

Scenario 226

ISI – CIA: FRIENDS & FOES [?] AT TIMES

The **Inter-Services Intelligence** [ISI], the prime intelligence agency of Pakistan, was [and still is] accused of being heavily involved in covertly running military intelligence programs in Afghanistan.

For quite a long time, the same ISI has been the most preferred organization for the Americans.

See a historical page from the Jimmy Carter's presidential finding; an interesting description to tell the whole back-ground facts about America's dependence on Pakistan and its ISI those days:

*"In any event, policymakers back in Washington did not believe the Soviets could be defeated militarily by the [Islamist] rebels. **The CIA's mission was spelled out** in an amended **Top Secret presidential finding** signed by President Carter in late December 1979 and reauthorized by President Reagan in 1981.*

*The finding permitted the CIA to ship weapons secretly to the mujahedeen. The CIA's covert action was to raise the cost of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. It might also deter the Soviets from undertaking other Third World invasions. But **this was not a war the CIA expected to win** outright on the battlefield.*

*The finding made clear that **the agency was to work through Pakistan and defer to Pakistani priorities**. The CIA's Afghan program would not be 'unilateral' as the agency called operations it ran in secret on its own. Instead the CIA would emphasize '**liaison with Pakistani intelligence**'. The first guns shipped in were single-shot, bolt-action 303 rifles, British infantry weapon until the 1950s.*

*In the aftermath of [Soviet] invasion, Carter was determined to respond vigorously to what he considered a dangerous provocation. In a televised speech, he announced sanctions on the USSR, promised **renewed aid to Pakistan**, and committed British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher enthusiastically backed Carter's tough stance.*

.....The thrust of US policy for the duration of the war was determined by Carter in early 1980: **Carter initiated a program to arm the mujahedeen through Pakistan's ISI** and secured a pledge from Saudi Arabia to match US funding for this purpose.

US support for the mujahedeen accelerated under Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, at a final cost to US taxpayers of some \$3 billion.....

The Soviets were unable to quell the insurgency and withdrew from Afghanistan in Feb 1989, precipitating the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself. Of the **seven mujahedeen groups** supported by Gen Zia's government, (there were) four espoused Islamic fundamentalist beliefs—and these fundamentalists received most of the funding.

By 1992, the combined US, Saudi, and Chinese aid to the mujahedeen was estimated at \$6–12 billion, whereas Soviet military aid to Afghanistan was valued at \$36–48 billion. The result was a heavily-armed, militarized Afghan society; thus Afghanistan was the world's top destination for personal weapons during the 1980s. Some 1.5 million Afghans died as a result of warfare between 1979 and 1996."

.....[The writer (Mr Coll) also documented that] "OBL informally cooperated with the ISI and with Saudi intelligence during the 1980s and had intimate connections to **CIA-backed mujahedeen commander Jalaluddin Haqqani**; the CIA's Islamabad Station Chief from mid-1986 until mid-1989, took an admiring view of bin Laden at the time."

Steve Coll's book Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden; [2004] p-58 [ISBN 9781594200076] is referred for more details.

ISI IN AFGHANISTAN (1970s):

In 1974, the then Pakistani PM, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, said that:

"Two can play this game. We know where their weak points are just as they know ours. The Non-Pashtuns there hate the Pashtun domination. So we have our ways of persuading Daoud [the then ruler of Afghanistan] not to aggravate our problems."

A leading Afghan Arab, **Abdullah Anas**, in his memoirs said that:

"ISI supported the Tajik insurgents with the blessing of Pakistan's president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who hoped to use this uprising as a means

to pressurise the Afghan government to resolve the border disputes over Balochistan and Pashtunistan”.

Abdullah Anas: *My Life in Jihad - from Algeria to Afghanistan*, [2019] is referred.

The first ISI operation in Afghanistan took place in 1975. It was in ‘retaliation to Republic of Afghanistan’s proxy war and support to the militants against Pakistan’; **Peter Tomsen’s “the Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism”** [2013] is referred.

