



PAKISTAN'S WAY(S) OF PURSUING INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN AFTER THE RISE AND RULE OF TALIBAN, 1994-2001

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***Abstract**-The rise and success of Taliban in Afghanistan shocked the world in general and neighbors in particular. Their command and control system was effective beyond imaginations and their operational capabilities were surprising for the armies of many developed nations. The negative side that surfaced was their establishment of strict Shari'a government which turned them anti-human in the eyes of the people. The regional powers were also caught in a difficult situation to adjust to the new reality. Pakistan as one among them was already involved in the Afghan affairs. It had either to continue betting on the Afghan Mujahideen or to support the Taliban for having a friendly government in Afghanistan. It opted for the second choice and put weight behind the Taliban despite criticism from the stake holders in Afghanistan. It continued shielding the friendly Taliban government to prevent India from getting foothold in Afghanistan and to gain access to Central Asia. These expectations, however, proved lofty because the Taliban acted on their own and paid little heed to Pakistan's interests. The situation changed after the American attack in 1998 and the distances also widened between Pakistan and Taliban but the former did not give up its pro-Taliban policy before the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America. Under US pressure, Pakistan joined the Global War on Terrorism against its Afghan favorites. The current research study descriptively analyzes the interests of Pakistan in Afghanistan and endeavor to answer the question that in what way(s) Pakistan pursued its interests in Afghanistan after the rise and rule of Taliban, and was it successful?*

Key Words: Pakistan, Taliban, Shari'a, Interests, Neighbors, Trade Route

INTRODUCTION

Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in 1989 and the *Mujahideen* (Islamic Warriors) whose political ideology emanated from communism, western liberal ideas, nationalism and Islamism (Nojumi, 2002, p. 84), fought the forces of Soviet Union. They afterwards turned their guns against forces of the communist government of the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) because Dr. Najibullah continued as the President of Afghanistan for another four years while the *Mujahideen* paid no attention to the regime and were busy in government making (Hekmatyar, 2004, p. 22).

United States of America (USA) remained involved in the affairs of Afghanistan since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided arms and money to *Mujahideen* through the ISI of Pakistan while the major share went to Hekmatyar (Siddiqi, 2007). Beside material support, USA also provided for the US-printed books to be taught in the schools of Afghan refugee camps. One scholar, Kathy Gannon extracted the title of her book, *I is for Infidel* from the alphabet system, introduced by the United States in those books. The alphabet system mentioned in the book reflects as "J is for *Jihad*, and K is for Kalashnikov and I is for Infidel" (Gannon, 2005, p. 141).

Pakistan on the other hand totally rejected the talks for compromise between *Mujahideen* and Najibullah's government. It instead cobbled together the interim government of *Mujahideen* under Sibghatullah Mujaddedi after the fall of Najibullah's government in 1992. Mujaddedi, however, remained in power for four months and was replaced by Burhan Uddin

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Rabbani through the Peshawar Accord for a term of four months but after the lapse of his four month time, he refused to shun his office. Pakistan wanted to vacate the office from Rabbani and kept insisting on the implementation of Peshawar Accord. It wanted the radical Pashtun leader, Gulbadin Hekmatyar to become a subordinate Premier but he refused to honor the Peshawar Accord due to the Tajik dominance Rabbani's government (Saikal, 1998, p. 118).

A civil war broke out in Afghanistan and the warlords began to fight with each other for more power. Pakistan was left alone by the US after the Soviet withdrawal and at the end of the cold war which according to Hillary Clinton was the biggest mistake of the US administration (Sarwar, 2015, p. 48). Pakistan alone had to safeguard its economic and security interests in Afghanistan by siding with one group or the other but when the warlords failed to establish a peaceful government in Afghanistan; it began to look for another group in the shape of the Taliban (students of *Madrassas* or Islamic Seminaries). After the emergence of Taliban on the political scene of Afghanistan, the ISI lent support to them by totally sidelining and ignoring its favorite, Hekmatyar (Siddiqi, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abundant literature on Taliban in Afghanistan is available in the form of books and journal article but these sources do not exclusively deals with the strategies of Pakistan for pursuing its interests in Afghanistan during the rule of Taliban, They generally covers the relations of both but fail to highlight the way(s) Pakistan adopted for pursuing its interests.

