

# Pakistan's Interests and Policy towards Taliban Regime in Afghanistan (1996-2001): An Analysis of Role of Military and Bureaucratic Elite

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## Abstract

This research paper aims to unveil the interests and policies of Pakistan towards Taliban regime in Afghanistan with an emphasis on the role of military and bureaucratic elite. It is believed that these two elites are the real movers and shakers of Pakistan's foreign policy. During this period the strategic and economic interests intertwined with each other. The role of Military and Civilian bureaucracy appears at two levels. First, the role of Civilian bureaucracy is more visible under the patronage of Naseer Ullah Baber, the then interior minister. He in pursuit of exploiting economic opportunities wanted peace and stability in Afghanistan. Second, The Military and ISI, which had always been under the control of policy and operational involvement into Afghanistan since long, were first not clear on Taliban. Soon realizing the significance of Taliban's victories, it decided to shed off the burden of its traditional allies and instruments, Gulbadin Hikmat Yar and Abdul Rashid Dostam. The research reveals that no regular army units were directly involved at operational level. Some Ex ISI officers or soldiers in their personal capacity might have fought along with Taliban against Northern Alliance. The circumstantial evidences prove that Pakistan did not stop the crossing of armed students from Pakistani religious Madrassa. This can be termed as to be a practical help on the part of Pakistan's regular Armed Forces.

**Key words:** Afghanistan, Taliban, economic and strategic interests, Governing Elite, Military Elite, Bureaucratic Elite, Naser-Ullah Babar,

## Introduction

There has always been a thrust in the Political Scientists and International Relations theorists to locate actual wielders of political power and their influence on public policy making. So this led towards an increased and monumental interest in the enquiry of decisions as focal point. The focus of political scientists was to analyze the decision makers in a given political system and the decisional behavior of voters, legislators, executives, officials, politicians, leaders of the interests groups and other actors simultaneously. They were actually inclined to look into and locate the actual decision makers, entrusted with a task to authoritatively allocate values within a society. While theorists of international relations earlier had been directed towards the analysis of the only political activities of state across boundaries, without considering that 'Who' is behind the activities of an abstract entity i.e. state, formulated and then manifested through the foreign policy.

However, this seems very difficult at broader national level to analyze the context of decisions, the nature of leadership and the stability and regularity of decision-making process. Parry has reinforced that "any decisions taken at national level have large ramifications. He, besides pinpointing the expensiveness of the research project has mentioned some problems in this regard. He talked about the limitedness of accessibility to decision makers. In case, access becomes possible then according to him:

The political scientist is often prevented on grounds of national interests or on grounds of official secrecy from publishing his results and his sources in full. This renders very difficult the task of assessment and criticism by the academic world, and the public to whom the analyst is under an obligation to present his researches. To the extent his work is censored that student is in danger of offering an apologia for the status quo. (p.60)

## Who are decision makers in Pakistan?

Ever since the sociologists and social scientists have forged discussion on the organization of society, the issue of governing elite has been the primary focus of their study. In general, the term elite stands for a small minority to play an exceptionally influential role in the political and social affairs.

The people who occupy the command positions with a capacity to take binding decisions for the society are interchangeably termed as Governing Elite, Power Elite or Decision makers. The concept of ruling class or governing elite varies from country to country owing to their peculiar historical experiences and societal fabric, as in the case of Pakistan, its political system is inherently elitist one.

The phenomenon of real decision makers in Pakistan have been delineated by multifarious dimensions, but broadly there is a consensus among analysts that colonial institutional - structural legacy provided the foundation stone for evolving Governing Elite in Pakistan. The steel frame of British reign were of two institutions; The Civil Service and Military, continued and nurtured in Pakistan's post partition favorable circumstances with the same characteristic features. Ayesha Siddiq focusing upon the core question, 'who is Pakistan's Elite' besides indicating towards other groups mainly pointed towards the primacy of Civil and Military bureaucracy as being the fountain of political power in the history of Pakistan.(Siddiqia ,Ayesha, Who is this Elite, The Express Tribune , Retrieved: [tribune.com.pk/story/.../Who is This Elite](http://tribune.com.pk/story/.../Who is This Elite) ).So politics in Pakistan was overwhelmed by two non-political elites - the military- bureaucratic elite, however intercepted with the short interregnum of democratic rule of politically elected civilians with lesser degree of influence. An astute scholar Ian Talbot comment, "The Army and bureaucracy have been the self- appointed guardians of the Pakistani state since independence. Political parties and constitutions have come and gone or been transformed but these twin unelected institutions have remained the pillars of state (2000, p. 215). So, contrary to all standardized rules of game of parliamentary democracy, politics has remained the dominion of military and bureaucratic elites because of their capacity of creeping invasion into political sphere.

Generally in developing countries, democracies return either because of the popular pressure or a Army's desire to maintain its professionalism and sometimes due to the transformation of the "ruling military elite into a de-facto civilian regime by the progressive reduction of manifest military support conscious civilianization of the top military elite" (Charles, L. Cochran :1974, p.74.) Pakistan is no exception. Here we need to address a pertinent question that what was the common thread between Military and Bureaucratic elite. In Pakistan as Ayesha Jalal (1990) states that the domestic, regional and international factors actually instrumented in the dominance of the civil bureaucracy and the military right after the independence. Besides these factors, the similar mindset of both elite groups on the issues of democracy, modernity, religion, strengthened their position in power structure. They considered Pakistani a naïve and simple people, unprepared to be governed by on the model Westminster type democracy, as in the words of Major General Iskandar Mirza

Democracy required education, tradition, and pride in your ability to do something, unless by condemning to ruthless struggle for power corruption, the shameful exploitation of our simple, honest, patriotic and industrious masses (Waseem, Muhammad, 1994, p. 157)

He actually showed his distrust in the ability of common Pakistani to enjoy the self- rule. Likewise, General Ayub Khan had the same trust deficit when he said: "My task, as I saw to set up institution which should enable people of Pakistan to develop their material, moral, and intellectual resources and capacities to the maximum extent"(ibid)

The same mode of thinking prevails among the CSPs, and almost every one of them has a comprehensive, extensive and self-sufficient formula for the salvation of the nation. Nevertheless, one cannot claim a complete harmony in outlook and attitude in both elite groups. At some of time there has been a sort of distrust and mutual suspicions, but easily mediated owing to a sort of balance in power structure and that the top level occupant of position in the institutions shared the same social class, pride in professionalism and same sources of norms, derived from colonial legacy. "Both had pretension to being liberal, utilitarian, and modern. Both liked associating with foreigners, no less than with capitalists , both were pro-western, pro-Islamic, pro-order, pro-development pro-guided democracy, proprietors, both anti -politicians, anti-mullahs ,and anti-communists. (Eqbal Ahmed, pp.51-52:19-23)

The colonial legacy of institutional structure of Pakistan had continued in terms of recruitment and power, simultaneously, enhanced its influence in all sphere of governance including foreign policy making decisions.