Before 1975, ISI did not conduct any operation in Afghanistan and it was only after decade of Republic of Afghanistan’s proxy war against Pakistan, support to militants and two armed invasions in *Bajaur* Agency in FATA that Pakistan retaliated. Later on, in 1980s, the ISI in **Operation Cyclone** systematically coordinated the distribution of arms and financial means provided by the US Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] to factions of the Afghan *mujahedeen* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud, later known as the Northern Alliance.

History stands witness as **Hein Kiessling** claimed that, the Soviet backed Republic of Afghanistan support to anti-Pakistani militants had forced the then prime minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Naseerullah Babar, the then Inspector General of the Frontier Corps in NWFP [now Khyber PK], to adopt a more aggressive approach towards Afghanistan.

As a result, the ISI, under the command of Maj Gen Ghulam Jilani Khan set up a 5,000-strong Afghan guerrilla troops, including influential future leaders like *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar* and *Ahmed Shah Masoud*, to target the then sitting Afghan government. The first large operation, in 1975, a sponsored armed rebellion in the *Panjshir* valley was launched in which the mayor ‘of their home city’ was assassinated; **Hein Kiessling’s *Faith, Unity, Discipline: The ISI of Pakistan***, [2016] is referred.

In 1979 the Soviet Union intervened in the Afghan Civil War. ***The ISI and the CIA worked together*** to recruit Muslims throughout the world to take part in *Jihad* against the Soviet forces. However the CIA had little direct contact with the *Mujahedeen* as the ISI was the main contact and handler and they favoured the most radical group, namely the *Hezb e Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The Pakistani backed rebellion, though unsuccessful, had shaken Afghan President Daoud Khan and made him realise the gravity of situation. He started softening his stance against Pakistan and started considering

to improve relations with his neighbouring country. He realized that a **'friendly Pakistan was in his interest'**. He also accepted Shah of Iran's offer to normalize relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In August 1976, Daoud Khan also recognised Durand Line as international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

*[The Afghanistan conflict began in 1978 and had coincided with several notable operations by the American CIA. The first operation, code-named **Operation Cyclone**, began in mid-1979, during the Presidency of Jimmy Carter. It financed and eventually supplied weapons to the anti-communist mujahedeen guerrillas in Afghanistan following a 1978 Marxist coup and throughout the ten-year military occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union.]*

*Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, supported an expansion under the **Reagan Doctrine**, which aided the mujahedeen along with several other anti-Soviet resistance movements around the world.]*

In 1990s, after the Soviet retreat [in 1989], the different *Mujahedeen* factions turned on each other and were unable to come to a power sharing deal which resulted in a civil war. The US, along with the ISI and the Pakistani government of PM Benazir Bhutto became the primary source of support for *Hekmatyar* in his 1992–1994 bombardment campaign against the Islamic State of Afghanistan especially its capital Kabul.

When *Hekmatyar* failed to take over power in Afghanistan, more energetic people from them got separated and made another new group called **the Afghan Taliban**. The ISI and the Pak-military started providing financial, logistical, military and direct combat support to the Taliban which continued till the 9/11 event of 2001. The Western media alleged that the ISI supported the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan after 9/11 but Pakistani officials denied this accusation. Allegations were also raised by the American Lobbies that the ISI provided support and refuge to al-Qaeda, too. Such allegations caught momentum when Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden [OBL] was killed in May 2011 in Abbottabad [Pakistan].

