

Scenario 61

PAKISTAN: ISI IN POLITICS – I:

ISI SINCE 1948 & AFTER:

[Gen (Rtd) Aslam Beg in his statement made in 1997 before the Supreme Court of Pakistan in Asghar Khan Case deposed that PM Z A Bhutto had dragged the ISI in politics. It is widely perceived that it was Bhutto who had first time assigned political tasks to the ISI in Pakistan. It was not the whole truth; see the following:]

The Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] was founded in 1948 by an Australian-born British army officer, Maj Gen R Cawthorne, then Deputy Chief of Staff in Pakistan Army. Gen Ayub Khan expanded the role of ISI in 1950s, to safeguard Pakistan's interests, monitoring opposition politicians, and sustaining military rule in Pakistan.

Paying a tribute to **Altaf Gauhar's** article titled as '**How Intelligence Agencies Run Our Politics**' available on media record, one can trace out that in Pakistan's early days, despite odds, ISI and the Military Intelligence [MI] confined themselves to the matters of direct military interest and the Intelligence Bureau [IB] concentrated on domestic political activities. This arrangement continued fairly smoothly until the imposition of Martial Law in 1958.

[Details of history about Pakistan's intelligence agencies have already been given in Chapters 14-15 of Volume-I.]

In 1965 the ISI was headed by Brig Riaz, MI was under Brig M Irshad and A B Awan was the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (DIB). A B Awan was made member of Gen Yahya's Committee as the GHQ tried to put all the blame on IB for their incompetence. Gen Yahya wanted the committee to recommend that officers of ISI and the MI should be posted at district level but A B Awan strongly opposed the idea. When the meeting concluded, A B Awan had whispered that '*they are planning to impose another martial law.*'

During Gen Yahya Khan's rule [started in March 1969] the ISI jumped into the Political crisis in East Pakistan un-warranted. A National Security Council was created by Gen Yahya Khan [headed by himself] with Major Gen Ghulam Umar as 2nd in command to control the intelligence operation in both wings of Pakistan to ensure that no political party should get an overall majority in the general elections of 1970.

An amount of Rs:2.9 million was put at the disposal of Gen Umar for the purpose. Before the army action Gen Akbar, then heading the ISI, had tried to infiltrate into the inner circles of the Awami League, but miserably failed. ISI's name was kept away but the operation proved another disaster though the NSC had aimed to get 'desired & suitable results' by distributing colossal amounts of money amongst his favourite parties and persons.

However, the fact remains that in those elections, the IB [then headed by Gen Yahya Khan's brother] was far more active than ISI or Gen Umar's Election Cell or NSC whatsoever it was named. **Dr Safdar Mahmood's 'Pakistan Kyun Toota'** is referred for more details.

Also referring to Lawrence Ziring: ['**The Tragedy of East Pakistan**' **Oxford Press 1997**]

'New efforts at a political solution might have been attempted later, but army intelligence failed time and again to correctly assess the situation, and the demeanour of the Generals was hardly conducive to rational decision-making.'

PM Mr Bhutto can, however, be named for strengthening the ISI's political role in mid 1970s in the backdrop of uprising in Balochistan and North-West Frontier Province [NWFP now Khyber PK]. Thus ISI's political cells were created in these areas in 1975 but it got bad name during general elections of 1977.

PM Bhutto had used both ISI and the IB to 'monitor' the elections though he was in a position to win majority seats in the Parliament. Both the institutions went overactive and intimidated many politicians to get Mr Bhutto, all the four Chief Ministers and key PPP members elected as 'unopposed'. Some Deputy Commissioners had played pivotal role to make the whole election process dubious & doubtful.

Despite the fact that PM Bhutto had patronized ISI above board but the army's loyalty always remained with the GHQ more than the PM House [and it should have been]. As a result during the 5th July 1977 coup, the IB's Chief was arrested whereas the ISI's Chief, Gen Jilani, was first made Secretary Defence and then elevated to the Governor's slot in Punjab. Gen Ziaul Haq used the ISI giving those full perks and privileges as is being seen now; making them the most powerful.

One more reference to the ISI is available in ***Stanley Wolpert's book 'Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times'***. The author states how the ISI and the IB cooperated with each other to interfere in domestic politics during the late Prime Minister Z A Bhutto's regime.