Pakistan never entangled militarily with Afghanistan despite its irredentist claims on some of parts of Pakhtun populated areas in NWFP(KPK), Baluchistan and FATA and its hostile attitude. Since inception, Afghanistan has always remained high at the helm of affairs of Pakistan security apparatus; side-by-side bolstered the power and positions of military elite into state's internal and external policies. Khalid Bin Sayeed analyzing elites' retrospectively commented that during the initial years, due to powerful personalities of Quaid-e-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan, the entire administration and politicians remained subservient to the central government, which had largely been, at that time, commanded by civil- bureaucratic elite. However, very soon the changing scenario of international politics and growing needs to cater with the compulsions of fragile security environment in 50's, Pakistan Army became the dominant player in decision making process,

specifically, when C-in-C Ayub Khan in contradiction to all democratic and parliamentary norms became, in uniform, the defense minister in the 1953-54's civilian cabinet. With the passage of time, the Army became the ultimate guarantor of the state integrity. In addition, during the Zia regime, it attained the position to secure the ideological identity of Pakistan as well. (Talbot, Ian, Does Army shape Pakistan's foreign policy, 2002, p.322). The dominance of military establishment is undeniable fact during direct rule but the military elite also kept in its hand the strings of foreign and defense policies specifically the issues related to India and Afghanistan even during the civilian governments. (Waseem, Muhammad, 2009, p. 183) Then how could, Pakistan's policy towards Taliban regime, be remained beyond the influence of military elite, and civil bureaucratic elite as the junior partner. Their perception, motivation and operational involvement fully capitalized Pakistan's policy towards Taliban regime during 1996-2001.

### **Interests and Policy of Pakistan and Taliban Regime**

The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan had been evaluated under vast arrays of opinions and perspectives. Nevertheless, before analyzing the reasons and causes of emergence of Taliban, and subsequent role of Military Civil bureaucratic elite in supporting them, there is a need to understand the re-innovated policy parameters and redefined interests of Pakistan in the changed post-cold war political environment. With the end of cold war, though there had not been any formal ceremonies, the United States and its Western allies stood winner. This victory unleashed massive geo-political changes at all levels i.e. national, regional and international. These changes included the dominance of western value system, the emergence of Central Asian states etc. South Asia's complex security system received all the shockwaves of these changes. So this led Pakistan to re-innovate its policies, objectives, and ways to avail new opportunities and face new challenges as well. However, Economic objectives and security needs retained their primacy intact. Rather in this changed environment, the strategic and economic interests closely intertwined with each other.

#### **Strategic Interests**

The coincidence of economic opportunities interweaving with security and strategic objectives in the region happened due to circumstances emerging out of Central Asian Republics' independence. These States possess vast natural resources. Pakistan is ideally positioned to transport oil and gas reserves of Central Asian States to the world. Pakistan can provide both sea and land links. These links comprised three routes i.e. via Afghanistan and through China and Gawadar, which is the easiest sea route for Central Asian states. This was presumed that "the CARS had sharpened the geo-political, geo-economic and geo-strategic potentialities of Pakistan". (Alam, Muhammad, Munir, 2004, p.120). Pakistan's policy in general towards Afghanistan had been fully under the shadow of two objectives:

- First: Traditional component of military' strategic outlook of securing Strategic depth viz –a-viz India,
- Second Refreshed economic perspective of opening trade routes with Central Asia

These two objectives then shaped Pakistan's policy towards Taliban regime i.e. **To have a pro-Pakistan Pliable Government in Afghanistan**

The strategic depth notion had also been, historically employed by British Empire under the rubric of the 'Deep Defence' and 'Forward Policy' for North Western Borders of British India (Barun, De, 2002, p. 3814). President Ayub Khan also believed that the natural defense line for the sub-continent was the Hindu Kush, (Hussain, Rizwan, 2005, p. 182).

Soviet Invasion in Afghanistan in 1979 revived this historic Strategic outlook of erstwhile British Empire for Pakistan, enlivened with constant threats from Eastern Border i.e India. So the refreshed strategic depth theory echoed in the security establishment's strategic outlook (Roy, Olivier, 2002, in Christopher Jafferlot (edt), p. 151). Pakistan's geographical lacuna in terms of its configuration (narrow in width) warranted to be dealt strategically, so military strategists suggested it to be dealt comfortably by having a pliable client regime in Afghanistan. Mirza Aslam Beg clearly worded this notion, which stressed the need for a dispersal of Pakistan military personnel and assets in Afghanistan well beyond the offensive capability of the India's military. The ISI, as observed by Rizwan Hussain (2005, p. 190) that the Pakistan intelligence agencies apparatus is controlled by the military elite with a definite chain of command also share the views regarding strategic lacuna of the county with military elite.

General Hamid Gul ex Director General Inter-Services Intelligence 1987-1989, had firm belief that strategic depth was a security compulsion for Pakistan. Because, it has a very large population on its borders and a friendly Afghanistan at backyard would rectify strategic lacuna. Therefore, it was presumed a compulsion for Pakistan to support Taliban. (Ahmed,Naseem , 2001, p. 206, Unpublished thesis) Pakistan's geographical configuration makes it a highly vulnerable country from security point of view. All its major cities are located on borders either of India or Afghanistan. ( Rizvi,Mujtaba ,1998,p. 184).

As shown in the following map.



**Figure 6.1 Map of Administrative Division Showing Geographical Configuration**

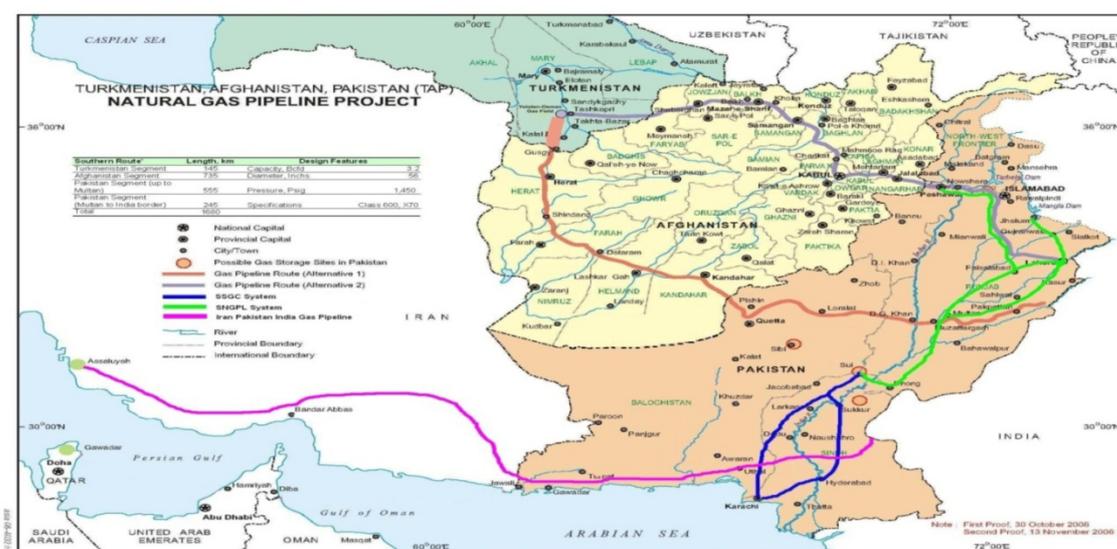
Source: <http://www.globalcitymap.com/pakistan/images/pakistan-political-map.gif>, Dated:12-7-2012