AFTER THE SOVIETS LEFT AFGHANISTAN:

In 1991, after-effects of the Soviets departure from Afghanistan started showing its true colours; it was widespread civil war amongst various Afghan militant groups. The Islamists tried to install a government under

1 *Hekmatyar* with Jalalabad as their provisional capital, but the idea
2 didn't work. The proposed Afghan Interim Government [***allegedly the***
3 ***ISI wanted to install it***] had *Hekmatyar* as Prime Minister and Abdul
4 Rasul Sayyaf as Foreign Minister. Allegedly the scheme was a brain-child
5 of Lt Gen Hamid Gul, the then DG ISI. The Jalalabad operation was
6 seen as a mistake by other *mujahedeen* leaders like Ahmad Shah Masoud;
7 as he was not informed of the plans before-hand, and nor had he
8 participated. Both commanders were planning independently.

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10 After operations by the Masoud's group, the defection of the communist
11 Gen Abdul Rashid Dostum, and the subsequent fall of another
12 communist Najibullah-regime in 1992, the Afghan political parties
13 agreed on a peace and power-sharing agreement, called the **Peshawar**
14 **Accords**. The Accords created the **Islamic State of Afghanistan** and
15 appointed an interim government for a transitional period to be followed
16 by general elections. According to the then media reports:

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18 *"The sovereignty of Afghanistan was vested formally in the Islamic*
19 *State of Afghanistan; after the fall of the Soviet-backed Najibullah*
20 *government.... with the exception of Hekmatyar's **Hezb e Islami**,*
21 *all the parties... were ostensibly unified under this government in*
22 *April 1992....*

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24 *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar received operational, financial and military*
25 *support from Pakistan.....Had it not been for the ISI's logistic support*
26 *and supply of a large number of rockets, Hekmatyar's forces would not*
27 *have been able to target and destroy the Kabul city."*

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29 Till 1994 at least, *Hekmatyar* was unable to conquer any territory from
30 the Islamic State; in this respect he felt bitter disappointment to his
31 patrons. The fighter sub-groups within ***Hekmatyar's Hezb e Islami*** got
32 frustrated and made up their own group called the Taliban – which later
33 held the reigns of Afghanistan during 1996-2001 and later in August
34 2021.

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36 The Western media believed that the Taliban were largely founded by
37 Pakistan's Interior Ministry under Gen Naseerullah Babar and the ISI in
38 1994. William Maley, Professor at the Australian National University
39 and Director of the Asia-Pacific College, writes on the emergence of the
40 Taliban in Afghanistan:

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42 *"In 1994, with the failure of Hekmatyar's attempt to oust the Afghan*
43 *President Rabbani's administration, Pakistan found itself in an awkward*

position. Hekmatyar had proved incapable of seizing and controlling defended territory. In October 1994, Pakistani interior minister Babar took a group of Western ambassadors, including the US Ambassador to Pakistan John C. Monjo to Kandahar, without even bothering to inform the Kabul government or its embassy in Islamabad.”

Once it was also alleged that the ISI had trained 80,000 fighters against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; and until 9/11 of 2001, Pakistan military and ISI officers deployed thousands of regular Pakistani armed forces personnel and had been involved in the fighting in Afghanistan – which was not true. One can see how resourceful the Western Media was while giving so irresponsible statement because in those days, the CIA and the ISI had been performing most military activities and operations jointly.

In 1998, Russia said, Pakistan was responsible for the **‘military expansion of the Taliban in northern Afghanistan’** by sending large numbers of Pakistani troops, including ISI personnel, some of whom had subsequently been taken as prisoners by the anti-Taliban group - Masoud’s Northern Alliance; it was a baseless and concocted story which was published in the ***Express India*** dated 12th August 1998.

Human Rights Watch wrote in its year 2000’s report:

“Of all the foreign powers involved in efforts to sustain and manipulate the ongoing fighting [in Afghanistan], Pakistan is distinguished both by the sweep of its objectives and the scale of its efforts, which include soliciting funding for the Taliban, bankrolling Taliban operations, providing diplomatic support as the Taliban’s virtual emissaries abroad, arranging training for Taliban fighters, recruiting skilled and unskilled manpower to serve in Taliban armies, planning and directing offensives, providing and facilitating shipments of ammunition and fuel, and ... sometimes directly providing combat support.”

