

# Scenario 224

## US-AFGHAN HISTORY AFTER 9/11

Let us travel to the earlier decades for a while – see an article titled as ***Soviet Union invades Afghanistan*** available at **History.com**; published on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009:

**[On 24<sup>th</sup> December 1E7E; the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, under the pretext of upholding the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978.**

*As midnight approached, the Soviets organized a massive military airlift into Kabul, involving an estimated 280 transport aircraft and three divisions of almost 8,500 men each. Within a few days, the Soviets had secured Kabul, deploying a special assault unit against **Tajberg Palace**. Elements of the Afghan army loyal to Hafizullah Amin put up a fierce, but brief resistance.*

**On 27<sup>th</sup> December 1E7E; Babrak Karmal, exiled leader of the Parcham faction of the Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), was installed as Afghanistan's new head of government, and Soviet ground forces entered Afghanistan from the north.**

*The Soviets, however, were met with fierce resistance when they ventured out of their strongholds into the countryside. Resistance fighters, called mujahedeen, saw the Christian or atheist Soviets controlling Afghanistan as a defilement of Islam as well as of their traditional culture.*

*The mujahedeen employed guerrilla tactics against the Soviets. They would attack or raid quickly, then disappear into the mountains, causing great destruction without pitched battles. The fighters used whatever weapons they could grab from the Soviets or were what were given by the US.*

*The tide of the war turned with the 1986-87 inductions of US shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles. **The Stingers** allowed the mujahedeen to shoot down Soviet planes and helicopters on a regular basis. With*

1        *this weapon, the mujahedeen were able to limit Soviet air capabilities.*

2  
3        *New Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev decided it was time to get*  
4        *out. Demoralized and with no victory in sight, Soviet forces started*  
5        *withdrawing in 1988. The last Soviet soldier crossed back across the*  
6        *border on 15 February 1989.*

7  
8        *It was the first Soviet military expedition beyond the Eastern bloc since*  
9        *World War II and marked the end of a period of improving relations*  
10       *(known as détente) in the Cold War. Subsequently, the SALT II arms*  
11       *treaty was shelved and the US began to re-arm.*

12  
13       **15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed** [in this expedition].

14  
15       *The long-term impact of the invasion and subsequent war was*  
16       *profound. First, the Soviets never recovered from the public relations,*  
17       *[diplomacy] and financial losses, which significantly contributed to the*  
18       ***fall of the Soviet empire in 1EE1.***

19  
20       *Secondly, the war created a breeding ground for terrorism and the*  
21       *rise of Osama bin Laden [and AL-QAEDA]. During 1980s the US*  
22       *passed on millions of dollars and ammunition through Pakistan to*  
23       *Afghanistan's mujahedeen as part of that anti-communist effort.]*

24  
25       **On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1989;** as said in above paragraphs, the Soviets pulled  
26       their last troops out of Afghanistan – however, the US continued to  
27       patronise the Islamist *mujahedeen*.

## 28 29       **US SCHOLARS CONDEMNED 9/11 WAR:**

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31       In 2003, there was a documentary on Western media titled '**TRUTH**  
32       **AND LIES in THE WAR ON TERROR**' which had shaken the whole  
33       world. It was compiled and directed by one John Pilger, an award-  
34       winning journalist who had investigated the discrepancies between  
35       American and British claims for those atrocities they played in  
36       Afghanistan in the name of 'war on terror'. He collected the relevant  
37       facts on the ground as then available in Afghanistan and Washington.

38  
39       Within two years of the *topi-drama* of 9/11 in 2001, the US had its  
40       military bases in 'liberated Afghanistan'. Amongst other warlords there  
41       was one woman named **Condoleezza Rice** in Washington - *in many ways*  
42       *worse than the Taliban*. In Washington, there were leading Administration  
43       officials like Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defence for Policy;

and John Bolton, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security and the other architects of the New American Century, who were dismissed as ‘the crazies’ by the first Bush Administration in the early 90s when they first floated their plans for world domination by the Americans and its close allies.

Now recall the words of a son of the same soil - **Henry Kissinger**:

***“What we in America call terrorists are really groups of people that reject the (new) international system [aka the New World Order]”.***

Most Americans don’t take 9/11 at its face value; they believe that George Bush brought down the towers and killed hundreds of the Americans and used it to start his war to begin the Democrats climb towards world conquest. There could have been a rebellion on the spot but the US citizens were too late to understand the inside political intrigues. See one American’s **[Jeffrey Norris]** feelings available on the world media pages of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016:

*“I was born in 1960. I never thought there would be a day when ‘American’ was a dirty word. It’s here! Washington D.C. is a cesspool of scum - lies, greed and a quest for some imaginary power. I’m sure Prescott Bush is in the bowels of hell waiting on his son and grandson too.”*

And also; most Americans were infuriated that Obama campaigned on **Guantanamo**, and didn’t do bend about it; most felt ashamed to be the Americans – they were being kept in dark.