Recovering the Frontier State: War, Ethnicity, and State in Afghanistan, is a book by Rasul Bakhsh Rais which deals with the political life of Afghanistan in the last thirty years of the 20th century and throws light on ethnicity, ideology, economy and state structure. It highlights the role of communists, Islamists and foreign states for dividing Afghanistan ethnically and religiously which caused the subsequent fragmentation. The book, however, fall short of clearly describing the stratagem and way(s) of Pakistan for pursuing its interests in Afghanistan during after the rise and rule of Taliban.

Another source on Afghanistan, *Political Frailty and External Interference* of Nabi Misdaq covers the diverse topics of Afghan society, social norms and codes, state and religion role in the formation of the Afghan society. As a whole the book elaborates the ethnic patchwork and its role in Afghan politics. It covers the history of Afghanistan from the times of the Afghan tribal confederacy of Ahmed Shah Abdali to the rise and government of Taliban. This book also gives little space to Pakistan's method(s) of following its interests in Afghanistan and does not highlight the relations and then suspension of relations between the Taliban and Pakistan.

Amin Saikal, the author of *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* wrote it from an Afghan nationalistic point. It covers the Meta history of Afghanistan from the tribal confederacy to the rise of Taliban. Saikal is critical of the policies of Afghan rulers for making the country into a rentier state. He also criticizes external intervention who introduced the political ideologies of communism and Islam in Afghanistan and is mainly critical about Pakistan and the US for supporting the Pashtun *Mujahideen* and Taliban whom it consider responsible for the fragmentation of Afghanistan while praises the Tajik leaders. The book also covers the intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic tensions but fail to see objectively the compulsions of Pakistan and its ways for pursuing interests.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research mixes descriptive and analytical methods to explain the way (s) of Pakistan in pursuing its interests in Afghanistan during 1996 to 2001. The data used for this research paper is based on few primary sources like books and reports but secondary sources are utilized that include books, research articles in journals and newspaper articles

The Rise of Taliban and the Interests of Pakistan

The Taliban emerged on the scene in 1994, as a result of the various malpractices and crimes that erupted in the Afghan society during the civil war. They were mainly from the Pashtuns ethnic group and fought against the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, who refused to leave the power (Matinuddin, 1999, p. 89). The Taliban emerged in the spring of 1994 when



Mullah Omar mobilized some thirty Taliban with few rifles against the commander of Qandahar on the plea of Singesar villagers because he was busy in heinous and immoral acts against the locals. The Taliban killed the commander by hanging him from the barrel of a tank and captured arms and ammunitions. *Mullah* Omar declared on this occasion that “we are fighting against Muslims who had gone wrong. How can we remain quiet when we see crimes committed against women and the poor” (Rashid, 2000, p. 25).

Pakistan played a very vocal role in the rise of the Taliban who were mostly the students of religious *madrassas* (seminaries), run by Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) of Maulana Fazl-ul-Rehman and Jamat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP) in the border regions of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. These *madrassas* were established after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and were mostly funded by the Gulf countries, particularly by Saudi Arabia. The *madrassas* run by the JUI were traditionalist and were also the followers of the Devobandi School of thought (Nojumi, 2002, p. 119). The *madrassas* served as relief centers for the *Mujahideen* whose young generation known as the Taliban became its students. Their ideological mindset was not only framed in the *madrassas* but they were also trained militarily there. *Mullah* (Leader of Islamic Prayers) Mohammad Omar was a Durrani Pashtun who himself was a teacher in one of the local *madrassa* affiliated with JUI (Nojumi, 2002, p. 120). The Taliban of those *madrassas* not only received radical conservative interpretation of Islam but also had mixed together Islam and *Pashtunwali* (Pashtun tribal code of conduct) (Maley, 2002, p. 75), the proofs of which were their anti-Shi’a approach and the banning of Iran Embassy at Kabul in 1997 (Maley, 2002, p. 75).

During the government of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in 1990-1993, JUI remained in opposition but it made an alliance with the Pakistan People Party of Benazir Bhutto in 1993 and reached an understanding with the Interior Minister, Naseerullah Khan Babar who himself was a staunch supporter of the Taliban. The JUI then started influencing the approach of the government towards Taliban because they under the leadership of Amir Mansoor had released the convoy of trucks by killing the offenders on 3 November 1994. This convoy was sent by Naseerullah Khan Babar to Turkmenistan. JUI celebrated this victory and some 12,000 Afghani and Pakistani students have also joined the Taliban in 1994 (Rashid, 2000, p. 28).