Afghanistan's denial of Durand Line led all Afghan rulers to promote Pashtun nationalism among the Pashtun population of KPK, Baluchistan and FATA areas. Pakistan in order to meet this challenge at its western border adopted two pronged policy. First, to keep calm at Afghan border, established cordial links by providing trade facilities. Secondly, to cultivate relations with Pushtun Islamists believing that their Islamic identity would ultimately dilute Pashtun ethnic identity between the Pashtun living on both sides of Durand line. Pakistan's Military has always been characterized by the presence of Pushtuns at decision making level with a belief that chosen Pushtun Islamists forces would always be in friendly posture towards Pakistan on assuming power. The rise of Pashtun force in the guise of Taliban from Pashtun populated Southern Afghanistan was considered another opportunity to install a Pro –Pakistan Pashtun Islamic government in Afghanistan to provide Strategic Depth vis- a- vis Hindu India.

### Economic Perspective

The strategic depth was not confined only to the security compulsions, it also entailed economic dimension. Especially the end of cold war brought this dimension forefront more clearly for states of South

Asian region. This actually happened because of South Asian's vicinity to the newly emergent central Asian republics. Pakistan hurried in to exploit all economic opportunities. Pakistan's policy makers conceived Afghanistan's geographic proximity to the Central Asian states to be the most advantageous factor in the changed geo-political scenario. The territory of Afghanistan could be used as the transit route for the Central Asian oil and gas supplies, supplanting the pipelines running through Russian territories. Therefore, Afghanistan emerged as the most plausible link for Pakistan to establish trade relations with Central Asian states. "Pakistan has since then sought to open a corridor to that region through Afghanistan" (Tarock, Adam, 1999, p. 808) Marvi Memon (1998) has opined that "Pakistan needs Kabul as a route; the western route via Iran is too long and eastern route via China is mountainous. Thus if it wants influence in the Central Asian states, then peace is necessary in Afghanistan." (Memon, Marvi, 1998, p. 411). Hence, a pipeline was proposed to be constructed from Turkmenistan to Multan with a cost of 2 billion dollar, by an international consortium (CENTAGAS) but could not materialize due to Afghanistan situation. (Gidadhubli, R.G, 1999, p. 262)



**Figure 6.2: Route of TAPI (projected)**

Besides obvious economic and commercial interests (Ferdinand, peter, 1994, pp. 86-87) in developing bi-lateral trade in raw material manufacturing goods, opening up communications links, Pakistan's policy makers wanted a "Muslim security belt stretching from Turkey to Pakistan with Central Asia as the buckle" to provide strategic depth" (Smith, L. Dianne. 1996, p.165). The strategic linkages between Central West and South are also found in history and well entrenched with political diplomatic and commercial ties. As it has also been found by Rajesh Basrur (1996-97:5) that the rise of Mogul power brought all three regions into one security complex.

Pakistan strategists presumed that the combination of Turkish- Persian- Uzbeks in an alliance form could successfully be waged in post- Soviet international world order as Islamic security complex. This strategic setting presumed to be materialized due to Central Asian states, which could provide the strategic hinterland. Central Asian states, during the initial years, were moving on the same lines, as they quickly joined ECO and OIC. Ahmed Rashid had the same opinion that expanding ties with the Muslim Heartland of Asia can fulfill Pakistan's military aspiration for strategic depth. He also hailed the possibility of joining the regional arrangements in Asia (Rashid, Ahmad, Seizing a Historic Opportunity, Dawn, January, 15, 1999)

Pakistan celebrated the joining of OIC and ECO by CARS as the re-unification of three Asia. It is like long lost brothers meeting once again and embracing deep. To successfully achieve all these objectives Pakistan needed a peaceful, politically aligned Afghanistan because "Pakistan's rail lines currently end at the Afghanistan border, (Dianne, L. Smith, 1996, p. 156).

What role military and civil bureaucratic elite in achieving these well conversant geo-political objectives had played? This is now being analyzed.

## The Role of Military and Civil Bureaucratic Elite: 1993-1996

In 1993, the political fiasco once again marred the system stability in Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif being in power performed vigilantly during the early years from domestic to foreign policy areas. Largely Islamic parties applauded his major policy changes. (Tikker, Manesha, 2004, p. 196). Soon the deluge of differences and complaints between Prime Minister and President turned everything upside down. President once again invoked the eighth amendment, the subsequent event was quite apparent that Prime Minister had to relinquish power. Though not having any such precedent, judiciary re-instated him for a while. However, the political debacle crippled down the political process completely and both P.M and President had to tender their resignation. Moen Quershi after a short interregnum in Prime Minister House held general elections on Oct 6, 1993. The results of election moved Benazir Bhutto into PM House with a confidant Farooq Leghari in President House.

Despite the democratic rule before and after fresh elections in 1993, military's creeping invasions into real politics did not end. Specifically, Afghan and Kashmir continued to be in the orbit of influence of military and ISI. However, this time Benazir came in power with somewhat improved patterns of relationship with military establishment. She had been in good terms with General Abdul Waheed Kakar COAS. In full realization that she had to keep the Pakistan Army happy, and accommodate the demands of Army and ISI but at the same time, she was also desirous of keeping control over the unbridled force of ISI. (Coll, Steve, 2004, p. 289) In that particular point of time in 1993, ISI was passing through a systemic change. General Abdul Waheed Kakar due to violations of channels of command changed two ISI chiefs Lt General Asad Durrani and Lt General Javed Nasir one after another.

The new ISI chief with the consent of General Abdul Waheed Kakar initiated a restructuring process and cleansing of ISI from Islamists. He also tightened the belt around Jihadis in Kashmir. So following this policy, many officers in ISI either repatriated or retired. (Abbas Hassan, 2005, p. 153) This enhanced Benazir's control over Afghan policy and bolstered her position viz-a-viz troika. However, broadly Benazir Bhutto continued to commensurate military guideline for foreign policy of the country. (Talbot, Ian, 2002). To say that ISI was completely purged would be too naïve and simplistic in approach.