See an editorial note of the **New York Times** dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001 – the next day of agonizingly and painfully known 9/11 episode – carrying the notion:

*‘.....the events of the previous day are identified as one of those moments in which history splits, and we define the world as “before” and “after”; also termed as ‘The War against America’.*

The said event single-handedly changed the course of international history – a sudden conflict - the so-called **‘Global War on Terror’** – it was said. Then there were 100s of opinions, articles, books and media events followed by up-rise of torturing dens of *Guantánamo*, *Baghram* and *Abu Ghraib* etc. Then the world saw mass slaughtering in Afghanistan & Pakistan, Iraq and Syria – just like an endless horror movie on a universal screen – America’s image was distorted more in fact.

A little later, historians had to extend their list of '**sickening images and narratives**' to the '**horrors**' associated with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS] and the cycle of violence and counter-violence that was set in motion by the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The ensuing humanity crisis continuously expanded its geographical reach, leading to further destruction and deaths across the Middle East and South Asia as well as to continuing terrorist incidents in the West. In the process, the 'War on Terror' gradually superseded the memory of 9/11 as an isolated event, and this was especially taken as true if we abandon George Bush and Obama's misleading narratives for a while.

In the wake of 9/11 War on Terror, **Dr Paul Craig Roberts** [an Assistant Secretary of the US Treasury for Economic Policy and Associate Editor of The Wall Street Journal & a well known columnist for Business Week] had once written in his essay '**Taliban the Wrong Target**' published on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2001 that:

*'The war on terrorism has lost its focus. It has become a military campaign against the Taliban. **The Taliban are not terrorists.** Defeating them will have very little effect on terrorism.'*

***The Taliban are a group of Afghans focused on their own country, NOT on the West. We are [otherwise] Israel's ally and are perceived as the power behind a corrupt Saudi royal family.***

*If the U.S. becomes bogged down in an Afghan civil war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, we will achieve our own demoralization and embolden terrorists unimpaired by our efforts.'*

Dr Paul had further elaborated that by using the authority of Islam to create a national unity in place of tribal consciousness, the Taliban were engaged in what the Council of Foreign Relations, the State Department, and the World Bank called "nation building." **The Taliban did not participate in the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. The anthrax letters were postmarked in the US not in Afghanistan."**

For more details see  
**JUDGES & GENERALS IN PAKISTAN VOL-III**  
by Inam R Sehri [2013]; Scenario 58; pps 755-772,  
GHP Surry [UK]

The re-alignment of geopolitical power relations after the two rogue interventions; the formation of new terrorist networks [like ISIS] and

regional alliances [Iraq / Syria]; the growing number of terrorist incidents 1  
 in the West; the changing discourses on security and technologies of 2 warfare;  
 the leveraging of fundamental constitutional principles; and the 3 ethical  
 anxieties surrounding the lack of accountability for the violence 4 carried out  
 in the name of countering terrorism – became the leading areas 5 of study for  
 future generations of the West. The Western new generations 6 gathered  
 evidences to identify the disgruntled faces of Bush, Tony Blair 7 and Obama  
 as the biggest enemies of humanity and human values. 8

For the future, the political students of the Western hemisphere would 10  
 study the levels of their leaders' intellectual corruption, i.e. from 'Ground 11  
 Zero novels' to 'post-9/11 literature'; they would reach a unanimous 12  
 conclusion that how empty minded their earlier leaders were – and then 13  
 there would be nothing left behind except curses and irritations. 14

History is so cruel, we all know; for many it would be a historical 16  
 rupture - more narrowly be characterised as Ground Zero Fiction. 17

### **BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN DREAM:**

However, the story of two decades' defeat and humiliation starts from 21  
 the **11<sup>th</sup> September 2001** [9/11] attacks on Twin Towers in New York. 22  
 The United States of America [US], supported by its close allies mainly 23  
 the United Kingdom [UK], invaded Afghanistan on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001. 24

Following the 9/11 attacks, allegedly orchestrated by al-Qaeda, the US 26  
 under the Bush administration issued an ultimatum to Afghanistan to 27  
 hand over Osama bin Laden [OBL] with his top companions and shut 28  
 down all al-Qaeda training camps within the country. 29

