recruited an Uzbek militia (Jawzjani) led by Abdul Rashid Dostam.⁸⁸ The reason for the recruitment was the earlier successes of the militia against Mujahedeen groups in Eastern Afghanistan. Najibullah could not keep Dostam happy with large stipends as he wanted more power for the minority Uzbek groups. The government did not want an antithesis to the central power which was primarily preserved by Najibullah thus shunned the idea of more autonomy to Uzbek militia. Dostam had a vision of an autonomous Northern Afghanistan which became a pressing issue. The question of more power and autonomy proved to be a critical juncture for the government as Dostam switched alliances and joined the Tajik commander Ahmed Shah Massoud. Dostam gave a brief statement to justify his resolve in leaving the government as follows:

*“Najibullah humiliated us and violated the rights of minorities.”*⁸⁹

After the defection of Dostam, Mazar-i-Shariff fell quickly to the Mujahedeen forces. By March 1992, the tide had turned against the Najibullah government and the Afghan armed forces. The leadership of Parcham and Khalq factions that made up the government abruptly disintegrated. They were quick to pick sides amongst Mujahedeen groups and again the divisions were clearly defined by ethnicity and class. The Khalqis aligned themselves with Pashtun dominated Hizb-i

⁸⁷ Coll, Steve. Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001. New York: Penguin Press, 2004. 212. Print.

⁸⁸ Olesen, Asta. Islam and Politics in Afghanistan. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies monograph series, no. 67. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1995. 269. Print.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*; 1995. 269. Print.

Islami of Gulbuddin Hikmetyar. The Perchamis aligned themselves with the Tajik leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, Uzbek leader in the north Rashid Dostam and Islamic Jamiat-i-Islami led by Dr. Burhanuddin Rabbani. Najibullah sought a compromise with Ahmad Shah Massoud with the help of United Nations country director Benon Sevan. The deal fell through due to lack of enthusiasm from Massoud as he formulated that Kabul was destined to fall soon. Najibullah had to take refuge in the United Nations compound after a failed attempt to leave the country through Kabul International Airport which was blocked by his own mutinous armed forces.⁹⁰ Once the leadership in Kabul had dissolved by April 1992, the immediate goal for Mujahedeen became the capture of the capital city. The second facet within the chronological order was the lack of cooperation between various Mujahedeen groups in choosing their leader collectively. After much debate and consultations the Peshawar Shura (council) appointed Sibghatullah Mojaddidi as the temporary head of state who would eventually transfer all powers to Dr. Burhanuddin Rabbani after the allotted two month rule. This was not appreciated by all members of the Shura or the various Mujahedeen groups. The Pashtu majority within the country did not want to see Dr. Burhanuddin Rabbani to be in charge of the country as he was a Tajik. Ethnicity played an important role for the continued fighting amongst the Mujahedeen groups as Hikmetyar rejected the idea outright for Rabbani to be the President of Afghanistan.

The third facet came along in the chronological order as Hikmetyar and others were advancing towards Kabul from various directions. Massoud and Dostam had captured the Kabul International Airport and had stopped for the decision of the Shura in Peshawar. In the south Hikmetyar and his militia were eager to take on Kabul and solidify Afghanistan and its rule under Hizb-i-Islami. Hikmetyar joined forces with the local government and started advancing as it rejected the selection of Sibghatullah Mojaddidi as the interim President of Afghanistan. On April 26

⁹⁰ Rubin, Barnett R. *Search for peace in Afghanistan from buffer state to failed state*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995. 10. Print.

the combined forces of Hikmetyar and local government were defeated by Ahmad Shah Massoud thus giving way for the interim government to successively perform its duties. The interim government was sporadically attacked in Kabul by Hikmetyar and his militia for the next four years.⁹¹ In these attacks the infrastructure of Kabul was completely destroyed and new wave of refugees started to trickle into Pakistan. There was a ceasefire in August 1992, but the intermittent fighting kept prevailing until civil war broke out in December 1992, when Rabbani was elected President.