The same year, Maulana Fazl-ul-Rehman visited various countries and called for the support of the Taliban. He also initiated a contact between the Taliban and the Arab rulers in 1995. JUI not only supported the Taliban during Benazir Bhutto’s rule but also had later on exerted pressure on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to recognize the Taliban as a legitimate Afghan government (Maley, 2002, p. 76).

In the beginning, religious parties and government ministers of Pakistan supported the Taliban (Nojumi, 2002, p. 114) because Pakistan’s Afghan policy was stuck like a beached whale, directionless and without powerful surrogates in Afghanistan during 1994 (Maley, 2002, p. 74). The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) showed reluctance despite the fact that it intervened in Afghanistan for security reasons after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. It instead with support of USA and Saudi Arabia searched and contacted different other groups after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and during civil war in Afghanistan but of all the groups, Hekmatyar remained the major beneficiary of ISI support. Thus, the ISI was totally against the Taliban because it feared that Taliban after capturing power would establish an independent government in Afghanistan (Nojumi, 2002, p. 122).

The ISI waited for the government of Benazir Bhutto to reduce the role of Pakistan in Afghanistan but afterwards got convinced and started supporting the Taliban. The remarkable success of the Taliban forced ISI to volunteer their training and guidance (Nojumi, 2002, p. 132). Many former Pakistani military officers and intelligence personals, such as General Hamid Gul (the previous head ISI) came forward for the support of Taliban (Marsden, 2002, p. 126). The funds from US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) meant for Taliban were provided to ISI (Emadi, 1997, p. 114).

This friendship and affiliation between ISI and Taliban brought the former into close links with the JUIP that resulted in the military support and training of the Taliban. It was hoped that this cooperation would pacify the Afghan nationalists’ threat against Pakistan (Nojumi, 2002, p. 132). The influx of Pakistan’s ISI and army official missions to Afghanistan started during 1995 while the presence of ISI in Qandahar grew tremendously in the year 2000, and it



affiliated with itself local informers including officials of secretariat and ministry of foreign affairs of *Mullah Omar's* (Gul, 2002, pp. 18-19).

The ISI became so involved that when the foreign office of Pakistan expressed reservations regarding pro-Taliban policy and asked for the closing of certain *madrassas* in the tribal agencies and near the Afghan border, the ISI countered it and advocated that Pakistan should recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan (Khan, 2007, p. 156).

Taliban Regime and Pakistan Way(s) of Pursuing its Interests

Pakistan conferred recognition upon Taliban after their capture of Kabul City in 1996 and after establishing peace and harmony with the capture of Mazar Sharif which was the stronghold of Tajik Commander, Ahmed Shah Masoud (Roy, 1996, p. 38). The Taliban proclaimed *Shari'a* (Islamic law) government in Afghanistan and the close associates of *Mullah Omar* proclaimed him as *Amir-ul-Momineen* (Commander of the Faithful) (Rashid, 2000, p. 42). Pakistan for the first time felt solace over its security concerns because it never had cordial relations with Afghanistan throughout history as they developed positively during the Taliban regime (Matinuddin, 1999, p. 128). It founded a golden opportunity for establishing trade links with the Central Asian states (Roy, 1996, p. 38).

Taliban entry into Jalalabad and cemented the suspicion that Pakistan along with Washington and Saudi Arabia has backed Taliban and even a commentator on BBC called the fall of Kabul plainly the engineering of Pakistani Interior Minister (Babar) and the American CIA (Toru, 2005, p. 68) which was true to some extent because Clinton administration had expressed full sympathy with the Taliban and was ready to hold early talks with the new Regime, for re-opening its embassy in Kabul. As the Taliban were anti-Iran, therefore, the US congress had allocated a covert budget of \$ 20 million for the CIA to destabilize Iran (Sreedar, 1997, p. 21). Pakistan from then onward openly backed Taliban at all cost and was ready to pay the political price no matter what comes next. India, Iran, Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Russia accused it for this support. Other countries including China felt threatened by the Taliban for hosting extremist elements. Despite increased isolation, Pakistan bore the burden to justify the Taliban to the outside world which saw it in the context of its Kashmir policy (Weinbaum, 2006, p. 9). When the question of recognition confronted the Taliban, they asked the world for recognition. Pakistan somewhat delayed its recognition and demand Taliban to include other ethnic groups. Taliban showed willingness and Pakistan immediately conferred upon them recognition in May 1997 (Murshed, 2006, p. 82), believing that its recognition would lead other regional states to recognize Taliban and all those states criticizing Pakistan hitherto will look to it for demonstrating leverage over Taliban and for improving their own relationships with them (Maley, 2002, p. 88). Subsequently, it asked other countries for following the suit which was accepted by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates but CARs preferred recognition through the United Nations Organization (UNO) (Murshed, 2006, p. 85). Pakistan committed a mistake by extending recognition to Taliban because they were not ready to make an alliance with others. As a result, Pakistan was criticized both at home and at abroad (Murshed, 2006, p. 94) but it refuted the all the accusations (Hoffman, 2001, p. 23) and focused only its interests in Afghanistan (Sultana, 2006, p. 166), such as forging close ties with Afghanistan, economic relations with CARs and the security of its western, north-western and south-western border.