In an interview with Voice of America, Mulla Omar, the then Taliban 31  
 Chief and ruler of Afghanistan, was asked if he would give up OBL. 32  
 Omar replied: 33

*"No. We cannot do that. If we did, it means we are not Muslims, that 35  
 Islam is finished. If we were afraid of attack, we could have surrendered 36  
 him the last time we were threatened."* 37

Mulla Omar had also explained his position to high-ranking Taliban 39  
 officials: 40

*"Islam says that when a Muslim asks for shelter, give the shelter and 42  
 never hand him over to enemy. And our Afghan tradition says that, 43*

*even if your enemy asks for shelter, forgive him and give him shelter. Osama has helped the jihad in Afghanistan, he was with us in bad days and I am not going to give him to anyone”.*

[Peter Bergen at **CNN** dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015 is referred]

The Taliban's stance had disturbed President Bush, the mighty head of the only superpower on the globe, because the Taliban had consensus to hand him over to a third party for trial. The US had also viewed their mission as *'ending a safe haven for terror,'* so invasion was explicitly planned in that way to start attack with bombing.

Mulla Omar was adamant that bin Laden was innocent of planning the 9/11 attacks despite the accusations directed against him. Despite this, high ranking Taliban officials attempted to persuade Omar and made offers to the US through its contacts with Pakistan. The Taliban ambassador to Pakistan Abdul Salam Zaeef said at a news conference in Islamabad that:

*".....our position in this regard is that if the Americans have evidence, they should produce it. If they could prove their allegations, we are ready for a trial of Osama bin Laden."*

[Ref: *The New York Times* dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 2001;  
**"Without Evidence....."**]

Basically it was a follow-up of the then prevailing Afghan Civil War between the [ruling] Taliban and the Northern Alliance groups; the Alliance was holding about 10% area of Afghanistan then and was long backed by the US & the UK.

No one, even in the US had felt that the said invasion would become the first phase of a '20-year long war in the country'; then it was simply taken as America's WAR ON TERROR [WOT] and most of the world celebrated it.

Referring to ***'The Washington Post-ABC News Poll'*** published in the paper dated 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021; the fact remained that more number of the US citizens held that the events of 9/11 2001 had more negative than positive impact on their country. Ahead of the 20th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, more than 8 in 10 Americans said those events changed their country in a lasting way. Nearly half [46%] said the events of 9/11 changed the country for the worse, while 33% only held the change better for the US.

**The Washington Post's** said polls told about a shift from 10 years ago <sup>1</sup> when Americans were roughly divided on this question, and it marked <sup>2</sup> even larger swing from the first anniversary of the attacks in 2002; when <sup>3</sup> 55% said the country had aspired change for the better.

In this polls conducted during 29<sup>th</sup> August - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 by **The WP's** Director Polling, Mr Scott Clement, wrote:

*"The Americans' perceptions of safety from terrorist attacks are also at low ebb, with 49% saying the country is safer from terrorism today than before 9/11 — one% point from the record low of 48% reached in 2010, and down from 64% percent in September 2011, four months after Osama bin Laden was killed.*

*..... [Interestingly] with 57% of Democrats saying it is [safer today], while 54% of Republicans say it's less safe; independents are closer to Democrats on this question."*

Director Polling also held that the ideological split was reversed in 2021 polls for 9/11 attacks, with nearly 6 in 10 liberals saying the events changed the country for the worse [59%], compared with 44% of moderates and 45% of conservatives.

The said polls also made clear that the citizens were not happy with US military withdrawal from Afghanistan along with the evacuation of more than 120,000 Americans and allies in just over two weeks; although the Afghan war was NOT worth fighting near 54% people. Those who say the war was not worth fighting were those 53% who opined that 9/11 changed the US for the worse. The Post-ABC poll was conducted with a margin of error +/- 3.5%.]

**...but what compelled the US for attacks on Afghanistan in 2001?** The main justification was to go after OBL. When the Taliban collapsed, the ruling US officials pretended saying that the Taliban urged to: *'...stop bombing we'll hand over OBL'* [clearly it was not the whole truth]; immediately President Bush came up with new justification – the US need to nation-build – *'we need to build Afghanistan up'*. Former Defence Secretary Rumsfeld, former Vice President Cheney and former President George W Bush wanted to create a pro-American government as foothold in the region.

*'Building up Afghanistan was an open lie'* by the American leadership then in 2001; see the following words of the US President Biden in 2021.