Before Benazir's entry into Power, Pakistan, since long has been supporting Gulbadin Hikmatyar in the hope that he, with the help of other Islamists- Pashtun groups, would install a pro-Pakistan's government. This hope could not materialize despite all conciliatory efforts undertaken by Pakistan by mediating Peshawar and Islamabad Accords. Rather as observed by Angelo Ranasyaam (2003) that he became a diplomatic burden because of his heavy bombardment over the Population of Kabul and annoyance of Tehran, which threatened to go for military solution to prevent Pakistan from attempts of installing a Pro Pakistan government at Kabul by supporting Gulbadin Hikmatyar. Benazir government seriously addressed the threat and Naseer Ullah Baber requested her to make him in charge of Afghan policy. He said as quoted in Angelo Raanasayam (2003) "I will see to it that Iran is neutralized in Afghanistan" (p. 147)

The internecine fighting and Mujahedeen's internal conflicts damaged Pakistan's interest in bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan and having a pliable friendly government at Kabul (Rais, Rasul Baksh, 1993, p. 912). At this juncture of history, Benazir Bhutto, in her second term with hopes to re-innovate the Afghan policy showed her intentions to rebuff the old cannons specifically Hikmat Yar. This time she wanted to market internationally the cross roads of the old silk road of the trade between Europe and Asia (Coll, Steve, 2004, p. 290). Benazir was in full belief in 1993-94, not to ignore political chaos and instability in Afghanistan. Because, History taught her that almost all ancient conquests had been the consequents of inspirations based on trade routes that ran from Central Asia to Delhi.

Therefore, a must barrier to re-define the interests and policies towards Central Asia was Afghanistan. Afghan policy, carved out by Benazir Government, was taken as an entrée to forming trade links with Central Asia and regional realignment. Benazir Bhutto and her advisors had no intention to bypass or rebuke the role of military elite or its most potent instrument 'ISI'. Naseer-Ullah Baber arranged a consultation meeting with concerned military senior people of ISI's Afghan Bureau. They were of the opinion that Pakistan should continue its policy of supporting Pushtoon Islamists, specifically Gulbadin Hikmat Yar on the pretext that if Tajiks and Uzbeks prolonged their control over Kabul, they might be used by India for ethnic secessionism in the large Pushtoon population of Pakistan (Coll, Steve 2004: 192). This experienced opinion made clear that alternate to Pashtun protégé must be a Pashtun political force. Besides it in 1994, the Army Chief General Abdul Waheed Kakar and ISI Head General Ali Quli Khan were both Pashtuns similarly Most of the ISI officers

involved in strategic planning and intelligence gathering, since long, was Pashtuns, inherently inclined towards their Pushtuns kins.

Benazir Bhutto was fully determined to establish trade links with Central Asian states. Therefore, the first prominent initiative undertaken by Naseer- ullah-Baber in pursuance of this policy objective was his decision to go to Central Asian states by land, along with Hidayatullah Khan Niazi, Director –General of Pakistan, National High Way Authority. This was fifteen days visit through Afghanistan, Central Asian States and China and meant to assess possibility of opening up trade with the CARS via Kandahar and Herat. (Matinuddin, Kamal, 1999, p. 63) On 20 October 1994, he went to Herat with a delegation comprising ambassadors from UK, USA, Spain, Italy, China and South Korea, senior Pakistani officials from railways, highways telephone. This was meant to unfold the plethora of opportunities and attract investment of at least \$300 Million to build highway from Quetta to Kandahar and \$800 million for construction of Railway track and Satellite system to link at least 100 towns (Rashid, Ahmed. (1998). Pakistan and the Taliban, the Nation, April 11) Benazir Bhutto also went to Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan on 28 October 1994, where she met Ismail Khan and Abdul Rashid Dostam. This aimed to secure the help of governor of Herat, which was comparatively at that time peaceful and prosperous region under the efficient administration of Ismail Khan. He promised his help provided Pakistan could manage security of Herat Road by marginalizing the warlords control in Southern Afghanistan, especially in and around Kandahar. (Angelo Raanasayaam, 2003 , p. 147) Another convoy was arranged with 30 trucks carrying Pakistani goods for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with a purpose to bypass Kabul in October 1994. Babar asked Benazir Bhutto “Why do we need Kabul anyway, (Coll. Steve, 2004, p. 290). The Southern route through Kandahar and Herat appeared as the most plausible way to establish trade links with Central Asia.

This initiative coincided with Taliban’s overture along this route. Similarly another unusual concurrence also took place in the same period, which had also great ramification for the rise of Taliban movement, this was the role of Truck Mafia based in Chaman and Quetta, who were looking for a unifying force, which could effectively arrange for their business free of any hazards. They were ready to pay heavy amount for this purpose happily. (Jacob, Happymon, 2006, p. 34) In March 1995, Taliban collected Rs 6 Million from Truck transporters. (Rashid, Ahmed. (1998). Pakistan and the Taliban, the Nation, April 11)

There are multiple opinions about Pakistan’s role in the rise of Taliban to prominence. Larry Goodson (2001) has identified some factors, which include Pakhtun identity, religious piety of Taliban leaders, and the war weariness of Afghan people, the money, and lastly Pakistan involvement. He has observed that “Support for the Taliban within Pakistan government, army, and society is deep and multifaceted. Indeed, it is not incorrect to say that the Taliban’s are Pakistanis”. (pp, 109-111) Daniel S.P. Sullivan looking at the causes and reasons of the rise of the Taliban viewed it as a fuel necessary to spread the fire. That means the initiation of Taliban movement was not due to Pakistan. Because according to him, the initial support was neither overt nor unified. Dorronso assumed that the emergence of Taliban is itself a byproduct of changing position of Ulema in Afghan Society. In the twentieth century, Ulema started taking part in politics because of discontentment over the modernization of society. From 1924 to 1971, Ulema successfully mobilized masses on different occasions, which show their social significance in the Afghan society. During the Afghan war, Ulema generally commanded at local level their respective students against Soviets. Due to this background, it was easy for Mullah Umer to gather his students and mobilize the way he wanted.

It has also been assumed that Taliban were the corollary of the Pakistani policy during post Najib Ullah period. Pakistan wanted from International community to withdraw their recognition of Rabbani Government on the basis that after 28 June 1994 Rabbani Government had lost its legitimacy because of non-compliance of March and April agreements. The growing friction between Pakistan and closeness of Rabbani government to India and Iran threatened Pakistan to be a final loser despite putting decades long efforts to have a pliable friendly government at Kabul (Magnus, Ralph, 1997,p. 115). Generally Pakistan’s analysts proceeded with the viewpoint that Pakistan had not initiated in any way the Taliban uprising. Colonel Imam, Raheem Ullah and Hamid Gul had the same opinion.