In year 2000, the UN Security Council explicitly criticized Pakistan for its military support for the Taliban; the Security Council stated that:

“It was deeply distressed over reports of involvement in the fighting, on the Taliban side, of thousands of non-Afghan nationals.”

Might be the Security Council had made the reference pointing out towards the Saudi and Egyptian warriors generally known as Afghan

Arabs. In July 2001, several countries including the United States, accused Pakistan of being in violation of UN sanctions because of its military aid to the Taliban. Earlier in 1996, after the capture of Kabul by the Taliban, Pakistan gave \$30 million in aid and a further \$10 million for servants' wages.

However, it was astonished that why the US needed to control Pakistan through UN and other allied forums because the Taliban was an offshoot of the same *Mujahedeen* bodies and groups which were nurtured by the two countries jointly through American arsenal and finance.

More explicitly, the fact remained that Pakistan was a poor country and was not in a position to supply finances and ammunition from its own kitty; all the equipment and financial aids were supplied by the US and Pakistan's role was only of a carrier or distributor. The policies of distribution as to whom, which quality and in what quantities were issued by the US admin and the CIA - then why cries. One can simply term it the ***'double face of the American Establishment'***.

Referring to a report published by the British Defence Ministry think tank in ending 2006, titled as ***'The ISI and Terrorism: Behind the Accusations'***, still available at **Cfr.org** which leveled baseless accusations to please its American companions stating:

"Indirectly Pakistan [through the ISI] has been supporting terrorism and extremism--whether in London on 7/7 [the 7th July 2005 attacks on London's transit system killing 52 people], or in Afghanistan, or Iraq."

The US Defence Secretary Robert Gates had added ***'to a certain extent, they play both sides.'***

Since the Afghan Presidential Elections in late 2009 Afghan President Hamid Karzai increasingly become isolated, surrounding himself with members of Hekmatyar's *Hezb e Islami*. The *Associated Press* reported once:

"Several of Karzai's close friends and advisers now speak of a president whose doors have been closed to all but one narrow faction and who refuses to listen to dissenting opinions."

In 2010, a report by the *London School of Economics*, titled as ***'The Discussion Papers'*** - made public on 12th December 2010, said that:

"Pakistan's ISI has an official policy of support for the Taliban. The ISI provides funding and training for the Taliban, and that the agency has representatives on the so-called Quetta Shura, the Taliban's leadership council.

Pakistan appears to be playing a double-game of astonishing magnitude; Asif Ali Zardari, the Pakistani president, met with senior Taliban prisoners in 2010 and promised to release them. Zardari told the detainees they were only arrested because of American pressure."

In 2011, the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen called the *Haqqani* network [the Afghan Taliban's armed element] a **'veritable arm of Pakistan's ISI'** – further that the Extremist organizations serving as proxies of the government of Pakistan were attacking Afghan national troops and civilians as well as US soldiers.

The compiler of the said report, Mr Waldman, had openly warned the US and the UK that:

".....without a change in Pakistan's behaviour it will be difficult if not impossible for international forces and the Afghan government to make progress against insurgency."

Al-Jazeera wrote in early 2012 that:

"Presidential Chief of Staff, Karim Khoram from Hekmatyar's Hezb e Islami, besides controlling the Government Media and Information Centre, enjoys a tight grip over President Karzai. Former co-workers of Khoram have accused him of acting divisive internally and having isolated Hamid Karzai's non-Pashtuns allies.

The damage that Khoram has inflicted on President Karzai's image in one year - his enemies could not have done the same {in full tenure}. Senior non-Hezb e Islami Pashtun officials in the Afghan government have accused Khoram of acting as a spy for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI]".

In March 2012, the Commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Gen John Allen, told the US Senate that there was no change in Pakistan's policy of support for the Taliban and its *Haqqani* network. The General also alleged that Pak-Army through ISI remained constantly involved in recruiting fighters and suicide bombers for the Afghan Taliban among the 1.7 million registered and 1-2 million unregistered *Pashtun* Afghan

refugees living in refugee camps and settlements along the Pak-Afghan border in Pakistan.