On 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021; President Joe Biden, in his national address, reiterated the US commitment to fulfilling the Doha Agreement, guaranteeing a complete withdrawal of troops by 31<sup>st</sup> August; announcing further that:

*"We did not go to Afghanistan for nation build. It's the right and the responsibility of Afghan people alone to decide their future and how they want to run their country. It is not inevitable the Taliban would seize control of the government and that he trusts the ability of the Afghan National and Defense Security Forces, who is 'better trained, better equipped and more competent' in terms of conducting war.*

*I will not send another generation of Americans to war in Afghanistan with no reasonable expectation of achieving a different outcome."*

The subsequent events, however, proved that the US aims were not at all to destroy the terror bases in Afghanistan – the whole game was a pre-determined plan to get established bases near Iraq, Libya and Syria etc for attacks thereupon in 2003. It's a separate topic that whether they succeeded in getting this facility ripened or not.

Some historians still hold that the '*Competing motives in the Bush administration – amongst President Bush, Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Secretary of State Colin Powell*' had derailed the US mission in Afghanistan.

*"Technically, the US could have accepted the surrender, accepted Osama bin Laden, and that's it. Justice is served, right? Put Osama bin Laden on trial or execute him or whatever. But going further by invading was an attempt to extend American influence in that region (for future).*

*That's where the United States got involved in ..... but more importantly, it flooded Afghanistan with money that often went into the hands of military contractors and advisers.*

*.....yeah, you develop Kabul with new skyscrapers, and a couple of KFCs there, but the rural parts of Afghanistan remain neglected. And that, in many ways, is the great failure of the United States' invasion."*

[Referring to **Emily Stewart**'s analysis at **www.vox.com** dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021]



## THE REAL WAR AFTER 9/11 ATTACKS:

As said in detail earlier; after 9/11 [2001] attacks on Pentagon and Twin Towers, the American government asked the then ruling Taliban in Afghanistan to hand over Osama Bin Laden [OBL] and his companion militants to Washington but the Taliban flatly refused. Pakistan tried to strike a negotiation deal with Taliban and al Qaeda members to facilitate and return OBL to American authorities.

When negotiations failed, Pakistan allowed American forces to use its military bases for launching attacks on Afghanistan; it was a military ruler's decision, the Pakistani populace didn't approve it. Rather there were public rallies in the whole country against Gen Musharraf's singular decision; world poles told that 84% populace voted against America on Afghan cause.

Gen Musharraf later confessed that the country had no option but to support the US as its Secretary Powel had threatened Pakistan of '**bombing it into stone age**' if it did not join the fight against al Qaeda. Simultaneously in 2001, US officials introduced a bill to lift all the sanctions, previously imposed on Pakistan under ***Pressler and Glenn amendments***.

**On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001;** the US launched its first attack on Afghan soils naming it as **Operation Enduring Freedom** in association with the UK as partner. The two were later joined by other forces, including the Northern Alliance local warriors present there. The Taliban government didn't have any air force to retaliate thus soon got knocked down. The leadership started disappearing one by one and they had no other choice except to take refuge in Pakistani border areas.

In the months that followed, the US & allied forces and their partners in the Northern Alliance, an Afghan faction, chased al Qaeda and upended the Taliban regime. Bin Laden took refuge in Tora Bora Mountains; the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, went to the southern mountains. Taliban commanders and fighters returned to their homes, mostly in Helmand & Kandahar provinces. Skillful diplomatic efforts spearheaded by a US special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, established a process that created a new Afghan government led by the conciliatory Hamid Karzai.

**Hamid Karzai**, later the president of Afghanistan, and his group were then in Quetta, Pakistan, where they began a covert operation against

the Taliban regime in Kabul. Before entering Afghanistan, he warned his fighters:

*"We might be captured the moment we enter Afghanistan and be killed. We have 60% chance of death and 40% chance to survive. Winning was no consideration. We got on two motorbikes - and drove into Afghanistan"; — Hamid Karzai himself told later.*

Karzai gathered several hundred fighters from his tribe, but were attacked by the Taliban. Karzai barely survived, and used his contacts with the CIA to call for an airlift. On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2001, American special operation forces rescued Karzai out of Afghanistan for protection.

**On 13th November 2001;** the Northern Alliance forces launched their attack on the Kabul city, on instructions of the US war planners, they made swift progress against Taliban forces. Till then the Taliban were significantly weakened by American and British air strikes since 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001. The Alliance moved ahead of plans, and the next day the Northern Alliance forces, supported by US Special Forces Unit ODA 595, entered Kabul and met no resistance inside the city. Taliban rulers and men retreated to *Kandahar* in the south.