With the establishment of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Pakistan hoped to have cordial relations with them for the first time. Before the Taliban, all the regimes in Kabul followed a policy of either indifference or hostility towards Pakistan (Ahmar, 2006). The strategic-depth policy that was prepared by the Interior Minister, General Naseerullah Khan Babar and his military and political allies was because of a threat from Afghanistan side. It aimed at a strong Taliban government for pacifying the nationalist elements in Afghanistan who might boast up the issues of independent Pashtunistan or the Durand Line. This new development was thought to help Pakistan against India also which might establish relations with the Afghan government, causing the cutting off Pakistan's trade with the Central Asian states (Nojumi, 2002, p. 131).

Another important objective of Pakistan in supporting the Taliban regime was to have a safe passage to CARs for trade (Meher, 2004, p. 203). The access to those markets was seen crucial for the economic growth and industrialization of Pakistan. The access was made indispensable by the discovery of oil and gas that required ground transportation and controlled economic



route. Pakistan also feared that a national government in Afghanistan would be fatal for the economic interest of Pakistan in CARs (Nojumi, 2002, p. 133). The establishment of a favorable government was seen as an important alternative for achieving the economic objective. Good relations with the CARs were desired due to the fact that they were mostly members of Economic Co-operation Organization or in short ECO (Rashid, 2000, p. 59).

Beside good ties with Afghanistan and trade relations with the CARs, Pakistan also pursued security concern in its relations with Taliban. Pakistan since its creation was not much concerned about its western border despite the fact that there were persistent demands of independent Pashtunistan and the issue of Durand Line. However, when Soviet forces entered Afghanistan in 1979, its concerns for security multiplied. USA resumed military sales to Pakistan and even it was decided that in case of attack by the Soviets on Pakistan, US would directly deploy its forces to protect it (Meher, 2004, p. 93). After the arrival of Soviets, Pakistan apprehensions had increased because of good relations between Soviet Union and India which saw itself as the hegemonic power in the region. For countering this situation, Pakistan started supporting and training militants which pressurized India. Thus, Pakistan's Taliban policy can rightly be called a by-product of this indo-centric approach (Niaz, 2004, pp. 133-35). Moreover, Pakistan also felt threatened from Iran on its western border during this period because it was unhappy with Pakistan over the situation in Afghanistan and started competition with it by supporting the Shiite leaders of Northern Alliance.

At this juncture, another ensuing issue concerning Pakistan was the tussle and competition between the American Union Oil Company of California (UNOCAL) and the Argentinean Bidas oil company which were fighting for a pipeline contract from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan. Before the Taliban takeover of Kabul, an Argentinean Bidas was given the right to extract gas from the oilfields of Turkmenistan but UNOCAL offered a better deal to the Turkmen government that caused the cancellation of the agreement with Bidas which immediately took the Turkmen government to the court and started competition with UNOCAL for securing the agreement with Taliban. It tried to secure the construction rights for pipeline through Afghanistan. The Taliban signed no agreement but wanted to accept the offer of Bidas (Zafar, 2014, pp. 626-27). When the Taliban captured Kabul, UNOCAL welcomed them and appreciated the stability they brought to Afghanistan but still considered it insufficient. US State Department asked the Taliban to restore order because it wanted to establish diplomatic mission in Kabul after seven years. America also offered finances to various aid organizations that were working in the refugee camps of Pakistan for setting up operations inside Afghanistan (Hayton, 2002).

Subsequently UNOCAL signed agreement with Delta Oil of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the Turkmen government in 1997 which provided for the construction of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan. Although the project was stopped to commence at the end of 1998 and UNOCAL declared that after the establishment of an internationally recognized government in Kabul, it will be started again. In the meantime, the Taliban favored the terms offered by the Bidas Company and the negotiations were in their final stages. Bidas was willing to work under the Taliban (Marsden, 2002, p. 129) As the US pro-Taliban policy has undergone a change and the episode of CIA's support of the Taliban came to an end, the agreement of Bidas and Taliban stopped also. The US attacked Afghanistan in 1998 for obliterating Osama Bin Laden who was viewed by America as the master mind of terrorist attacks on its embassies at Kenya and Tanzania. UNOCAL abandoned its plans to construct the pipelines (Khan, 2007, p. 154).