However, Gen Allen forgot the fact that most of those *Pashtun* refugees had lived there since the Soviet–Afghan War during 1979-89 – and they were installed, nurtured, fed and equipped by the CIA then.

CIA ACTIVITY IN AFGHANISTAN:

America's **Operation Cyclone** primarily supported militant Islamist grow- ups; and in deference to the priorities of Pakistan's ISI, CIA funding un-evenly benefited Afghan *mujahideen* commanders, most notably *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar* and *Jalaluddin Haqqani*, although the CIA developed a limited unilateral relationship with the Northern Afghan commander Ahmad Shah Masoud [*a favorite figure of British intelligence*] beginning in late 1984.

Operation Cyclone was one of the longest and most expensive CIA operations ever undertaken; costing over \$20–\$30 million per year in 1980, and peaking at \$630 million during the fiscal year ending in October 1987. The program began modestly with provisions of antique British Lee–Enfield rifles but by 1986 included US-origin state of the art weaponry, such as thousands of FIM-92 Stinger missiles.

The CIA's Islamabad Station Chief Milton Bearden, among others, was one of the architects of the ambitious escalation of CIA activities in Afghanistan from 1985 on, as the Reagan administration had rejected compromise with reformist Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in favour of a total *mujahedeen* victory. Funding continued as the *mujahedeen* battled the forces of Najibullah's PDPA during the civil war in Afghanistan [1989–92].

After the February 1989 withdrawal of Soviet troops, the CIA's objective was to topple the Najibullah government, which was formed under Soviet instructions. By 1990, under instructions of the CIA, the ISI and *Hekmatyar* worked to violently eliminate their Afghan rivals, including Ahmad Masoud, anticipating fall of the Afghan capital, Kabul.

*{The historical facts are that amidst those days of Afghan Civil War, **the ISI and CIA jointly formulated** a plan to capture Jalalabad and Kabul during 1989-1990, marking a high point in cooperation between the two spy agencies. As part of the offensive, the CIA paid Masoud to close the Salang Pass, which Masoud failed to do.*

*The Najibullah government finally collapsed in April 1992, several months after the December 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of US aid to the mujahedeen, **leaving Afghanistan a failed state** in the grip of a multifaceted civil war marked by horrific atrocities and the destruction of Kabul in mass-casualty rocket attacks.*

*THAT WAS THE TIME when the US initially welcomed the emergence of **the Taliban militia** as it sought to restore its vision of Islamic order to the Pashtuns heartland of Kandahar and then to the rest of Afghanistan.*

The CIA's Islamabad Station Chief from May 1981 to mid-1984, Howard Hart, had called for a Pakistani bounty on killed or captured Soviet troops. Gust Avrakotos, serving as the head of the CIA's task force on Afghan operations, also praised a Pakistani program that provided incentives to *mujahedeen* commanders. The CIA & ISI jointly organized repeated unsuccessful assassination attempts on Mohammad Najibullah, then in charge of Afghanistan's secret police and later the President of Afghanistan, using CIA funds and CIA-supplied long-range rockets.

As a side note, the *CIA started funding Masoud* in late 1984 *without Pakistani involvement*, but its officers remained prohibited from interacting with him directly. British and French intelligence officers, however, did not operate under those restrictions as their CIA counterparts used to speak with Masoud in person. The British role was resented by the Pakistanis in routine and some CIA officers found the French to be 'grating,' but the CIA came to **rely on MI6** for intelligence regarding Masoud during those years.

[Even much later, in response to the 9/11 attacks, the CIA personnel coordinated closely with Masoud's anti-Taliban Northern Alliance militia during the 2001 US invasion of Afghanistan.]