The late Colonel Imam in an interview claimed that Pakistan ISI had no information about the rising of Taliban until the end of 1994. (Interview with Ifthikhar Ahmed at Geo News dated September 2009). Similarly, Ahmed Rashid has also observed that ISI, which had been in control of both operational and policymaking for Afghan Affairs was initially skeptical about their chances of success. (Rashid, Ahmed, 2000,p. 188).Therefore, the exponent of this viewpoint that Pakistan had been involved in the initiation of this Taliban surge could not present any circumstantial evidence in this regard. Sometimes Taliban’s protection to a Pakistani Truck convoy in Oct 1994 and the Chamman Truck Mafia support in the same period are furnished as evidence. Still no one can categorically claim that Pakistan managed this protection. “Any possibility of transporting regular troops,

disguised Taliban or the Krates of Kalashnikov mortars, and other assorted firepower needed to capture a city blistering with hard bitten fighters sounded whimsy” (Griffin, Michael, 2001, p. 37). Though, the events and circumstances surrounding this convoy had acute relevance with later events concerning Taliban’s swift victory. National Logistics Cell organized under the command of Major Jehangir a Truck convoy. Late Colonel Imam who was the first head of the Pakistani mission at Herat joined this caravan at the point of Spin Boldak. This caravan could not make its way safely as stopped by a local commander, when it was just twenty-five kilometers away from Kandahar. The local commanders Mansoor Amir Lali, Ustad Alam Saraktib stopped this convoy with a view to mount a pressure to stop the joining of madrasa students to the rising Taliban force. This force, began with 30 Taliban, by the end of Oct of same year 1994 touched the number of 1500, which was unavoidable. When colonel Imam, by his own means trying to rescue the convoy and negotiating the local commanders, Mullah Borjan, a Taliban leader contacted him and offered to rescue the convoy. Colonel Imam accepted the offer. The task of rescuing the convoy successfully accomplished with the force of 200 hundred Taliban on 4 November 1994.

This act of bravery endeared Taliban to Pakistan’s military and civil bureaucracy taking them as a most viable available option to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and make possible the free movement along the Chaman -Kandhar Highway. On the next day of rescuing the Pakistan’s convoy, Kandhar siege took place by the hands of Taliban. Sullivan, Daniel. P. has commented that (2007) “Kandahar victory was possible just because that Pakistan had paid off a commander in Kandahar to make it easier for the Taliban to take the city. (P. 105)

Before Pakistan could capitalize their support to Taliban meaningfully, the Transport Mafia, the Drug trafficker and war weariness of common man started pouring in money to Taliban movement. The donations from business people was made to clear the roads for carrying goods safe from bandits, money for the sake of God (Mullah Zaef, 2010, 67).

Pakistan formalized its support to Taliban by 1995. Since Nov 5, of Kandahar fall out, Taliban kept on advancing, and by the end of February, they were in control of seven provinces. Colonel Imam is considered to have been, at that time, the main conduit for Arms and Money to Taliban. He is as believed with other ISI officers to have managed to buy the loyalties of local commanders for Taliban (Hussain, Zahid, 2010, p. 29).

Taliban has mainly emerged from Pushtun ethnic areas, so this benefitted them a lot because of Pushtoon elements in Pakistan military, and civil bureaucracy had strong affiliations with their Pushtoon Kinsmen in Afghanistan (Hussain, Rizwan, p. 182). Olivier Roy (2002) pointing out towards the significance of Pushtoon elements observed that because of failure of Gulbadin HikmatYar, to force out the Tajik Ahmad Shah Masood and Rabbhani Alliance from Kabul “Pakistan had to find another Afghan fundamentalist pakhtoon card”. (p. 152). Though, No credible evidence endorsed the involvement of Pakistan in the creation of Taliban, but sign of co-operation since its rise were quite visible and persuasive to lead to the belief of Rabbani regime that all victories and advances done by the Taliban were the outcome of Pakistan’s active military support. He complained that Pakistan had not been taking notice or barring the illegal crossing of flock of armed men. Rabbani appealed to international community for the arrangements of monitoring of international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Fange, Andres, 1995, p. 23)

A US embassy cable has also mentioned about the alleged involvement of ISI and Pakistan’s Air Force officers (The Taliban file 1994, P 1). However, in an interview a retired ISI officer keeping his anonymity claimed that these were all speculations, that any regular forces were involved in any way with Taliban as fighters. At the same time, he opined that there is very much possibility that some ex ISI men due to their personal contacts, established during Afghan resistance against the Soviet Union, might have remained involved. William Maley(1996) quoted the former Pakistani General Mirza Aslam Beg, that “ their origin is in Pakistan , their bases are in Pakistan”. He also mentioned that a BBC correspondent in Kabul reported that aid workers had recognized the Pakistani army within the Taliban occupation force.( P.276)

Sardar Asif Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan had an exchange of views with Taliban in Kandahar, in which, he reiterated Pakistan’s commitment to Afghanistan territorial integrity. (Dawn, August, 6 1995) This meeting took place between a foreign minister and a non-recognized political force of Afghanistan. Pakistan initial support was a competition between Army and civilian leadership gaining influence within Pakistan government as regards Afghan policy. Because there was distrust between prime minister Bhutto and ISI (Sullivan, Daniel P, 104). This viewpoint is also present in one of the US cable, which stated. “The burgeoning Taliban movement is being directly supported by Pakistan. The interior minister is the chief patron of the Taliban” while DG ISI had been quoted as that he had strongly recommended to PM Bhutto that GOP not

support the Taliban in any way Taliban could become dangerous and uncontrollable which could harm both Afghanistan and potentially Pakistan (The Taliban file NSA Document No: 1994: 11584 p. 2).

The historic city of Herat was captured on September 5, 1995, and the next day Pakistan embassy at Kabul was burnt down, killing one employee and one wounded left behind. This incident further deteriorated the already tensed relations between Pakistan and Rabbani regime. These two incidents also made ISI to re-orient its policy outlook of supporting Gulbadin Hikmat Yar who had, by that time proved a complete failure. Pakistan and Rabbani regime were entangled in war of words over the issue of Pakistan involvement, as PM Benazir Bhutto in a meeting with senator Hank Brown and Charlie Wilson clarified Pakistan's position in this regard. (The Taliban File, Document ID, 200314, April, 1996) Rabbani's deputy F.M in UN Assembly blamed Pakistan for being the source of financial and logistical means, making Taliban's swift advances, and victories possible. He gave statistical analysis in his speech and insisted that Pakistan gave 88 million dollars and 15000 gallons fuel besides providing fighters.

