

Scenario 90

PAK - US TENSE RELATIONS AT LAST:

On 13th September 2011, the American Embassy in Kabul and the NATO Offices situated nearby were attacked by Afghani Taliban. The international media started portraying that the Karzai government was, perhaps, losing its control over the capital too.

[US Embassy Kabul's official statement: *The attack, which ended on Wednesday morning, (14th Sep) lasted as a 20-hour gun battle, an insurgent attack in the heart of Kabul and finished after a final volley of helicopter gunfire as Afghan police ferreted out and killed the last few assailants who had taken over a half-built downtown building to fire on the nearby US Embassy and NATO compounds.*

The bold assault that started Tuesday (13th Sep) left seven Afghans dead, including four police officers and three civilians, and raised fresh doubts about the Afghans' ability to secure their nation as US and other foreign troops begin to withdraw. No NATO or US Embassy employees were hurt in the attack.

Two or three of the assailants had held out overnight but were killed in the final morning assault by Afghan forces. In all, six attackers had occupied the unfinished, 11-story high-rise at one of the main traffic circles in the Afghan capital. At least one other police officer was killed in an attack in the west of Kabul as suicide bombers tried to strike in a number of neighbour-hoods.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.]

PAKISTAN BLAMED & THREATENED:

Immediately after, the US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta issued a press statement that the said attack had been launched by 'Haqqani Group' based in Afghanistan but its supplies and logistic support were sent from North Waziristan.

The Chief of the Haqqani Group, Siraj Haqqani, had then negated the US claims by saying that their logistic centre was based in Eastern Afghanistan and not in North Waziristan because they were feeling more secure in Afghanistan than in Pakistani area. Siraj Haqqani had also informed the concerned that this attack was not done or aided by Haqqani Group.

Anita Joshua had mentioned in '**The Hindu**' dated **18.9.2011** that:

'.....The group's leader Sirajuddin Haqqani on Saturday told Reuters that it no longer had sanctuaries in Pakistan and had moved back to Afghanistan where it felt secure.'

In the blunt remarks by a US official since Pakistan joined the US-led war on militancy in 2001, the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, on 22nd September testified before the US Senate that '*the Haqqani militant network is a 'veritable arm' of the ISI*'. US officials alleged there was intelligence, including intercepted phone calls, suggesting those attackers were in communication with people connected to Pakistan's ISI.

Mike Mullen held Islamabad responsible for the Kabul attack, saying Pakistan provided support for that assault. The Pakistan government as well as its army rejected the allegations. John B of the White House, while delivering speech at Harvard Law School, released a statement that:

'Pakistan should attack on Haqqani Group hideouts in North Waziristan otherwise the US would use its last option'.

Admiral Mike Mullen picked up those words and conveyed a direct threat of launching an armed attack on Pakistan. The Pakistan's civil and military leadership felt the pinch and immediately retaliated by saying big NO to America. They reiterated that Pakistan would not attack its own territory of North Waziristan nor would they allow any power to enter their territorial limits.

Considering the American threat serious, a high level conference of Sunni Ittehad Council held in Lahore immediately after Mike Mullen's threat, in which fifty (50) Sunni leaders and clergymen jointly issued a 'Fatwa' (decree) that **'fighting against Americans in this event is 'Jehad' and it is imperative for every Muslim to take part in this holy war'**. It was in fact a big achievement for the PPP government and the Pakistan Army at this moment of distress and agony.

On political front the PPP government immediately contacted chiefs of all political parties and asked them to attend an All Pakistan Political Parties Conference (APC) at Islamabad **on 30th September 2011**. All the political leaders invariably agreed to assemble in Islamabad so that the Americans should get a message that their threat had been taken seriously by the whole nation pushing behind all political rivalries etc.

Another development had already been seen by the nation **on 25th September 2011** when a corps commander conference was held in emergency on Sunday at GHQ where all the strategic plans were considered to deal with any possible foreign attack with an iron hand. The commanders agreed to resist US demanding Pakistan's Army action in FATA saying that:

*'We have already conveyed to the US that **Pakistan cannot go beyond what it has already done**. Our army is too stretched battling its own Taliban insurgency to go after the network, which has estimated 10,000-15,000 fighters. Our military could suffer heavy casualties if it were to attempt a crackdown on Haqqani group, which has developed extensive alliances with other militant organisations in the region, and has mastered the rugged mountain terrain.'*

The message was clearly read by the whole world especially our neighbouring enemies. Same day the Pakistan's Air Force was made alert and shifting of logistics was accomplished within 24 hours which inculcated more confidence in the people of Pakistan.