In March 1985 President Reagan signed a draft of a National Security Decision Directive [NSDD], which formalized and provided a legal rationale for the changes that were already taking place with regard to CIA activities in Afghanistan. The resulting **NSDD-166** reportedly included a highly classified supplement signed by NSA Robert McFarlane that detailed expanded forms of US assistance to the *mujahedeen*, such as the provision of satellite intelligence, 'burst communication devices', advanced weapons systems, and additional training to the Afghan rebels through the ISI.

Furthermore, the document allowed the ***CIA to unilaterally support certain Afghan assets without the ISI's participation or knowledge.*** In sum, NSDD-166 defined the Reagan administration's policy as aiding the *mujahedeen* by '*all available means*'. In one [30th April] meeting, Iklé communicated the general thrust of this policy to ISI Director Akhtar Abdur Rahman; Pages-125 - 129 of the above referred book of *Steve Coll* are referred.

As a result, more Americans landed in Pakistan to train ISI handlers on the new weapons systems. In turn, the ISI developed a complex infrastructure to impart training 16,000 to 18,000 Afghan *mujahedeen* annually by early 1986; furthermore 6,000 to 7,000 rebels [*including a number of Arab volunteers*] were additionally trained every year by those *mujahedeen* that were previously trained by the ISI. Despite many congressional concerns and reservations, the ISI remained the main conduit for US support to the *mujahedeen* and the bulk of the Reagan-era aid championed by conservatives went to ***Muslim Brotherhood-inspired commanders*** favoured by the most notably *Gulbuddin Hekmatyar*.

In those days of early 1985, in retaliation for KGB-sponsored bombings that had killed hundreds in Pakistan, the ISI also organized *mujahedeen* teams to carry out violent raids inside Soviet territory, which the CIA had in fact approved. Soon after, a State Department message to Gen Akhtar of ISI was conveyed to the effect that the ISI should not encourage Afghans to cross the Soviet border. [*Previously Casey had approved such acts of sabotage in late 1984 during an ambivalent reception by Gen Akhtar DG ISI, stating that 'You should take the books ... and you can think of sending arms and ammunition if possible'.*]

[For media, the version was different – ***'No one but President Reagan possessed the authority to foment attacks inside the Soviet Union.'***]

In late September 1986, roughly two months after Bearden replaced Piekney as Islamabad Station Chief, the CIA started delivering US-made state of the art FIM-92 Stinger surface-to-air missiles to the *mujahedeen*; the Stingers were to be used to destroy Soviet aircraft from a distance of roughly 12,500 feet, seriously targeting low-flying helicopters by the Soviet Special Forces - the Soviets eventually had to decide that it was no longer safe to use helicopters for attacks and rescue.

In April 1987, three separate teams of Afghan rebels were directed by the ISI to launch coordinated violent raids on multiple targets across the Soviet border and extending to over 10 miles into Soviet territory.

In response, the Soviets issued a thinly-veiled threat to invade Pakistan to stop the cross-border attacks: Casey was forced to resign his DCI post; the cross border fighting was also stopped by the ISI.

Bearden, CIA's Chief in Islamabad Station, endorsed supplying the Stingers as a turning point in the Soviet-Afghan war. In total, the CIA sent nearly 2,300 Stingers to Afghanistan, ***creating a substantial black market for such weapons throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, and even parts of Africa*** that persisted well into the 1990s. Perhaps 100 Stingers were acquired by Iran. The CIA later operated a program to recover the Stingers through cash buy-backs. Despite Masoud's reputation as one of the most effective *mujahedeen* commanders, Pakistan's ISI was instructed to give only 8 Stingers to Commander Masoud—a fraction of 1% of the total supply for *Mujahedeen*.

Mikhail Gorbachev emerged as the reformist leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 and by November 1986 the decision to withdraw Soviet troops had been made; Najibullah was informed of the *fait accompli* in December. Around the same time, the CIA rejected out of hand Soviet entreaties to work together to prevent civil war or the rise of what KGB head Vladimir Kryuchkov had told Gates that there would be a ***'fundamentalist Islamic state'*** in Afghanistan.