To substantiate their claim Rabbani official produced the captured Pakistanis fighting for Taliban in Afghanistan. (Dawn, Jan 27, 1995) After the embassy attack on 6th September at Kabul, there was a cutoff at diplomatic level between Pakistan and Rabbani regime. However, after a while, the situation improved. Afghanistan's officials apologized and agreed to pay handsome money for the construction of embassy in compensation (Dawn, February 17, 1996)

In the meantime, Afghan imbroglio worsened further. The fighting in and around Kabul between Ahmed Shah Masud and Gulbadin Hikmat Yar intensified. Taliban's march was unimpeded; finally, the day came when they made their way into Kabul victoriously. Benazir called it a welcome development. Pakistan, finally officially abandoned its long cherished policy of supporting Gulhadin Hikmatyar, but once again the chosen instruments were Pushtoon elements to accomplish the long awaited task of establishing a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul to secure strategic depth viz-a-viz India. As Zahid Hussain opined that Pakistan support for the Taliban was certainly not based on any ideology, it purely reflected geo-strategic objectives. i.e a friendly or pliant government in Afghanistan (Hussain, Zahid, 2010,p. 30)

Since long Afghan Affairs had been in the domain of military and its allied organizations, but first time, after the capture of Afghanistan by Taliban the civilian bureaucracy under the patronage of Naseer-Ullah-Babar, especially Afghan Trade Development Cell and civilian departments played a key role not only in decision making but remained active at operational level. Pakistan laid new telephone cables linking major cities of Pakistan to Turkmenistan. (Khalilzad, Zalmay. 1993, p. 193). Similarly, Kandahar and other cities of Afghanistan could be dialed by Quetta's code 081.

### **1997-1999**

After 39 days of Kabul capture, Benazir Bhutto's government was over thrown on the charges of corruption, economic mismanagement and deteriorated law and order situation. President Leghari invoked Eighth amendment and in eight years, this was third government axed by this constitutional instrument. Nawaz Sharif became prime minister in 1997 with absolute majority. This was his second term in which he appeared to have been more inclined towards religious orthodoxy. (Hussain, Zahid). He showed his intention in echoing the Islamisation process of Zia's period.

On April 1, 1997, the parliament unanimously passed the 13th amendment under which the power of president given by 8th amendment was eliminated. The new amendment ascertained that the prime minister was to dismiss and appoint the chiefs of the Armed Services. Nawaz Sharif's government was seemingly appeared less inclined to curb the activities of militants and Jihadi outfits beyond the borders. In his previous term, ISI had been blamed for being to be supportive to jihadist outfits in Kashmir. In 1992, The CIA Director wrote a letter to Nawaz Sharif in which he mentioned the possibility of declaring Pakistan a terrorist State on the basis to have been involved in providing material support by ISI. He selected General Javed Nasir as new ISI Chief in 1992. He had declared inclination towards Islamic renaissance. He had close links with Tablighi Jamaat. During his tenure, ISI moved independently undermining the Military's control and command system. However, he had been removed from ISI right after the dismissal of Nawaz Shrif government in May 1993.( Hussian , Zahid, 2007, p.27) . The same policy measure regarding Islamic outfits continued as written by Hussain Haqqani (2005) in his second term of office, "Official defence to the Jihadi groups was demonstrated by the visits in April 1998 of the Governor of Punjab and the Pakistani Information Minister to the headquarters of the Lashkar-e-Taiba. The Governor of Punjab applauded the spirit of Jihad and a sense of sacrifice among the students of the Markaz.(p. 299)

In August 1998, he introduced a bill in the National Assembly for the 15th amendment, which ultimately meant to declare Nawaz Sharif the Kalifa, the caliph. The bill passed on October 9 1998, but could not get assent of the senate. Eventually, Nawaz Sharif tried hard to mobilize the religious segment of society to mount pressure on Senate; but all went in vain. (Abbas, Hasan, 2005,p. 165). In a statement, Nawaz Sharif idealized the situation prevailing in Afghanistan. He stated, "I have heard that one can safely drive a vehicle full of gold at midnight without fear. I want this kind of system in Pakistan (Griffin, Michael, 2001, p. 203). This shows his ideological predisposition on matters related to Taliban regime at that time. However, until April 1997, despite all successes of Taliban, Gohar Ayub Foreign Minister in a statement clarified that Pakistan had no immediate plans to recognize Taliban government. (Dawn April, 10, 1997)

In whole of May 1997, Taliban advances and capturing of province after one another remained continued. Taliban started their first North offensive in January 1997 (Dawn, January 25, 1997). Finally, in May 1997 crushing all resistance and also by maneuvering alliances with Malik Pahalwan, the ex- ally of Malik Rashid Dostam made easy for Taliban to enter Mazar-e-Sharif, chanting slogan "Allah-o-Akbar. (Dawn, May 25, 1997)

This was a tremendous victory and Pakistan next day of capture of Mazar-e-Sharif with all jubilation recognized Taliban government. Gohar Ayub Khan in a statement announced that new government in Kabul fulfilled all criteria for "de-jure recognition". (Dawn, May 26, 1997)

The opposition leader chairperson of PPP endorsed the recognition of Taliban as de-Jure government, but she was very much concerned about the possibility of emergence of such elements in Pakistan (Dawn, May 27, 1997). The UAE and Saudi Arabia also followed Pakistan and formally recognized Taliban regime. (Dawn, May 28, 1997) ISI's role once again became very prominent when its officials mediated between Malik Pahalwan and Taliban to settle their issues on 28 May 1997, right after two days of Taliban capture of Mazar-e-Sharif. The local population stood up against Taliban, consequently Taliban retreated losing five Northern provinces, which they occupied five days back. This encounter at Mazar-e-Sharif caused heavy atrocities as at least 2500 Taliban and approximately 10,000 Non-Pushtoons disappeared from the abandoned provinces of Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh, Badghis and Sowarngan.

Mullah Umer appealed to Pakistani Madrassas and almost 10,000 fighters cum students joined Taliban forces. (Dawn June 2, 1997) Pakistan's civilian leadership during the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif regime persistently continued to extend all out support to Taliban. Pakistan provided 6000 tons of wheat to Taliban despite their inhumane attitude towards Hazarajat as they had enforced blockade on all the roads from the South West and East. This blockade starved at least one million people in Bamiayan, Ghor, and Wardak.

In the July 1998, Taliban once again moved to assault on North. This time Saudi Arabia and Pakistan's military establishment meaningfully supported Taliban with cash and Weapons. The Saudi intelligence Chief Prince Turki Al Faisal visited Kandahar and pledged to give them 400 picks up and substantial financial aid. Pakistan provided Rs. 10. Millions for road repairs in Kabul by Ambassador Aziz-Ud-Din Khan (Dawn July, 1998).