On diplomatic front, the American Ambassador was called in the Foreign Office Islamabad almost daily and twice on 27th September to make the US clear about our concerns. The top man of the US Senate James M, who was in Islamabad at some design or by chance, failed to convince Pakistani political leadership about the truth of their threats and at the same time Pakistan's lady Foreign Minister, Hina Rabbani Khar, also conveyed a comprehensive and lucid message to the Americans, while speaking in New York, that:

*'**Pakistan cannot be pressurized by such negative means**. The Haqqani group that the US holds responsible for last week's attack against the American embassy in Kabul was CIA's "blue-eyed boy" for many years.'*

Responding to questions during an interview with Al Jazeera television, she had rejected US accusations against the ISI, saying it had no links to the Haqqani network and that:

'If we talk about links, I am sure the CIA also has intelligence links with many terrorist organisations around the world and this particular network has no connections with ISI; it is unsubstantiated allegation. No evidence has been shared with us. Partners and allies do not talk to each other through public statements. If that was the case then we have the right to make our own decision. I think we must not be tested more than we have the ability to bear.'

Strategically speaking, Pakistan Army had taken a wise stance by refraining themselves from any untoward drag in the quagmire of North Waziristan. Very simple logic that if NATO forces or American soldiers were being attacked in Afghanistan, they could take any measures against

them there in Afghan area. Why to thrust upon Pakistan the defeat, shortcomings and follies of their own forces or the failure of their intelligence.

Pakistan had already suffered a lot at the hands of Taliban and Afghan national forces on the charge of being the American ally; and the suffering continued. By initiating armed action against another group like Haqqanis, it did not want to commit its army at another sector in addition to Swat, South Waziristan and Mohmand Agency. Pakistan had rightly conveyed that after suffering from a loss of \$68 billion in economy and sacrificing their 35000 [till then] lives, the country was not in a position to 'do more' in that direction. In fact it was US turn then.

The past behaviour of the Americans had mostly shown their dubious character in that so called war on terror. 'Attack the Haqqani network' was the new slogan of the US Generals but they were not going to stop here. Their next demands were in the crucible; like that:

- *"Search Mulla Omar in the whole FATA otherwise we'll ruin Pakistan.*
- *Taliban's Shoora is in Quetta; smash them; failing to do so would be dealt with severely.*
- *Aiman uz Zawahri is reportedly hiding near Kahuta, allow us to search him.*
- *Mastermind of Mumbai Attacks is reportedly running a madrassah near Lahore; close it.*
- *Al Qaeda's new den is reportedly working in Karachi; attack them there."*

And many more excuses like that. Americans were after the Pakistani nuclear arsenals nothing else. Rest of all were stories and excuses.

HAQQANI GROUP TARGETED:

The whole scenario needed revisiting at the American end. The security advisors of President Obama might have asked him to adopt this face-saving policy in the back drop of US defeat on Afghan soils. Next elections were ahead, only a year away, and Mr Obama had totally failed to appraise his nation that they had done better after George Bush. ***86 of the Democrats and 56 Republican members were trying on record to bring the White House Admin believe that they were constantly loosing in Afghanistan*** so should quit this war as early as possible; much before 2014.

One was unable to understand that why the NATO and American forces were in Afghanistan then if they had failed to achieve their main objectives. They could not handle the Afghan situation in ten years then how the threats of attacking Pakistan would pacify their defeats. Pakistan is another slippery area; it was not like attacking Iraq or Libya or Cambodia. The situation could bring more humiliation for the Americans because on the first day of their attack on North Waziristan, Pakistan could cut off the NATO supply line and the US or NATO army could not continue fighting beyond a day or two without logistics, they needed.

On the Afghanistan front, the US Command was already facing disgrace and embarrassment due to increasing control of Taliban. The Taliban had proved their armed access up to the American Embassy and the Bagram Airport which was considered the ultimate secure fort of the NATO alliance there. The other indicator was the murder of Burhanuddin Rabbani who was playing a key role in US sponsored negotiations with Afghan Taliban.

(Late) Burhanuddin Rabbani had also paid a diplomatic visit to Iran so that peace talks in South East Asia could be guaranteed but there were other forces in the region which wanted to send back America bleeding and not with victory flags tied on their heads as turbans.