The US negotiators initially signaled a willingness to suspend CIA support to the *mujahedeen* in exchange for a Soviet withdrawal, but ***President Reagan personally intervened*** to declare an aid cut-off unacceptable as long as the Soviets assisted Najibullah's regime. Nevertheless, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan began in May 1988 pursuant to the terms of the **Geneva Accords** and was completed in February 1989. These events produced much elevation for Pakistan and its ISI in the US government.

Meanwhile, reports appeared that *Hekmatyar* was planning to install an ***Islamist regime*** in Afghanistan by killing or intimidating his opponents. President Gen Zia left a formidable legacy including a roughly ten-fold increase in the number of madrassas in Pakistan and the transformation of the ISI into a powerful state-within-a-state. Many of these madrassas introduced a new generation of Afghan religious students, or '*taliban*' from Kandahar to a severe, Deobandi-influenced interpretation of Islam that had not previously played a significant role in Afghan history.

Najibullah's government, backed by hundreds of millions in Soviet aid every month, demonstrated more staying power than any CIA analyst

could have anticipated, successfully fending off a disastrous 1989 attempt by the *mujahedeen* to take Jalalabad. Despite such like setbacks, the *mujahedeen* scored a major victory by capturing *Khost* in early 1991. The US felt nothing objectionable in Najibullah participating in Afghan elections as part of a peaceful settlement. Nevertheless, the CIA and the ISI both continued to claim, for years, their historical victory amidst the joyful celebrations for ***Fall of the Berlin Wall*** and the ***end of Cold War***.

AFTER THE COLD WAR ENDING:

Shortly after taking office in 1989, President George W Bush signed a presidential summary renewing the CIA's legal authority to conduct covert operations in Afghanistan; but the country was placed low in priority list. Congress was losing interest in Afghanistan as well, slashing the CIA's Afghan budget to \$280 million for fiscal year 1990 with additional cuts in fiscal 1991 – because of the end of Cold War.

In late 1990, the US suspended most aid to Pakistan – then blaming for the **Pakistan's continued progress in nuclear field**. Finally, President Bush's Secretary of State James Baker reached an agreement with his Soviet counterpart Boris Pankin for both sides to cease sending weapons to either the *mujahedeen* or Najibullah. This agreement came into force on 1st January 1992. The cessation of external assistance was more devastating to Najibullah than to the *mujahedeen*; combined with Najibullah's ally Abdul Rashid Dostum's defection.

Following Dostum's defection, Masoud's militia captured Kabul Airport from the north, while Hekmatyar and other *mujahedeen* commanders advanced closer to Kabul from the south. In a TV speech, Najibullah stated that he planned to resign as part of a peaceful transition organized by the United Nations [UN]. After a tense exchange, *Hekmatyar* rejected Masoud's pleas for compromise and reconciliation. Then forces allied with Masoud entered Kabul, took over the city and an interim government was established with Burhanuddin Rabbani [a religious scholar who had taught both Masoud and Hekmatyar during their times at Kabul University] serving as president while Masoud took reins of the defense ministry.

Despite being offered the role of prime minister which he declined astonishingly, *Hekmatyar* bombarded Kabul with rockets, inflicting mass casualties. The fighting in and around the capital plunged Afghanistan into a multifaceted civil war that continued for several years, with all sides committing substantial atrocities.