According to the book, the Director of the IB, M Akram Sheikh and the Joint Director (IB) Muhammad Isa were busy with the compilation of dossiers, analyses and detailed reports on National Assembly candidates and their respective election prospects. It is mentioned therein that on 9th February 1977 the ISI headed by its DG Gen Jilani Khan along with the IB jointly compiled an assessment of the PPP's election prospects. Brig (retd) Syed Tirmazi, a former ISI officer states:

"It may be noteworthy that we hardly carried out any surveillance of politicians. The activities of some were, however, kept under discreet, decent, unobtrusive, and invisible 'watch'. At times, we were also ordered to bug the telephones of some individuals.

Such orders came in writing from the Prime Minister himself. This authority he had not delegated to anyone else. We compiled the reports and sent it to the PM with appropriate recommendations to continue or discontinue the watch. In most cases it was discontinued".

Academically analysing such historical events, the rationale for the ISI involvement in domestic politics could be attributed to three reasons:

- The need for the military to manipulate politics and indirectly rule the country.
- To marginalise the civilian intelligence agency; this could become powerful with patronage from an elected government.
- The absence of a genuine external threat to national security.

Theoretically the ISI would fall under the category of an independent security agency with the characteristics that its goals are determined by the army bosses and are most likely to differ from that of the political governments.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif used the ISI in another way; to collect evidence of corruption by rival bureaucrats and politicians involved in major contracts with foreign companies [*kickbacks in Agosta Submarine deals and Zardari's Swiss accounts info are referred*].

The intelligence agencies have played a frontline role in the struggle for power between the PPP and the PML(N). So much so, the political leadership in the 1990s has not really used these intelligence agencies for promoting good governance; instead both used them in their

hidden warfare leading to instability and a crisis in Pakistan. The Indian governments of the past always contended that

'The ISI keeps close connections with the Harkat ul Ansar and the Lashkar e Toiba which are extremely active in waging terrorist operations against the Indian state and its people in Jammu and Kashmir for the past decade. This relationship between the ISI and fundamentalists, fostered among other objectives on anti-India interests, clearly characterises a close-minded approach of the ISI to any improvement in relations with India.'

The Pakistan Army always and the political governments in succession vehemently denied the Indian stance terming it as 'poisonous propaganda' in the absence of any cogent proof in that respect. However, the fact remains that Lt Gen Hamid Gul, the former ISI Chief, have openly reiterated in all of his interviews that it was done so for the security of Pakistan and was our priority at times.

Concluding the above debate: for Gen (retd) Aslam Beg to claim on solemn oath before the Supreme Court of Pakistan that the ISI got involved in the internal politics of the country only after a special cell was created by Prime Minister Bhutto in 1975 is a culpable attempt at concealing the truth and distorting the record of the operations of the military intelligence agencies since independence.

Much after, an analysis made by M B Naqvi over 2001's scenario, then published in '**The News International**' said:

'..... so far as Army high command (of Pakistan) is concerned, its pretensions rest on the undeniable fact of 'occupation'. It has been in the business of ruling the country continuously since 1958 except for two breaks: the first from 1972 to 1977 and the second time from 1988 to 1999.

But it has to be recognized by the Generals that it is a wrongful occupation of a house that clearly belongs to the citizens of Pakistan who pay their salaries and perks at great cost to themselves. If they do not vacate and begin obeying laws--made by, or on the authority of, the people -- there might be unacceptable damage to the country through internal convulsions. Simply because of their brute force their right to rule cannot be accepted'.

POLITICIANS SPOILED ISI (?):

The ISI always had the cream of officers amongst the available lot in the Pakistan Army but the political masters always tried to spoil the atmosphere by sending retired or redundant faces like Shamsur Rehman Kallue (in Benazir Bhutto's 1st tenure in 1990s), Javed Nasir (in Nawaz Sharif's 1st tenure in 1990s) and Engr Ziauddin Butt (in Nawaz Sharif's 2nd tenure in 1990s) to manage the ISI. What could they deliver; nothing because all the three were declared PNG by their respective army chiefs making GHQ a 'No Entry' region for them. One episode is here for change of taste.

The International tribunal of Hague had once demanded the custody of Lt Gen (Rtd) Javed Nasir, former ISI Chief, for his alleged support to Muslim fighters of Bosnia against the Serbian army in the 1990s, despite an embargo by the United Nations. Islamabad had refused to send him; officially informing the court that **the former General had 'lost his memory'** following a recent road incident and was, therefore, unable to face any investigation into the matter.