The Americans had also alleged that the murder of Burhanuddin Rabbani was done by the Haqqani Group too whereas the fact remains that the suicidal killer had got the security clearance from the Karzai's top admin incharge who had okayed him to see Mr Rabbani that day.

In fact, the US top brass was pressurising Pakistan to get the Haqqani team join the peace negotiations which their leader Siraj Haqqani had refused many times earlier. Another prevailing

truth was that Haqqani Group wanted to expel America from the Afghan soil with a sense and admission of disgusting defeat and not with emblem of success talks.

In the first week of October 2011, National Security Adviser of the White House, **Thomas E Donilon, had secretly met in UAE with Gen Kayani** to deliver a tough message: 'rein in the Haqqani network'. Obama's top adviser on Pakistan, Douglas E Lute was also accompanying him. American officials made veiled threats of increasing drone strikes by the Central Intelligence Agency or conducting cross-border commando raids into Pakistan if the danger to American forces in Afghanistan was not quelled.

Referring to '**The News' of 7th October 2011**, just a few weeks before, American officials held a secret meeting with leaders of the Haqqani network to explore how the group might join talks to end the war in Afghanistan. The two meetings, held just over a month apart, underscored the Obama administration's complicated and seemingly contradictory policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The US-talks with the Haqqani network brokered by the ISI illustrated America's recognition that military strikes alone would not end the fighting with the Taliban, the Haqqanis and other insurgents in Afghanistan but those preliminary discussions yielded no results. A little earlier, the Americans had blamed Haqqani fighters for a truck bombing at a NATO outpost south of Kabul on 10th September which killed at least five people and wounded 77 coalition soldiers, of course, along with a 20-hour assault on the US Embassy in Kabul; as has been detailed above.

The US was reviewing whether to designate the entire Haqqani network as a foreign terrorist organisation, even as it had already slapped sanctions against seven of its top leaders, including Badruddin Haqqani who was designated as a global terrorist. Those sanctions targeted kingpins of the Haqqani Network, their financiers, leadership, as well as some of its most dangerous operatives. Earlier, the US had marked Siraj Haqqani, Badruddin Haqqani, Sangeen Zadran and on the Treasury side Nasiruddin Haqqani, Khalil Haqqani, Ahmed Jan Zadran as well as Fazl e Rabi during years 2008-11 as cogent threat for American interests.

The US administration was under new pressure to designate the Haqqanis a terrorist organization alongside 49 others, including al-Qaeda, Lebanon's Hezbollah, the Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip. John Walcott and Viola Gienger, **on 28th September 2011**, had placed open their candid opinion on *bloomberg.com* website.

HILLARY CLINTON'S [FRUITLESS] VISIT:

During the third week of October 2011, the US Secretary Hillary Clinton was in Islamabad with a delegation attempting to push Pakistan into action against the Haqqani network. Accompanied by the Director of the CIA, David Petraeus, and the newly appointed military chief, Gen Martin Dempsey, Hillary held long meetings with Gen Kayani, Pakistan's Army Chief, and the political tops on 20th instant.

Hillary talked too much on the issue but Pakistani officials rejected the whole set of criticism, saying '*they have working intelligence links with the Haqqanis, but not operational ones*'. Astonishingly, the White House later rowed back on Mullen's comments; thus the high-level composition of this latest visit seemed designed to place a fresh message of renewed relationship between the two countries. **The Guardian of 20th October 2011** had mentioned the key aims as:

'Clinton said Pakistan had the capacity to encourage, to push, to squeeze Haqqanis into peace talks. That is what we are looking for. The US had also reached out to the Haqqani network to see if it was ready to talk peace. We are now working among us [Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US] to try to put together a process that would sequence us toward an actual negotiation. There are many ways of doing that. I think it's one of the real successes of the relationship.'

One could note that the whole American delegation led by Hillary Clinton seemed apologetic during the meetings with PM Gilani and COAS Gen Kayani. They were expecting that Pakistan would ask them to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries inside Afghanistan.

[During the last six months the US had increased their deployments at Pak-Afghan border on eastern side and many attacks were launched on Pakistani security forces.]

The tone and tenor of the delegation sometimes echoed frustration as they made attempts at asserting themselves on Pak-Afghan leaders; though all tactics failed. The Pakistan leadership rather snubbed the Americans telling them about the APC's resolution and the firm reaction it demanded in the case of Americans continuing with their aggressive designs. This firm resolve of the leadership was not lost on Secretary Clinton who had later remarked certain odd things in panic. However, at the same time Hillary tried to convey that **'failing that, US officials suggest they would escalate military strikes'**.