As the pipeline issue was related to Pakistan, therefore, its halting as a result of US attack was a great setback for Pakistan. Beside it, the situation has also changed for it because the golden period of friendly relations with Taliban ended soon. Although Pakistan gained some security and commercial advantages from the Taliban regime but it suffered to a great extent. The Taliban forces on several occasions obstructed the trade convoys of Pakistan for the sake of the boundary taxes and hand refused the request of Pakistan for handing over those people to it involved in the sectarian tension in Pakistan (Ahmar, 2006). Furthermore, fundamentalism became prevalent, opium trade and smuggling became a routine affair and Kalashnikov culture and black marketing became a permanent threat to the integrity of Pakistan. It even lost the trust with the Afghan people it enjoyed during the *Afghan Jihad* (Holy War) against the Soviets and Socialist regimes in Afghanistan (Maley, 2002, p. 88).



In short, the ISI mainly directed Pakistan's Afghan policy during 1979-2001 for protecting its economic and security interests. Pakistan supported the *Mujahideen* and played a pivotal role in the emergence of Taliban by continuing their support till September 2001. Pakistan became isolated both at national and at international level (Khan, 2007, p. 54).

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center of New York in USA on 11 September 2001 (popularly called 9/11), Pakistan changed its pro-Taliban policy for an anti-Taliban policy and accepted the new situation. When America declared to go behind the terrorists and launched the global war against terrorism, Pakistan joined it and once again became a "frontline state" because it made great sacrifices in terms of military personnel, civilian casualties as well as material losses. As a result of war on terrorism Musharraf received legitimacy for his rule from the world in general and US in particular beside massive economic and military aid (Sarwar, 2015). Nevertheless, Pakistan's integrity for its role in the war against terrorism shattered its integrity in the eyes of regional powers and Northern-Alliance as well its own people at home. Inside Pakistan, society, politics, economic structure and security environment was severely affected. Even during the war on terrorism, the US did not treat Pakistan fairly (Sarwar, 2015, p. 48).

In the wake of 9/11, Pakistan took a U-turn over its Pro-Taliban policy. As soon as the US declared war against terrorism, Pakistan was given two options, either to side with the US or to face the consequences. Pakistan knowing its position immediately joined the US in its war against terrorism. Another good reason for joining hands with US was that India from 1990 to 2001, was trying to declare Pakistan as a terrorist country (Rifaat Hussain, 2002, p. 183). The terrorist attacks on US brought Pakistan into the limelight of US national security and it was given the status of a "frontline ally" in the war against terrorism (Cohen, 2004, p. 103) which shattered the hitherto Indian desire to permanently stigmatize Pakistan in the eyes of the world and to declare it as a terrorist country (Jones, 2004, p. 275).

Pakistan's U-turn on its Afghan policy resulted both positively and negatively. In the positive sense Pakistan got economic benefits from the war against terrorism and also became once again a frontline state and in the negative sense it was cursed by the Northern Alliance in particular and the world in general for supporting the Taliban.

The implications of the pro-Taliban policy for Pakistan were beneficial in the short run but disastrous in long run. Initially Pakistan secured its political, economic and geo-strategic ends. The Taliban regime was the first ever regime to comply with the objectives of Pakistan in Afghanistan. They were totally in line with Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan and CARs (Toru, 2005, p. 69). In the long run, the relations between Pakistan and Taliban deteriorated greatly. Despite the fact that they were considered a product of Pakistani establishment, disappointed Islamabad when they refused to hand over some of the suspects involved in acts of sectarian terrorism inside Pakistan (Ahmar, 2006). They proved that "today's friends can become tomorrow's enemies" (Rifaat Hussain, 2002, p. 182).