Eventually the Taliban, controlled by an obscure, soft-spoken, and 1 insular former participant in Yunus Khalis's *mujahedeen* faction named 2 **Mulla Omar emerged from the Pashtuns heartland of Kandahar**, taking 3 control of all of southern Afghanistan and Herat by September 1995 4 before driving Masoud and the Afghan interim government from Kabul 5 in September 1996. Extensive Pakistani and Saudi support played a key 6 role in these Taliban victories. Masoud retreated to his native Panjshir 7 Valley, forming the United Front [also known as the '**Northern Alliance**'], 8 which was backed by India, Iran, and Russia. 9

The US originally sought to work with the Taliban and its leader Mulla Omar as a legitimate Afghan political faction. Meanwhile, Bin Laden returned to Afghanistan earlier in 1996 after being expelled from Sudan by President Omar al-Bashir under heavy American pressure, initially settling in Jalalabad, which was then controlled by former *mujahideen* whom bin Laden knew from the 1980s—**not by the Taliban**. Jalalabad fell to the Taliban in August that year; soon bin Laden moved to Kandahar, where he was merely '**a guest of the previous regime**'. 10
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Soon, OBL established a close relationship with Mullah Omar, who repeatedly praised bin Laden as a hero of Muslims. The US became increasingly concerned with the relationship between Pakistan and the Taliban. The Taliban pursued their own interests rather than acting as a proxy for external forces. Pakistan's alleged support of the Taliban led to increasing tensions with the US – apparently without any cause. 20
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On 7th August 1998; two massive bomb blasts occurred at the US embassies in two different East African capital cities: Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. These explosions killed 224 people, wounded more than 4,500, and caused a substantial amount of property damage. Twelve Americans were killed in these attacks while vast majority of the casualties were Kenyan civilians. Immediately the blame was placed on a faction of al-Qaeda. Western media went too far rather relatively notorious levels - consequently bin Laden was placed on the Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI]'s **most wanted fugitives list**. 27
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In the aftermath of those bombings, US President Bill Clinton ordered cruise missiles strikes at 'targets in Sudan and Afghanistan affirming they had clear evidence of Bin Laden's activities for the planning and execution ... of the bombings. In addition, seven suspected members of al-Qaeda were arrested. 39
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1 **[On 4th November 1998;** the US moved to '*indict Osama bin Laden*
2 *and al-Qaeda military Chief Muhammad Atef on 224 counts of murder*
3 *for the embassy bombings.]*
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5 In a declassified CIA document, the CIA emphasized that the international
6 community should share this concern about OBL's planning and activity
7 against the humanity especially against Americans; '***US Engagement***
8 ***with the Taliban on Osama Bin Laden***' the CIA document retrieved by
9 the *National Security Archives* on 20th April 2017 is referred.
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11 In February 1999, the Memoranda of Notification was signed by the
12 president that oversaw covert action in Afghanistan, '***authorized the CIA***
13 ***to work with the Afghan Northern Alliance ... against [bin Laden].***' In
14 October 1999, the Taliban proposed solutions including a trial of bin
15 Laden by a panel of Islamic scholars or monitoring of bin Laden by the
16 OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) or the UN. The US however
17 refused to be bound by the panel's decisions.
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19 The CIA started reporting with increasing frequency, like a propaganda
20 campaign, about the danger that bin Laden posed to the United States.
21 A Senior Executive's *Intelligence Brief dated 6th February 2001 stated*
22 *that the **threat of Sunni terrorism was growing.***
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24 Before the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks on twin-towers and the
25 Pentagon HQ, the US intelligence had determined that Afghanistan had
26 been a training ground for bin Laden's terrorist network. These warnings
27 were not enough to stop the attacks from occurring, resulting in the US
28 declaring war on Afghanistan.
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30 In 2001, the CIA's Special Activities Division [SAD] units were the first
31 US forces to enter Afghanistan. Their efforts organized the Afghan
32 Northern Alliance for the subsequent arrival of American forces. ***The***
33 ***plan for the invasion of Afghanistan had been, in fact, developed by the***
34 ***CIA much earlier than E/11 attacks on the Twin Towers.*** SAD, the US
35 Army Special Forces and the Northern Alliance combined to overthrow
36 the Taliban in Afghanistan with minimal loss of US lives. They did this
37 without the need for US military conventional ground forces.
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