There were reports that Pakistan's ISI managed 2 billion PKR in terms of logistical support. Before the attack of Mazar-e-Sharif, There were reports that Pakistani officials had visited Taliban frequently. Abdul Rashid Dostam blamed that some 1500 Pakistan's military personnel belonging to Elite Special Services Group with effective support of Pakistani piloted air attacks from Afghan air force fighter planes made possible the capture of Mazar-e-Sharif (Middle East International, August 21, 1998,pp. 13-14). Ahmed Shah accused that at least 28,000 military and Para Military staffs were used to consolidate the Taliban occupation (Griffin, Michael, 2001,p. 208). The ISI used Ex Afghan Army officers, affiliated with General Shah Nawaz Tani exiled in Pakistan since March 1990. He with the backing of ISI and Gulbadin Hikmatyar tried to coup against Najibullah but failed in his attempt. Tani had affiliation with Khalaq faction of PDPA. The Ethnic Pashtun identity led these ex-Afghan Army officers to help Taliban and ensure resurgence of Pushtun dominance in power structure of Afghanistan. Therefore, the Afghan Air force planes and a considerable portion of Armor and Artillery of Afghan Army helped Taliban.

By 1998, Pakistan in cognizance of significance of Taliban's victory was seeing Taliban controlled areas as a sort of de facto expansion of its territory. The ISI established training camps secretly at Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Khoost and other adjacent areas to Pakistan for guerrillas to be used in disputed Kashmir. This policy was continuously pursued despite the Clinton administration's retaliatory attack in 1998 on

Jalalabad, Khoost, Kandahar. Now one point agenda of hunting Osama bin Laden became the prime mover of US policy and gave a new turn to the events.

In 1999, Pakistan's internal political scenario and external environment coincidentally was marked by unparalleled events of history, which commenced in May 1998. India surprised the world by detonating five atomic devices at Pokharan. Pakistan pursued the same path and stepped in disregard of all types of pressure from international community. At domestic level, except from a small segment of moderate people from civil society, generally he received applause specifically from religious parties. These were more enthusiast than others to even the score with India. Similarly Islamic countries largely backed Pakistan decision of 28<sup>th</sup> May 1998.

After eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation of previous year, a wind of change blew in South Asia in early 1999 when friendship between India and Pakistan wrapped up the entire region. The reconciliation process culminated into engagement between both the countries at various levels, like Lahore Agreement 1999, Delhi-Bus Service, launched by Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, but soon dust storm of Kargil conflict changed the entire scenario. Pakistan initially termed this incursion an independent move of Kashmir freedom fighters. But India was fully convinced that Pakistan Army did this adventure in the name of Kashmir mujahedeen. Domestically, this adventure unleashed such consequences, which crystallized deeply ingrained facts of political system, first this widened the already existed chasm between military and elected leadership, secondly the primacy of military leadership in foreign policy decision making fully entrenched. However, military leadership had never acceded that civilian government was kept in darkness. They claimed that on January 29, 1999, and Feb 5, 1999 a comprehensive briefing was conducted for Nawaz Sharif explaining all the aspects of Kargil situation. Rather, a good no of briefings had been undertaken by DGISI and other relevant high officials regarding this issue. (Musharaf, Pervaiz, 1996, p. 96)

The third consequence was the non-acceptance by military leadership of the meddling of political leaders into internal affairs of Army and ISI. Lt General Tariq Pervaiz, a Quetta based corps commander and cousin of one of Nawaz Sharif's Federal Minister had a meeting with PM without prior permission of COAS. He was right away removed from military service on this sheer violation of discipline. Military top brass took it as an attempt to divide Military. (Baxter, p. 54-55) All these events paved the way for coming monumental event of the removal of Nawaz Sharif from premiership. Nawaz Sharif did not allow Pervaiz Musharaf plane to land at Karachi Airport and simultaneously when he was in air, was deposed from the seat of COAS at 4:30 pm and Lt General Khawaja Zia-ud-din was declared new COAS (Abbas, 2005, P.176). However, Army elite officers did not let civilian leaders to smart out them and lose their pedestal position in Pakistan. So they decided with immediate effect to rectify this situation. Army took over the control of Karachi Airport. Musharaf plane safely landed. All of events ended in the removal of democratic elected government. (Siddqa, 2007,p. 96).

Army was once again in direct control of foreign policy making. On October 17, 1999 in a televised address to nation, He announced seven point agenda delineating his program to rebuild the national cohesion and strength of the federation. He did not talk much about any change in foreign and defense policies of the country. He continued the previous government stance of supporting Taliban (Abbas, Hassan, 2005, p. 182).

In 1999, Pakistan was passing through by many worries and problems; prominent among them was the US concern over its persistent patronage of orthodox regime of Taliban, which by that time had virtually become base camp of al-Qaeda operations and sanctuary of thousands of Islamic militants from different countries. Pakistan military and civilian leaders were fully convinced that Pakistan's policy was correct (Ahmed Rashid, 2001, p. 194). However, the decision makers of Mushraf government realizing the significance of durable peace also showed interest in UN peace initiatives side by side also supported mediation measures taken by regional countries. As in a meeting with Turkmenistan foreign minister Pakistani foreign minister supported the efforts of group of six plus. (Dawn, January 27, 1999)

In the meantime, USA was also mounting pressure over Taliban regarding its demands to expel Osama Bin Laden (Dawn, Feb 5, 1999).But Taliban were stick to their stance not to expel Osama Bin Laden from Afghanistan. They were not ready to undermine their Pakhtun - Wali, a strong usual norm of Pakhtun to give protection to a guest at any cost. (Dawn, February 10, 1999) Throughout 1999, Pakistan had been under fierce criticism for its Taliban policy. In August, the same year, the ousted President Rabhani wrote a letter to UN Security Council to take serious measures against Pakistan because of its interventionist designs against Afghanistan (Dawn, Aug, 6, 1999)

PM Nawaz Sharif rejected this blame while presiding over the cabinet meeting as he said his government was not taking any “sides” in Afghanistan (Dawn, Aug 1999). In the last days, the USA successfully persuaded Nawaz Sharif to bring a change in his policy and urged him to use his influence as the mentor of Taliban to hand over Osama to USA. Nawaz Sharif, first time ever publically denounced Taliban. On 7 October 1999, Lt General Zia-Ud-Din, chief of ISI went to Kandahar to see Mullah Umer with concrete evidences of training camps in use by militant organizations and religious militants who were involved in target killing of Shia community in Pakistan. The change in civilian leadership’s policy towards Taliban became more discernible when Nawaz Sharif in the same month flew to Dubai to brief the Gulf States about the change in policy. Nawaz Sharif insisted that Taliban should stop all activities in Pakistan and shut down all training camps. (Griffin, 2001, p. 233).