In fact, Hillary Clinton's visit to Pakistan could not provide her much to smile. First time the Americans had felt that the Pakistan's military command had expressed the same words and tone which they had adopted when Gen Ashfaq Kayani had taken Army Chief's slot in early 2008. That was a hard paragraph from Pakistan's history; though lips were of Gen Musharraf but the pushing force was of Gen Kayani's mind.

In ending 2011; very clear message was given to the Americans that Pakistan's President Mr Zardari, the PM Gilani and the Army Chief Gen Kayani had spoken the same bitter language, expressed the same odd tone and the same firm determination. Reportedly, it was Mr Zardari who, with an opening sentence, had embarrassed Hillary by saying that:

'Why the US is asking us to take action against Haqqanis in Pakistan. Why don't you take action against them in Afghanistan? You do with them in Afghanistan whatever you like. Secondly, the US command is holding talks with Haqqanis in Kabul and you are asking Pakistan to launch attacks on them.'

Hillary Clinton had nothing to say much except that *'attacking Haqqanis by you is not the only option; we want to bring them on table and you help us; you can do it, your ISI would help us'*. This time Pakistan's leadership was united, uni-directional and integrated. The priorities were already worked out by civil and military chiefs so were able to convey the same message to the Americans from three different places; the Presidency, the PM House and the GHQ.

During Hillary's meeting with intelligentsia in Islamabad, a Pakistani woman told her that the US acted like Pakistan's mother-in-law; amid the serious talks there was a laugh. The lady said *'we are trying to please you, and every time you come and visit us you have a new idea and tell us that we are not doing enough and need to work harder.'* Hillary Clinton, whose daughter married a New York investment banker this summer, smiled and replied: *'Now that I am a mother-in-law, I totally understand what you're saying.'*

Hillary and her US officials were demanding that Pakistan either deliver the Haqqani network to peace talks, kill its leaders, or pave the way for the Americans to eliminate them; but the Pakistan's leadership did not agree with any of their suggestions. Contrarily, Hillary Clinton's statement that Black-water was not 'directly' working in Pakistan needed a thorough probe.

A day earlier, while in the Afghan capital Kabul, Hillary had told the media there that *'The Haqqani group is considered the greatest threat to American troops in Afghanistan'*. The daily **'Nation' of 22nd October 2011** had pointed out an interesting fact in this regard that:

'The US has an unfortunate history of having propped up leaders like Bhutto, Sukarno, Ben Bella, Qaddafi, Shah of Iran and later when they refused to toe the American line, they were made horrible examples of.'

As the US is now pressurising Pakistan to take on groups; which were not long ago bred and reared by the Reagan Administration; the same order seems to be in play. Such a double standard in dealing with the world, one rule for yourself and another for everyone

else, is the root cause of mistrust and dislike that the reputation of the world's only Superpower enjoys nowadays.'

In Pakistan, there have been protests in many areas like Multan where a mob burnt an effigy of Hillary Clinton on 20th October when she was holding talks with her Pakistani counterparts in Islamabad. They were demonstrating against the intensified American pressure on them to crack down on militants allegedly destabilising Afghanistan.

Hillary Clinton, while leading an unusually large and powerful US delegation, warned during her four hours of talks with Pakistani officials, that:

'America and Pakistan cannot walk away from their relationship despite frustration on both sides. We are going to stay the course because we both have too much at stake. We cannot walk away.'

'We should be able to agree that for too long extremists have been able to operate here in Pakistan and from Pakistani soil. No one who targets innocent civilians, whether they be Pakistanis, Afghans, Americans or anyone else should be tolerated or protected.'

The US went increasingly impatient with Pakistan's refusal to take military action against Haqqani network but the super power forgot that according to the US media claims, only 2.7 percent of the total fatalities of 9,000 were estimated to be militants lost in drone attacks during this War on Terror. [*Obviously out of this 2.7 percent, the percentage of actual operatives killed could be far less*] A large number of those killed were innocent men, women and children but Hillary or the US delegation had no regard for that civilian loss of life; they even refused to express remorse at the deaths caused by drone attacks.

American officials warned if Pakistan continued to stay aloof; the US would act unilaterally to end the militant threat. Hillary, while talking to the media at Islamabad urged that:

'Pakistan has a critical role to play in supporting Afghan reconciliation and ending the conflict. We look to Pakistan to take strong steps to deny Afghan insurgents safe havens and to encourage the Taliban to enter negotiations in good faith.'