Afghanistan was divided in two expansive factions by the end of Najibullah government. First faction was led by Rabbani which had the combined support from Tajik and Uzbek minorities along with Perchamis. The second was led by Hikmetyar which was predominately Pashtun with the support of Khalqis. The foreign actors aggravated this situation by supporting the one that was close to their ideological and ethnic grounds. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia supported Hikmetyar because of his Pashtun ethnicity and Sunni ideology. Iran started supporting the new government of Burhanuddin Rabbani as it supported the minority Shi'a groups in the west. Iran also did not want a Sunni government in Afghanistan as it perceived that to be dangerous for its own national interests.

For the first time in 300 years, Afghanistan had a non-Pashtun leader in Burhanuddin Rabbani.⁹² He moved quickly after he was selected by a council which he appointed to reconcile differences with Hikmetyar and his militia. The Hikmetyar militia was pounding Kabul with artillery and sporadic fighting but was unable to capture the capital city. A cease fire agreement was formulated by Pakistan in March of 1993 between the Rabbani government and Hikmetyar.⁹³ Under

⁹¹ Lansford, Tom. A Bitter Harvest: US Foreign Policy and Afghanistan. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2003. 143. Print.

⁹² Runion, Meredith L. The History of Afghanistan. The Greenwood histories of the modern nations. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007. 120. Print.

⁹³ Zartman, I. William. Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995. 250. Print.

the Islamabad Agreement Hikmetyar became the prime minister while Rabbani kept his post as the President. The agreement totally ignored Ahmad Shah Massoud who was a staunch adversary of Hikmetyar.⁹⁴ Massoud did continue to support the Rabbani government as an 'informal' defense minister thus keeping some of his power base in place. The peace did not last long and in 1994 the coalition government disintegrated and civil war broke out.

The divisions based on ethnic grounds were exploited by local Afghan leaders who played one side against the other for bribes and favors from both parties. The central government of Burhanuddin Rabbani played a very limited role outside of Kabul and relied heavily on regional shuras (council). Once the shuras had power which was recognized by the central government they were able to collect taxes, build up local militia, and collect custom duties.⁹⁵ This gave the regional government more autonomy over its affairs and kept the central government out. Local leaders also 'withheld' funds from the central government thus exploiting the central government of revenues.⁹⁶ Due to the unstable state of affairs in Kabul the local leaders seized formal control over its populace. This gave rise to anarchy within the state and Afghans were being displaced both internally and externally (Pakistan). Due to population exodus from local villages and cities apart from Kabul the local economy and politics never had a change for recovery. This era also 'marked the return of feudalism and warlordism' which led to the total collapse of order, economics, and political stability.⁹⁷

Lastly, Afghanistan under the Mujahedeen could only be described as, 'chaotic.' This will rein in the fourth chronological order that will see an increase in instability and the displacement of students from their religious institutions. The constant fighting between the pro and anti-

⁹⁴ Ibid; 1995. 250. Print.

⁹⁵ Lansford, Tom. A Bitter Harvest: US Foreign Policy and Afghanistan. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2003. 143. Print.

⁹⁶ Ibid; 2003. 144. Print.

⁹⁷ Ibid; 2003. 144. Print.

government forces led to the total breakdown of order on social, political, and economic grounds. The central government of Rabbani (predominantly Tajik) controlled Kabul and its surrounding north east sections. Three provinces in the west including the city of Herat were in control of Shi'a leader Ismail Khan who was supported by Iran.⁹⁸ The Shura (council) of Mujahedeen commanders based in Jalalabad controlled three Pashtun dominated provinces bordering Pakistan.⁹⁹ In the south and East of Kabul lay Hikmetyar and his militia who were pounding Kabul with artillery and sporadic fighting against the central government.¹⁰⁰ The Hazaras controlled the province of Bamiyan located in central Afghanistan.¹⁰¹ General Dostam (Uzbek) laid control to six provinces in the north and in 1994 aligned himself with Hikmetyar to attack Kabul.¹⁰² Major City of Kandahar was divided between dozens of ex-Mujahedeen warlords' and various factions of bandits who plundered and pillaged the population at will.¹⁰³ The tribal and village structures were in ruins and regional actors like Pakistan were unwilling to deal with Durrani Pashtuns to formulate a consensus on leadership. The warlords were in total control as they seized property from the local populace at will and handed them to their supporters. According to Ahmad Rashid,