But soon he was deposed by military, eventually the forces who had been the real movers and shakers of Pakistan’s policies towards Kashmir and Afghanistan since 1980s once again were in the center stage. (Saikal, Amin in K. Wariko ed, p. 248) About Pervaiz Musharaf and his coterie, Selig Harrison had the opinion, quoted in Griffin (2001,p. 232) “Musharaf along with a number of other high ranking military staff also had ties with many of the Islamic fundamentalist groups that have had supported the Taliban.”

Conclusively it can be said that since long Pakistan was in the desire to curb all possibilities of resurgence of Pashtoon nationalism within Pakistan and along the border of Durand Line. It was thought this could be done by only stopping Pashtoon nationalists coming into power in Afghanistan. Therefore, to achieve this motive, Islamic identity was invoked repeatedly (Resolving Afghan imbroglio, Dawn 6, 1999). This concept prevailed and the strategies followed remained more or less same throughout the history of Pakistan, specifically after 1970’s.

Pervaiz Musharaf initially seemed inclined to pursue the policy change, initiated by Nawaz Sharif in his last days. Pakistan played an intermediary role between the US and Taliban to settle the issues, with partial success, when Taliban agreed to set up a commission to investigate about the Bin Laden involvement in bombing at US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. However, they were not responsive to any of Pakistan’s requests despite the fact that Pakistan stood by them, when they were in isolation because of their contrary stance to International community and annoyance of almost all regional countries Uzbekistan, Iran, Tajikistan etc.

Musharaf government in compliance to UN sanctions closed down branches of Afghan Banks in Pakistan and frozen all bank accounts. (Pioneer 9, 12, 1999) Hamza Alvi (2002) has observed, “Musharaf himself does not appear to have been driven by any ideology. He is a professional. He has had no difficulty in abounding one policy and supporting another if that promises to be profitable.” (p, 26). With time, this opinion appeared very much true. By mid May 2000, Pervaiz Musharaf and his top confidant showed a bent of mind to support to Taliban against Northern Alliance, which by that time had become the blue-eyed boy of all regional countries including India and Iran. Pakistan has always remained obsessed with a desire to countervail India’s influence in the region.

Since 1980’s, Iran had also been a source of instability for Pakistan’s social fabric due to intrusive role in the affairs of Shia Sunni divide. (Nasar, S.V.R, 2002, p.88) Pakistan also wanted to curtail the influence of Iran in the region. Musharaf as written by Amin Saikal under the influence of the military and growing militant Islamic forces backed away from the original promise of pressuring the Taliban (In K. Warik: 248). In an interview to BBC on 2, August, 2000, he clearly expressed the change in his mindset, and he cleared that policy of supporting Taliban as being a cross border force dominated by ethnic Pashtuns who populate on both sides of the long Afghan Pakistan border would be continued. (ibid: 249).

Before 2001, Pakistan had full-fledged diplomatic contacts with the Taliban regime despite the international community consensus against them. Pakistan pledged to continue its support to reconstruct the Afghanistan fragile economy (Raja, Zulfiqar, Sattar stresses talks for Afghan peace News, 25, Jan, 2000). In pursuance of this policy line, Pakistan extended operational assistance between May to October 2000. This support made possible the pincer movement of Taliban against Northern alliance. (Dawn January, 2000)

However, military in command of policymaking also simultaneously continued to urge Taliban to respond positively to international community concerns regarding Bin Laden issue. In this regard, a request was also made to Mullah Rabbani who was on a visit to Pakistan in those days. He did not show any flexibility on Osama’s issue. (Hindu, February, 22000). Taliban’s were steadfast with their stance throughout the year 2000 with a plea that he was a guest (News, July 7, 2000). The development in Afghanistan regarding Buddah’s

destructions in Bamiyan, Ahmed Shah Masood's successful visit to Europe in which he demanded from International community for diplomatic support Against Taliban, dragged Pakistan into a state of isolation. He also asked international community to pressurize Pakistan to end its assistance to Taliban. He said that without Pakistan's support the Taliban's military campaign would not even last a year. (Dawn April 7, 2001).

General Mahmud Ahmad one of the leading operates of the military bureaucratic structure at that time had a pronounced pro-Taliban stance. He, during his visits to USA once in April 2000 and then in September 2001, elaborately defended Pakistan policy towards Taliban regime. During his second visit in Sep 2001, the tragic event of 9/11 occurred, which qualitatively and paradigmatically changed the entire scenario of international environment, Pak-US relations, and Afghanistan alike. He came back with a list of demands, which he acceded even without consulting General Pervez Musharaf. However, he was overtly unhappy over the behavior of US officials after 9/11 and the way he had been pressed for the demands. (Hussain, Zahid, 2010, p. 36)

All the successive events testified that crucial decisions in Pakistan have always, been taken by just a few people (power elite) of the society. Musharaf had a short deadline to reply to US demands, which had been already accepted by General Mahmud Ahmed. He could not take in confidence the other corps commanders over the policy reversal. However, on September 14, 2001 nine corps commanders and other high officials at GHQs and chiefs of the ISI and MI had a meeting. Musharaf explained the reasons and causes of policy reversal and the circumstances in which Pakistan had to give in to American demands. He told them that Pakistan faced a stark choice it could either join the US coalition supported by the United Nations or otherwise be declared terrorist state, leading to severe economic sanctions. Musharaf found in this meeting a mixed response as dissident opinions came from four corps commanders namely Lt General Aziz Lt General Muzaffar Usmani, Deputy Chief of Army Staff. General Mushtaq, Lt General Jamshed Gulzar. While General Mahmud kept quiet. (Abbas, Hassan, 2005, p. 220)

There were reports that at one hand, he acceded to the demands of the US and on the other hand, he motivated Mullah Umer to remain steadfast and not to succumb to American pressure (Hussain, Zahid, 2010, p. 42). Musharaf civilian co-aides readily accepted the U-turn in Pakistan's policy towards Taliban but he had to shed off the burden off General Mahmud Ahmed and other dissidents. (Abbas, Hassan, 2005, p.220)

A delegation comprising Lt General Mahmud, the ISI chief, and Moulvi Nizamudin Shanzai head of the famous Deobandi Maddrasa in Binori town, Karachi went to the Taliban to convince them to handover Usama Bin Laden. But mission failed instead of convincing Mullah Umer, Mufti Shanzai encouraged Mullah Umer to start a Jihad against the United States if it attacks Afghanistan (Friday Times Oct. 07, 2001& Abbas Hassan, 2005, p. 221)

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