[However, his son Omer Javed had claimed, vide Express Tribune dated 20th September 2011 that his father was not in army service during the Bosnia war in 1993-95.] {Also see pages 430-431 of Vol-II of this book for some more background}

The summons were served on Government of Pakistan when Serbian army officials were put on trial by The Hague Tribunal for War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Bosnia, during which it was revealed that Gen Javed Nasir was actively involved in the war and had supported and provided arms to the Bosnian resistance. The case was built on the 'confessional statement' that the General had made in a petition filed through his legal counsel against an English daily after the newspaper published a report of his alleged involvement in a case of embezzlement.

The Pakistan government had to avoid any untoward situation and save the General also. There was no alternative available except that the army doctors had to send a medical certificate in that respect saying: *'the General was not mentally fit then'* as stated above.

Gen Javed Nasir had himself admitted that over 300 articles were circulated on the internet by the western media containing references against him saying that he was the *'only radical Islamist head of the ISI who was an active member of the Tableeghi Jama'at'*.

The fact remained that in April 1993, the US once finally warned Pakistan in writing to remove Lt Gen Javed Nasir from his post of ISI Chief, after which he was prematurely retired from service by the caretaker government of Mir Balkh Sher Mazari on 13th May 1993.

[The demand for Nasir's custody came when the International Criminal Tribunal put on trial the former Chief of the Yugoslavian Army Gen Momcilo Perisic and his Deputy Gen Ratko Mladic for war crimes and crimes against humanity during the war in Bosnia and Croatia in the 1990s.

Perisic and Ratko had reportedly told the court that the military help to the Bosnian Muslims by Gen Nasir had forced them to retaliate against Bosnian Muslims, who were fighting against the Serb army for their national independence.

More than 100,000 people were butchered in about three years of conflict. The war saw a level of barbarism more marked by mass rape, torture and indiscriminate murder until the Dayton Peace Agreement paved the way for a settlement.]

To be remembered also that whenever the ISI was controlled by a civilian government the MI reoriented itself to political intelligence activity to keep the generals informed about the relevant developments in the country. In the process the IB by design and not by default was always relegated to a 'runners up' or second slot in the intelligence community with the first place reserved for the ISI.

In the past, the MI got itself involved with an internal role, in the name of combating counter-insurgency in Sindh, linking itself in provincial politics; not liked by many even within the army high ups; MI's role in the interior Sindh in Gen Ziaul Haq times of 1983-84, during PM Nawaz Sharif's tenure of 1992 in Karachi against MQM and its killing role during Gen Musharraf's rule in the alleged horrific events of 12th May 2007 and 18th October 2007 are referred by many insiders.

DANIEL PEARL'S KILLING (2002):

On an event of kidnapping and killing of Daniel Pearl of Wall Street Journal [*he was kidnapped in Karachi on 23rd January 2002 in mysterious circumstances*], Dr Imran Farooq of the *Muttehida Qaumi Movement* (MQM) was bold enough to raise his voice high even up to the United Nation forum. Following is the full text of a letter sent to the then Secretary General of the United Nations by him:

26th February 2002

Mr Kofi Annan
Secretary General
The United Nations

U N Plaza, New York 10017
USA

Dear Secretary-General

RE: ISI IS BEHIND THE MURDER OF DANIEL PEARL

I hope that you are in good health and spirit. I know that you are one of the busiest person in the world and, therefore, I will try and keep this letter short, as much as possible which is about the subject mentioned above.

After the horrific terrorist acts against the United States of America on 11th September 2001, the United Nations, United States of America and the entire sovereign nations, peace loving political leaders including Mr Altaf Hussain, Founder and Leader of *Muttahida Quami Movement* (MQM), the third largest political party in Pakistan and the second largest in the province of Sindh, strongly condemned the cowardly acts of terrorism in the United States of America. MQM held the biggest rally on 26th September 2001 in Karachi (port city of Pakistan) to demonstrate its solidarity that it stands shoulder to shoulder with the international community against all sorts of terrorists' acts and terrorism throughout the world. MQM also offered its unconditional support to the international community against all sorts of terrorism.

As you would know that one of the journalists of the Wall Street Journal, Mr Daniel Pearl was kidnapped on 23rd January 2002 in Karachi. The kidnappers put certain demands for the release of Mr Daniel Pearl. The present Military Government of Pakistan and its high officials were assuring the entire world that the Authorities and police will recover Mr Daniel Pearl alive within two or three days but failed.

Pakistan's Interior Minister on Friday predicted a "major breakthrough" and more arrests within 48 hours in the search for Daniel Pearl. The official rejected a claim from Pearl's self-confessed kidnapper that the Wall Street Journal reporter is dead.