*“the commanders abused the population at will, kidnapping young girls and boys for their sexual pleasure, robbing merchants in the bazaars and fighting and brawling in the streets.”*¹⁰⁴

The refugees were on the move again but instead of returning from Pakistan and Iran, a new wave was leaving Kandahar for Quetta.¹⁰⁵ Many Mujahedeens, who had fought against the

⁹⁸ Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 21. Print.

⁹⁹ Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰² Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰³ Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid; 2000. 21. Print.

¹⁰⁵ Tanner, Fred, and Stephen J. Stedman. *Refugee Manipulation War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering*. New York: Brookings Institution, 2003. 81. Print.

Najibullah government, had gone back to their madrassas in Kandahar and Quetta to continue their education. Students' education was interrupted by the refugees as the madrassas became the first line of humanitarian aid to the fleeing populace. The students were given an indefinite 'leave of absence' from the madrassas and no date for return to continue their education. Many older students left for their hometowns in Afghanistan while the young Afghans remained in Pakistan to help with the refugees.

The young Afghans hardly knew about Afghanistan as they were born in Pakistan and educated in the Pakistani madrassas. Various Mujahedeen parties trained Afghan youths on guerilla fighting skills that will be essential in their militaristic ambitions later. Furthermore, Afghan youth learned about the idealist, almost utopian society that was created by the Prophet Mohammad 1400 years ago through their curriculum in the madrassas. The young Afghans wanted to reproduce this social and political order within Afghanistan and thus ignored the local histories and traditions. The students were tired of chaos, warlordism, and corrupt Mujahedeen groups which were not only hampering their education but also devastating their own people. According to Mullah Hassan (Taliban leader):

*"Mullahs Omar, Ghaus, and Mohammad Rabbani (no relations to President Rabbani) all knew each other very well because we were all from Urozgan province and had fought together (against Najibullah). Whenever we got together we would discuss the terrible plight of our people under these bandits. We were people of the same opinions and we got on with each other very well, so it was easy to come to a decision to do something."*¹⁰⁶

Various groups of Mujahedeens were also discussing the grave situation in the Pashtun dominated region (Kandahar) and wanted some sort of a calculated action. A consortium was held

¹⁰⁶ Rashid, Ahmed. Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. 22. Print.

in Kandahar (1994), which included many members who would take leading position in the Taliban movement. They came together to discuss what can and should be done to bring about the end of feudalism and warlordism. In this grand meeting members inked out the Taliban credo which had three principles:

1. Restore peace in the region (through Islam or coercive means)
2. Neutralize the population by disarming
3. Impose Sharia law as the ordering principle to defend veracity and preserve the Islamic character of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁷

Most of the gatherers were either full or part time students at madrassas in Afghanistan or Pakistan and they chose a simple name to explain their ideology as well as its principles. The chosen name was 'Taliban.' The gathering also created a Taliban Shura (council) who would see to the enforcement of these principles. The joint session also nominated Mullah Omar as Amir ul Momineen (leader of the faithful). The Taliban movement was not limited to Pashtun ethnicity as it had leaders within its organization representing various minority groups. They undermine the importance of ethnicity and filled that vacuum with Islamic principles which sought unity within the Muslim ummah (community). Although the Taliban did not have much material or monetary support outside the gathering, they had ambitions to grow into a governing outfit that will restore order in Afghanistan. The foundation had been laid by the Taliban Shura and now it was up to them to mobilize and take control of Afghanistan.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid; 2000. 22. Print.