'It's like that old story: you can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them only to bite your neighbours. No policy, that draws distinctions between good terrorists and bad terrorists, can provide long-term security.'

'What is needed now is to try to agree on how to 'operationalise' efforts to end the threat; this process should take place over the next days and weeks, not months and years.'

Pakistani leadership, both civil and military, simply shelved aside the whole set of overt & hidden threats.

PAK – US GULF WIDENED MORE:

Gen Mike Mullen's declaration before US Senate's Armed Services Committee that Haqqani operatives acted as a proxy for Pakistan's ISI further complicated the question of strategic cooperation between the two countries. While adding Haqqani group to the list of terrorist organizations, the US policy makers pointed towards declaring Pakistan as a terror – sponsoring state; Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria were already named.

The above move required halting US aid to Pakistan [though peanuts, and already stood halted] and forced the US to oppose World Bank loans to Pakistan [*the people already wanted so because most of the loans had been pocketed by the ruling elite since decades*]. Pentagon Press Secretary George Little told the media **on 27th September 2011** that:

'The US wants to maintain a relationship with Pakistan that's grounded in common interests, to include going after terrorists that threaten both countries. There are differences

from time to time which have been made public, and we continue to discuss those differences in private. We look forward to working with the Pakistanis to try to resolve them.'

At the same time the Pentagon's summary also kept on record that:

'Pakistani military officials told reporters in Islamabad on 25th September that they had decided not to take action against the Haqqani group because their forces are stretched too thin. If tensions escalated, Pakistan might again, as it did in a previous diplomatic confrontation, cut supply lines to US, NATO and Afghan forces from Karachi. Alternative land or air routes are more costly and difficult.

The Pakistanis also might abandon secret agreements that permit unmanned US drones to collect intelligence and attack targets in designated areas of Pakistan. They also might expel some or all of the classified number of US intelligence officers and special operations forces who are training Pakistani troops and helping target drone attacks since a decade.'

The American think tanks and research organizations like Heritage Foundation also held that:

'The Haqqanis probably would continue to get financial support from their allies in the Persian Gulf region and backing from the Pakistan's ISI and there is no likelihood of any change in their policies this time because they (Gulf countries & Pakistan) had no more faith in America now for their continuous betrayals in the past and more American tilt towards India.'

Interestingly, after hearing Prime Minister Gilani's remarks of 25th September **'that US policy on Afghanistan shows confusion and policy disarray'**, Marvin Weinbaum, a former Afghanistan and Pakistan intelligence analyst at the State Department and Director of the Centre for Pakistan Studies at the Middle East Institute in Washington said that:

'We may just let this ride. We know what direction the US-Pakistan relationship is going, and now we have no idea what the bottom looks like.'

It was, interalia, held by the opinion makers (referring to **'The Hindu' dated 18.9.2011**) that the Pakistani government had successfully rolled the 'do more' phrase back to the US stating that Pakistan had done a lot in the fight against terrorism and now it was time the US should come up for similar sacrifices. Elsewhere in Spain, at the NATO Chiefs of Defence meeting, the Army Chief Gen Kayani underlined Pakistan's sovereign right to formulate policy in accordance with its national interest.

The Haqqani claim of having returned to Afghanistan was in line with the Pakistani establishment's contention that there were terrorist havens west of the Durand Line from where repeated attacks were being launched on its border posts; the latest being of a week ago in Lower Dir. Islamabad, time and again held NATO and Afghanistan responsible for those attacks; stating that negligible security on the Afghan side of the border with Pakistan allowed terrorists to use those areas as safe havens and mount attacks on Pakistani forces and isolated villages along the border.

Commenting on his group if hiding in Pakistan, Sirajuddin Haqqani in his rare interview said:

'Gone are the days when we were hiding in the mountains along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Now we consider ourselves more secure in Afghanistan besides the Afghan people. Senior military and police officials are with us. There are sincere people in the Afghan government who are loyal to the Taliban as they know our goal is the liberation of our homeland from the clutches of the occupying forces.'

The American policy makers were, however, unable to understand the facts narrated by the world media including Indian Press, though the Indian government mostly presented distorted facts. Some opinions were there that the Americans and NATO had comprehended the whole game but, just to cover up their humiliation of visible defeat in Afghanistan, they were looking at Pakistan to come up as an scapegoat.