(Los Angeles Times, Breakthrough Expected in Kidnap Case, Pakistan Says, February 16, 2002)

No one has explained why Sheikh Omar was held in ISI custody for a week before civilian authorities were informed of his arrest. Two former ISI officers have been questioned about Pearl's murder.

(The Observer, Vicious Web of Intrigue that Trapped Daniel Pearl, February 24, 2002)

Mr Daniel Pearl was decapitated ruthlessly. What plans had been made by the ISI in collusion with Ahmed Omar Sheikh while he was in its custody only God knows! The Interior Minister of Pakistan and even President General Pervez Musharraf were not aware of this plan.

Not only in Pakistan but also throughout the world, the educated and politically aware people know that the ISI is above all the institutions and even above the law in Pakistan. ISI is a State within a State. ISI is not answerable to the Presidents, Prime Ministers or anyone else.

'They are a state within a state... 'The ISI is the only institution powerful enough to dare to disobey the President.'

(The Guardian, Torture, treachery and spies - cover war in Afghanistan, November 4, 2001)

The ISI is responsible for harbouring the terrorists' not only in Pakistan but also throughout the world under the pretext of "Jihad". The ISI is not at all happy with the decisions taken by the present Government for eradicating religious fanatics, as they are its own creation.

The ISI and only the ISI is behind this barbaric killing of Mr Daniel Pearl because the ISI wanted to give the message to the USA that by supporting the present Government the USA will not be able to achieve its goals and the United States of America must deal with the ISI and not with anybody else; and if the United States of America would continue to support the present Government then they have to face and see many more barbaric acts.

From early on in the Pearl investigation, ISI's involvement was evident.
(The Observer, Vicious Web of Intrigue that Trapped Daniel Pearl, February 24, 2002)

Dear Secretary-General,

The ISI has become a monster and until and unless the ISI is disbanded or dismantled, my apprehensions are that the ISI will continue to form, fertilize, harbour, train and provide financial support to create more and more religious fanatical groups like *Jesh-e-Mohammad* and others.

The intelligence agency's past actions indicate that its interests - or, at a minimum, those of former agency officials - have often dovetailed with the interests of Mr. Pearl's kidnappers, as reflected in their original demands. New disclosures of links between Mr. Sheikh and two recently dismissed agency officials only intensify suspicions about its role in this case.

(The New York Times, Death of Reporter Puts Focus on Pakistan's Intelligence Unit, February 25, 2002)

Dear Secretary-General,

I request you to convey my apprehensions to the International Community including the United States of America and its allies and to use your good office to ask the Government of Pakistan to dismantle the ISI. I would also request you that for the dismantling of the ISI, full support and active involvement of the United Nations, USA and the International Community would be required otherwise the present Government or any other Government in Pakistan would not be able to dismantle the ISI.

I also request you that if the United Nations Organizations and international community seriously and sincerely want to see the entire world free from any source of terrorism, they must take serious and practical steps and actions for completely wiping out the ISI otherwise, it would be too late for the world's sorrow and tears. The killings of innocent people would be the fate of the world.

Thank you for giving me your precious time.

Yours truly,

Dr Imran Farooq
Convener

This letter was sent from office of the MQM, by Dr Imran Farooq in his capacity of official spokesman of the aforementioned political party.

Another note from the history: During a formal meeting on '*terrorism in Pakistan*' amongst Republican Senators Don Nickles and Jeff Sessions during the days of Daniel Pearl's killing, it was a major question that: who is responsible? It was then unanimously opined that:

'President Musharraf was quite aware of the people who were involved in the conspiracy and murder of Daniel Pearl; they were members of extremist and terrorist groups which were known to be associated with various covert activities of the ISI.'

But the point to ponder is that who brought Pakistan Army's name and character in question. The researchers trace it back to the Russian's movement in Afghanistan in 1980s, commonly known as '*Afghan jihad*' days when the CIA funded, armed and inspired the ISI to create a band of Afghan mercenaries to counter the Soviet invasion. The ISI not only set up training camps within Pakistan and in areas bordering Afghanistan but also acted as a conduit for arms and dollars flowing from Langley, Virginia, USA. To give this terrorist network a religious acceptance, the ISI called those fighters as '*jihadis*' the religious fighters.