Pakistan's global image had badly tarnished and internally the pro-Taliban policy proved disastrous because for having multi-cultural and multi religious society. The Afghan Taliban introduced strict *Shari'a* law and started violence. They considered America and the West as the cause of all evil and suffering. After the fall of their regime when the Taliban infiltrated in the tribal areas of Pakistan they propagated the same views of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. At international level, they not only caused a bad image of the country but also tarnished the image of Islam because many started considering it as a religion that promotes intolerance, militancy and terrorism. Internally, militant activities have multiplied and suicide attacks became a routine matter for Pakistanis. They affected the social fabric, peace and stability (Hilali, 2012-2013, p. 165). The element of fundamentalism grew. The *mullahs* became very powerful. They wanted to impose *Shari'a* in Pakistan. Economically; Pakistan was destabilized by the influx of refugees (Toru, 2005, pp. 76-80). In Afghanistan, it also received a setback because the Northern Alliance resumed power there which evaporated the strategic-depth policy of Pakistan over night. The only influence that Pakistan gained in Afghanistan was participation in the US war against terrorism (bhatnagar, 2007, p. 159). The Northern-Alliance ended the chances of Pakistan to further play the role of a king maker in Afghanistan. Another obstacle was the presence of US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces. Pakistan in the face of new realities needs to bury its illusionary dreams and has to establish good realities with the new Afghan authorities (Sultana, 2006, p. 167).



CONCLUSION

Pakistan adopted such way(s) in the pursuit of its interests in Afghanistan that shattered its previous image of a state which is anti-Soviet and anti-Afghan socialist regime forces, and of a state that host the Afghan refugees. During and after the civil war, the Afghans started suspecting Pakistan for pursuing its own interests instead of helping Afghanistan to enjoy peace and stability. When the Taliban emerged, Pakistan saw them the best suited group to serve its interest because they were rightly in line with its state ideology of Islam. It established cordial relations with any Afghan government for the first time as almost all the previous Afghan governments promoted Afghan nationalism and supported Pashtunistan and Durand Line issues. The Taliban felt unmoved by these issues and started protecting the interests of Pakistan; such as the prevention of Indian influence, trade links with CARs and the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan.

Pakistan also compromised its image internationally and pleaded the case of Taliban. It sought recognition for them on various forums and from various neighboring and non-neighboring countries despite their strict *Shari'a* version which had antagonized many people inside and outside Afghanistan. Pakistan won negative popularity as the supporter of Islamic radicalism and militancy. Internally, Pakistan also faced a difficult situation because many circles have criticized it. The society which was already disturbed by the Afghan policy of General Zia-ul-Haq had further radicalized and the Kalashnikov culture, smuggling, drug-trafficking and black marketing became more common elements.

Later on, when the Taliban started securing their own interests at the cost of Pakistan's interests, the golden period of cordial relations withered away and even had deteriorated to a greater extent. However, as a matter of necessity, Pakistan continued the support of Taliban for the time being until the occurring of a turning point in the shape of US missile attack on Osama bin Laden in 1998 for his alleged involvement in the terrorist attacks on its embassies at Kenya and Tanzania in Africa. Pakistan immediately sensed the situation and joined US and Saudi Arabia to convince the Taliban for handing over Osama bin Laden to America but the Taliban turned down the request.

Afterwards when the war on terrorism was launched by USA against Taliban for hosting Osama bin Laden and his terrorist organization, Al-Qaeda on the pretext of attack on the World Trade Center in USA, Pakistan joined the US and its allies, thus, becoming a non-NATO front line state once again. On Positive note, Pakistan once again became a focus of attention but on a negative side, its image was greatly harmed. The phases of the deterioration of Pakistan image among the Afghans can be clearly seen. For instance, during the civil war, Pakistan was regarded as an interest driven neighbor. After the rise of Taliban and during their rule, Pakistan was seen as the supporter of radicalism and fundamentalism. After the ouster of Taliban from government and the establishment of the predominantly Northern Alliance government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai as a result of Bonn Agreement, Pakistan lost ground in Afghanistan. Even it lost confidence with the Taliban who saw it as an ally of the US. Thus, Pakistan lost the trust of all the sections of Afghan society. Internationally, neither America nor its allies had trust and confidence on Pakistan.

Last but not the least, the destruction of the Taliban regime had direct consequence on the security of Pakistan. The Taliban infiltration took place into the tribal areas which created new concerns for the authorities because from the safe havens of the tribal areas of Pakistan, they launched operations against US, NATO and Afghan government forces which caused Pakistan to be labelled as the facilitator of terrorists despite its own sacrifices of military personnel, civilians and material losses. The international community paid lip service to the services of Pakistan and did not sincerely acknowledge them. On the other hand, the Taliban also threatened it to establish the Afghan-style *Shari'a* government in Pakistan. All these happened to Pakistan for pursuing its interest in Afghanistan without considering the consequences.

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