HAQQANIS – HISTORY STANDS BY THEM:

Institute for the Study of Wars (ISW), a non-partisan & non-profitable public policy research organization based at Washington, traced out the history of Haqqani Group as under:

'The group is still believed to be led by the old (aged 60+) and ailing Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani; a former anti-Soviet Commander. He was based in or around Miran Shah, Pakistan's tribal area, since his exile during Sardar Daud's rule in early 1970s. He was initially a part of Hizb e Islami but when it fractured in the late 1970s, Haqqani followed Yunis Khalis rather than Hekmatyar.

When Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, Haqqani was in Pakistan but, being a field commander in Younus Khalis's Hizb e Islami (HIK), he received significant support from the CIA and ISI to build up a sizable and competent militia force by the mid-1980s.'

That is why the Pakistan never denied its connections with Haqqanis; the same as the CIA held since then. For quite some time the US Ambassador to Afghanistan (1989-1992), Peter Tomsen, used to communicate between the ISI and Haqqanis because all were having common interests.

After the US invasion in October 2001, Haqqani was invited to Islamabad for talks about a post - Taliban government and Gen Musharraf did it on America's stance. **Till May 2008, Haqqanis remained 'a strategic asset' for both America and Pakistan.** One ISI official reportedly used to hold talks with Sirajuddin Haqqani on behalf of the Americans till early March 2009.

[But it is still to be enquired into that whether that ISI official was acting so on behalf of Pakistan Army or used to perform as an under the table paid American Agent.]

It is on record that in a prisoner exchange with Pakistani Taliban led by Baitullah Mehsud, the Pakistani government, once in November 2007, had released three family members of the Haqqani family named Khalil Ahmad (Haqqani's brother), son Dr Fazl – I - Haqqani and brother – in - law Ghazi Khan. If the Pakistan army or ISI had so good relations with Haqqanis then why the three family members of Haqqani remained in Pakistan's custody and had to be released in exchange later.

Maulvi Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin Haqqani run a number of religious schools and due to his father's ill health, Sirajuddin Haqqani run day – to - day operations of the movement as well. The Haqqanis hail from the Zadran tribe, who are mostly, based in Paktia and Khost provinces in the east of Afghanistan but they keep deep relations with their tribesmen in FATA's North Waziristan since the Soviet War.

The Haqqanis and Zadran tribesmen had been fighting with Soviet forces throughout during 1985-87, sometimes gaining control of Khost through the only built in Khost - Gardez road, but sometimes getting defeated. In 1989, when all Soviet forces left Afghanistan, Haqqani consolidated his military position in Greater Paktia and established a Shura (Council) to coordinate military operations. He was able to capture Khost in 1991 from the communist government of Dr Najibullah; becoming the first mujahideen commander to seize and hold a major Afghan city after the Soviet withdrawal. Haqqani got a ministry in the new government of Burhanuddin Rabbani but defected to the Taliban in 1995.

The relationship between Haqqani and the Taliban government was not smooth but Haqqani nevertheless remained loyal to the Taliban government, becoming Minister of Tribal Affairs. In late September 2001, Mullah Omar appointed Haqqani the Chief Commander of the Taliban armed forces.

Haqqani speaks fluent Arabic and one of his two wives is from the UAE which helped him raise a great deal of funds from Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Haqqani established a close relationship with Osama Bin Laden in the 1980s and **'the first camp that Osama created in Afghanistan, Lion's Den and similar infrastructure were built in Haqqani's territory.'**

A US military spokesman in eastern Afghanistan, Major Chris Belcher had accused the Haqqanis of inviting foreign fighters from Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Chechnya, Turkey and Middle Eastern countries into Afghanistan. US Army Lt Col Dave Anders, Director Operations of Combined Joint Task Force-82, once wrote to their seniors that:

'Siraj Haqqani is the one who is responsible for kidnappings, assassinations, beheading women, indiscriminate killings and suicide bombings. Siraj is the one dictating the new parameters of brutality associated with Taliban senior leadership. His tribesmen were behind most of the attacks in eastern Afghanistan in 2008 and he commanded them. Khost, Paktia and Paktika are their traditional bases but their influence also extends to other provinces in the east, such as Ghazni, Logar, Wardak and Kabul.'

In addition, the said American report held that the recent simultaneous attacks on government buildings in Kabul in September 2011; a suicide attack on the Indian Embassy on 7th July 2008; an assassination attempt against President Hamid Karzai in April 2008 and many more were also done by Haqqanis. At the same time the Americans also said that the Haqqanis collaborated with the Mullah Omar - led Taliban forces, but tried to keep their leadership in the east.