The tragedy remained that since Daniel Pearl's abduction from Karachi on 23rd January 2002, all the concerned officials including the President of Pakistan were asserting that they see no reason to believe that Daniel Pearl was dead. Contrarily, the chief suspect and mastermind, Sheikh Ahmed Saeed Omar, himself had asserted before a court of law that Daniel was shot to death on 31st January 2002 by the abductors because he was trying to run away.

Sheikh Omar was one of the three Indian prisoners who were released to secure the discharge of passengers of the Indian airliner that was hijacked from Kathmandu (Nepal) and taken to Kandhar (Afghanistan) in 1999. He was alleged to be from *Jaish e Muhammad* (JeM) whereas the other two arrested persons in the case were identified as former ISI agents. Thus the footprints of JeM and *Harkatul Jihad e Islami* (HJI) were there to be seen. Gen Musharraf's government was still at an initial stage of dealing with alleged War on Terror spread on various grounds.

During the lengthy spills of interrogations since 5th February, Sheikh Omar was found changing his statements several times. The Karachi police was unable to get the trace to the Daniel Pearl or his abductor supposing he was still alive which was based on one fact that his dead body could not be found till then. Even it could not be ascertained that how Daniel was kidnapped, when, where and by whom; the most vital information the investigating agencies, including the intelligence agencies and the American FBI, needed at first hand.

The immediate funding for the operation was admitted by Sheikh Omar but where he got the money from was the really wanted information. In the meantime India got hold of a person who had funded Sheikh Omar; taken as a tip of an iceberg of a continental conspiracy at least. *'How nice it would be if Indian and Pakistani investigators could consult each other and collaborate directly rather than via Washington,'* the intelligentsia had observed.

Referring to one ***Amir Mir's essay titled 'A scene from wreckage'*** available in SAT Archives, a different scenario comes up. It says:

'Indeed, it was Ejaz Shah [former DIB] who had 'arranged' the surrender of Sheikh Ahmed Omar Saeed, the killer of American journalist Daniel Pearl, on February 5, 2005, in Lahore. Then, Shah was the home secretary of Punjab. Shah knows Omar's family well as both of them belong to 'Nankana Sahib' area of Punjab. The relationship between Shah and Omar was really one of a handler and his agent.'

In an **interview with *Daily Times*, [dated 13th August 2007]**, late Benazir Bhutto had said:

"Brig Shah and the ISI recruited Omar Sheikh, who killed Danny Pearl. So I would feel very uncomfortable to have the Intelligence Bureau, which has more than 100,000 people under it, run by a man who worked so closely with militants and extremists."

American's whole approach had less to do with finding Daniel than getting at the abductors because Gen Musharraf was likely to be on the state visit to Washington soon. One of the reports had suggested that the economic aid package that US President George W Bush had prepared for Pakistan was scaled down largely due to this case. The quantum of financial relief and aid that had been promised was much less than what was originally expected; indeed earlier indicated by the Americans.

Pakistan was a strategic partner; this was said several times during the visit. Putting Daniel Pearl's case in focus, the Americans pushed Islamabad hard to co-operate more closely with American intelligence agencies in pursuing the fleeing Al-Qaeda men and Taliban and their supporters in Pakistan.

M B Naqvi's version in that regard, as appeared in the ***Deccan Herald dated 21st February 2002*** held that:

'.....The Americans then persuasively pointed at ISI for Daniel as they had identified revolutionary and rebel elements of ISI for defiance of the government. This was too simplistic.

The ISI is army's department, run by the military personnel and has been reporting to the government and the army chief. As a government department it is not in a position to directly disobey the government or the President or run a policy of its own.

The fact of the matter is that the Americans have been unable to identify the culprit by name. It is a mind set and not an organised disciplined force. To think that the ISI can plan anything against the wishes of the government is nonsense. The problem is in part ideological, part political and part general decay of state structures that sustain the rule of law.'

However, Pakistan-US relations were not at all hampered or compromised over Daniel Pearl's disappearance barring financial assistance. The relationship remained of much value to the Americans rather went stronger in an arena of cooperation against War on Terror because Gen Musharraf was the most valuable ally for Americans.

ISI ALLEGED BY THE BRITISH (2006):

Going into the recent past of ISI; an article appeared in UK's daily ***the 'Independent'*** dated 28th September 2006 written by James Tapsfield and Tony Jones said that:

'ISI is supporting terrorism by secretly backing the coalition of religious parties in Pakistan known as the MMA. The Army's dual role in combating terrorism and at the same time promoting the MMA, and so indirectly supporting the Taliban through the ISI, is coming under closer and closer international scrutiny.