But, Pakistan had nothing to do with all such details; why these voices were echoed to them.

Of course, Pakistan could not deny the whole set of allegations from America. **On 13th October 2011**, a Haqqani leader named Janbaz Zadran Jamil was killed in a drone attack in Miran Shah. Referring to the '**Express Tribune**' of **14th October**, Janbaz was a senior Haqqani leader that was 'taken off the battlefield'; had been playing a central role in helping the Haqqani network attack US and coalition targets in Kabul and south - eastern Afghanistan. It no doubt, pointed towards the US claims that militants in Afghanistan had access to the 'Miranshah - based leadership'; but might be the Pakistan Army not knowing.

Moreover, ***need not to tell America that retired and 'off the battlefield' officials are called redundant not the leadership.*** US was clearly told by Pakistan to find out their active leadership in Eastern Afghanistan instead of wasting time & money in North Waziristan.

The net result from the whole scenario described above, was that:

- Pakistan's ISI was in contact with the Haqqani group since mid-1970s and those relations were still in line; it was OK.
- Pakistan Army was not in a position to shun those relations just within moments on America's instructions nor could they launch operational attacks on them.
- Pakistan, being a sovereign state, could not allow any other force; American, Afghani or of NATO, to intrude in its territorial limits to launch attacks on their possible sanctuary.
- If Haqqani group was accused of launching attacks anywhere in Afghanistan, the Afghan government or the American network there should have taken appropriate action against them to root out their sanctuaries in Eastern Afghanistan.
- The Americans or the Afghan government could tell Pakistan pin - pointing particular persons and their exact location through their own intelligence spread over in the whole FATA region; Pakistan might take action as per international norms. [Attacking them indiscriminately could cost Pakistan another killed batch of hundreds innocent women and children.]
- Pakistan could only help the Americans as per prevailing customs amongst sovereign nations nothing extra and nothing less.

It is well understood phrase that '**a terrorist for one country may be a freedom fighter for the other nation**'. Haqqanis were terrorists for Americans but for general Afghani populace, they might be their freedom fighters to liberate Afghanistan from Americans. Taliban are specie of another kind in the same scenario. Pakistan had already suffered a lot on that count but Pakistanis in general kept the opinion that the ISI should not be a party in this game anymore; strictly not from any side.

America's quit from Afghanistan was written on the wall, but they set the schedule till ending 2014. Soon the news popped up that bulk of the US men & material had already left the Afghan soils without announcements, till mid 2013 precisely.

PAKISTAN AMIDST GLOBAL CONSPIRACY:

To understand this phenomenon, one has to travel a little back.

Recalling the renowned speech of Obama delivered at the occasion of Cadet's passing out in New York **on 1st December 2009**, Ibrahim Sajid Malick, US correspondent for Sama'a TV, mentions that:

*'Speaking to a hall full of cadets at the US Military Academy of West Point, President Barack Obama almost seemed like he might be declaring war on Pakistan. Sitting at the back benches of the hall at one point I almost jumped out of my chair when he said: **"the stakes are even higher within a nuclear - armed Pakistan,** because we know that al Qaeda and other extremists seek nuclear weapons, and we have every reason to believe that they would use them." I was shocked because a succession of American officials had recently confirmed that the Pakistani arsenal is secure.'*

The same kind of reason was forwarded by the Americans when they attacked Iraq in 2003 saying that weapons of mass destructions were there. The world knows the tricks the Americans use when they plan to ruin a country. The UN, leave it, it plays the same cards which are handed over to them by the CIA and pentagon. So, President Obama had already started acting his plans of December 2009. Pakistan's dollar thirsty leadership could not follow the words and their body language though the world press including of the US and Western had clearly warned Pakistan on the issue. Pakistan's Interior Minister and financial advisors were already on their pay roll.

In the summer of 2007, Obama, coached by Zbigniew Brzezinski and other controllers, was the originator of the unilateral US policy of using predator drones for assassinations inside Pakistan. This assassination policy was massively escalated along with the troop strength:

"Two weeks ago in Pakistan, Central Intelligence Agency sharpshooters killed eight people suspected of being militants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and wounded two others in a compound that was said to be used for terrorist training.. The White House has authorized an expansion of the CIA's drone program in Pakistan's lawless tribal areas, officials said this week, to parallel the president's decision to send 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan.

American officials are talking with Pakistan about the possibility of striking in Baluchistan for the first time - a controversial move since it is outside the tribal areas - because that is where Afghan Taliban leaders are believed to hide."