Indirectly Pakistan, through the ISI, has been supporting terrorism and extremism whether in London on 7/7 or in Afghanistan or Iraq.'

{Independent's reporters and column writers were well learned and knew that MMA (*Mutehida Majlis e Amal*) was a coalition of six authentic politico-religious parties in which *Jamat e Islami* (JI) and *Jamiat Ulema e Islam* (JUI) were also included which, in media at least, had openly and repeatedly denounced their connections with Taliban. The MMA used to condemn the terrorist activities done in the name of Taliban; as much as the general populace in Pakistan.}

That article basically proposed using military links between the British and Pakistan armies at senior level to persuade Gen Musharraf to step down, accept free elections and persuade the army to dismantle the ISI.

Gen Musharraf was in London those days and a meeting between UK's Prime Minister Tony Blair was proposed same evening. The allegations on Pakistan were likely to add extra tension to that meeting between the two giants.

Gen Musharraf reminded the English media that US had threatened to bomb Pakistan ***"Back to the Stone Age"*** if the later did not co-operate against the Taliban in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. He had also criticised British intelligence for delays in informing the Pakistan authorities that two of the bombers who carried out the 7th July attacks in London had visited Pakistan just months earlier. But Gen Musharraf had insisted then that he would not give in to pressure to disband the ISI saying loudly to the world:

'I reject it from anybody - MoD or anyone who tells me to dismantle ISI. ISI is a disciplined force, for 27 years they have been doing what the government has been telling them, they won the Cold War for the world. Breaking the back of al-Qaeda would not have been possible if ISI was not doing an excellent job. UK is also at fault for not doing enough to stop its own home-grown extremists.

There's no doubt that the London (bombers) have some way or other come to Pakistan but let us not absolve the United Kingdom from their responsibilities.

Youngsters who are 25, 30 years old and who happen to come to Pakistan for a month or two months and you put the entire blame on these two months of visit to Pakistan and don't talk about the 27 years or whatever they have been suffering in your country.'

The UK's government and the media had no answer to Gen Musharraf's ending narration and the British government had to announce that:

'Pakistan is a key ally in our efforts to combat international terrorism and her security force has made considerable sacrifices in tackling al-Qaeda and the Taliban. We are working closely with Pakistan to tackle the root causes of terrorism and extremism.'

Next day, the same paper came up with another stance that Gen Musharraf would curb the excesses of the *madrasas* (religious schools) to combat terrorism in an effective way. On a broader level, he would return Pakistan to full democratic rule without delay. The world knew the hidden dangers of supporting local 'strong men' like Gen Ziaul Haq or Gen Musharraf in the Muslim world who lack democratic legitimacy.

Bill Clinton's speech at the Labour Party conference in those days was instructive. The former US president regretted that while he was in office so much aid to Pakistan had been given in the form of military hardware. He should have focused on eradicating school fees in most of the areas of Pakistan. That would have stopped poorer parents sending their children to free religious *madrasahs* (schools) for their education, where they go easily radicalised. President Clinton had rightly argued that:

'It's much cheaper to help the economy in a poor country than to fight a war. The tragedy is that such a subtle approach is apparently anathema to the architects of the present calamitous 'war on terror'.

The British PM Tony Blair, during his tour to Pakistan in ending 2006, had announced an aid of £480 million, in part to help fund the reform of Islamic schools or *madrasahs* in the country. Some of these schools, attended often by the children of poor families, have been blamed for the spread of extremist thinking.

Mr Karzai, at the same moment, did not waste a single moment to blame the ISI and Gen Musharraf, might be to extort more funds from the UK, that Taliban commanders were living on the Pakistani side of the border, and it was their forces that had been harassing the British troops in Helmand province.

The British policy makers were able to grasp that five years after the Taliban were toppled, the infrastructure in many parts of Afghanistan was still in ruins, the opium poppy was back and corruption was endemic.

The distressing truth was that helping Karzai to oust the Taliban amidst putting baseless allegations on the ISI, Britain did precisely what it had promised not to do. The British PM's speeches in the Parliament are referred. ***The British had "walked away" from Afghanistan and chose to fight a war in Iraq in 2003 onwards.***

The situation in the region was much deteriorated than of six years ago for anyone's comfort including UK, the Americans and Pakistan. ISI had little role in it.

Until this truth is acknowledged by the British historians as has been done by the American warriors; and suitable steps are taken in positive direction to indemnify those faults, there is no use of playing blame games in the name of ISI's activism. It stayed there as such; political wing is only one part of the organization.