To achieve that US goal of blame-game, the CIA, the Pentagon, and their various contractors among the private military firms remained on murder spree across Pakistan; it was widely documented in the media. They attacked peaceful villages, community halls, mosques, *Imam-Bargahs*, shrines, police stations and even private wedding parties. Black-water, later called itself as Xe Services and Total Intelligence Solutions, was heavily involved:

'At a covert forward operating base run by the US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in Karachi, members of an elite division of Black-water were at the centre of a secret program in which they planned targeted assassinations, "snatch and grabs" of high-value targets and other sensitive action inside Pakistan. The Black-water operatives also assisted in gathering intelligence and help direct a secret US military drone bombing campaign that ran parallel to the well-documented CIA predator strikes,'

There were persistent charges that a large part of the deadly bombings in Peshawar and other Pakistani cities were being carried out by Black-water; see **XINHUA's reporting dated 29th October 2010:**

'Chief of Taliban movement in Pakistan Hakimullah Mehsud has blamed the controversial American private firm Black-water for the bomb blast in Peshawar which killed 108 people, local news agency NNI reported Thursday. This was blind terrorism designed for maximum slaughter, especially among women and children.'

Pakistan was deliberately positioned to be the centre of international conspiracy and the enemies in collaboration have been trying to punish it for being the only Muslim nuclear power. The ferocious advisors of Mr Bush had once suggested that:

- Pakistan be declared a failed state and thus should be deprived of their nuclear title and capacity to handle nuclear warheads & equipment.
- The nuclear assets especially the warheads be placed under the custody of a joint task force of US and UK because there was an apprehension that the same could be taken over or approached by the religious extremists sometimes. [*Unfortunately still this presumption prevails*].
- Hilary Clinton had opted to make it her election slogan that she would place Pakistan's nuclear warheads under US control if she would come in power after 2008 US elections.
- The scope of CIA, Pentagon and American intelligence be extended to the tribal areas of Pakistan on the basis of long ago fabricated slogan of 'presence' of Osama [since killed in May 2011], Mulla Omar and Aiman uzZawahri and 'Al-Qaida's training camps' on Pakistani soil etc.

The same dangers were enumerated in Professor **Michel Chossudovsky's paper titled as 'The Destabilization of Pakistan'**. Prof Michel was associated with the 'Global Research' of Canada. In his research paper it was rightly pointed out that the US was pushing Pakistan into accepting the presence of more of its 'special forces' on its soil. The US was expecting this situation because of rising unpopularity of Gen Musharraf in the wake of Ms Benazir's assassination.

To achieve its vicious goal, the American administration wanted to engage a local leader who had a minimal commitment with the Pakistani nation but should be able to further the American objectives, while **'concurrently contributing under the guise of decentralization'** so that an agenda of weakening the Pakistan Federation's structure be effectively implemented. The report further said:

'The political impasse is deliberate. It is part of an evolving US foreign policy agenda, which favours disruption and disarray in the structures of the Pakistani state. Indirect rule of the Pakistani military is to be replaced by the more direct forms of US interference, including an expanded US military presence inside Pakistan, which is also dictated by the Middle East Central Asia geopolitical situation and Washington's ongoing plans to extend the Middle East war to a much broader area.'

In the course of 'War on Terror' the US ultimately resolved to hit his ally Pakistan below the belt by floating a slogan that *'the atomic assets of Pakistan are not safe; there is likelihood that the extremists or Taliban might get hold of their control.'* This voice was being maliciously echoed by various candidates running for American presidency. Obama and Hilary Clinton went out of their shoes to convince their gatherings that in case of their success they would prefer to launch an attack on Pakistan to gain control of atomic weapons.

American stalwarts, at last asked Albaradi, Chairman of International Atomic Energy program, to raise slogans in this respect so that the world opinion would go against Pakistan. The world media was already following footprints of the US. These were all speculations specially coined in peculiar situations as were framed against Iraq before regular army was sent there and formal attacks were launched.

Referring to an essay published at ***Pakspectator.com*** website on ***30th September 2011***; the US and their allies in Afghanistan had successfully transferred their battles across the border into the Pakistani territory. Regular attacks on Pakistan's army contingents, members of Frontier Corp, Frontier Militia, Rangers and Police including one on Ms Benazir Bhutto, sponsored and backed by Pakistan's 'Friends' clearly, loudly and stridently told the world that war was at the doorstep of the country; the danger was not over.