Coupled with the fall of **Mazar e Sharif** five days earlier, the capture of Kabul was a significant blow to Taliban control in Afghanistan. The other cities quickly fell in the hands of Coalition forces writing a new chapter of history in Afghanistan.

*[Just to remember that Ahmed Shah Masoud, Chief of Northern Alliance and a legendary anti-Taliban guerrilla commander was assassinated in the first week of September 2001, two days before the 9/11 attacks.]*

**On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2001,** Karzai and his group of fighters survived a friendly fire missile attack by US Air Force pilots in southern Afghanistan. The group suffered injuries and was treated in America; Karzai received injuries to his facial nerves.

**On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2001;** the US and its allies officially drove out the Taliban from power and established military bases near major cities across the country; most al-Qaeda and Taliban members escaped. However, few Taliban leaders moved to Tora Bora Mountains; the training base of the Taliban fighters also.

Besides above; some of them escaped into hiding in Pakistan, some of them ended up in *Kandahar*, some of them were picked and sent to the 'safe houses'. But they were no longer a sort of organized and unified group. During that decade the Taliban re-organised themselves. In mid-2010s, they appeared on the horizon once more; appeared to have received more money than they ever had. The US estimated that the ISI of Pakistan might have passed the US Aid to the Taliban with some internal planning – and surely after that the whole political scenario started changing. However, the question remained that if the US had really given 'aid' to Pakistan in those days; President Obama was more near to India then.

**On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2001;** as was decided in the Bonn Conference held in those days, Hamid Karzai took over the Afghan Administration as the 'Interim Authority', which after a 2002 *loya jirga* [Afghan Grand Assembly] in Kabul named as Afghan Transitional Administration.

**[HAMID KARZAI;** is an Afghan politician who served as President of Afghanistan from 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2001 to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Born in *Kandahar*, graduated from Kabul and later received a master's degree from India in the 1980s. He moved to Quetta city of Pakistan, where he was active as a fundraiser for the Afghan rebels during the Soviet-Afghan War [1979–89] and after. He briefly served as Deputy Foreign Minister in the Taliban's 1st stint of the government [1996-2001].

**In October 2001,** with the US invasion of Afghanistan, Karzai led the *Pashtun* tribes in and around Kandahar in an uprising against the Taliban; he became a dominant political figure after the removal of the Taliban regime in late 2001. During the December 2001 International Conference on Afghanistan in Germany, Karzai was selected to serve as Chairman of the Interim Administration.

**In 2002,** he was chosen for a 2-year term as interim president by the *Loya Jirga* [grand assembly] held in Kabul. In the 2004 presidential election, Karzai was declared the President of Afghanistan. He won a second five-year term in the 2009 presidential election which term ended in September 2014.

In later years, his relationship with NATO and the US went increasingly strained, and he was accused of corruption several times. Following the take over by the Taliban on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Mr Karzai along with other former leaders met the Taliban leaders for National

Reconciliation and seeking to form an interim government – but the Taliban flatly refused to accept these oldies.]

During the same month of **December 2001**, the United Nations Security Council established the **International Security Assistance Force [ISAF]** to oversee military operations in Afghanistan including training of the Afghan National Security Forces.

From year 2002 till 2021 there were normal war activities in Afghanistan; sometimes hard days for some groups and some times diplomatic conversations. Going into details of each event may need another voluminous book – so only important events are given below in brief.

**On 17th April 2002:** US President George Bush called for billions of dollars in US aid in the name of reconstruction of Afghanistan. New American ledger was opened then and the rogues and warlords started offering their services to help the American forces to trace out Taliban & Al-Qaeda members and also for ensuring peace in their respective areas.

One USAID official told in private [later on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2015] that:

***“We used the bad guys to get the badder guys. We thought we could circle back and get the bad guys later – [but] we never did.”***

A Tajik militia commander, **Qasim Fahim Khan**, was also among those. As leader of the Northern Alliance, Fahim Khan played a critical role in helping the US topple the Taliban in ending 2001. He served as Afghanistan’s defence minister during 2001-04 and later as the country’s first vice president — despite having a stinking reputation for corruption. Even so, the Bush administration treated Fahim Khan as a VIP and once welcomed him to the Pentagon with unnecessary honour and protocol.

Details of exactly how much money Qasim Fahim and other warlords pocketed from the US remain secret but confidential documents showed the **payouts were discussed at the highest levels of government.**

**In April 2002**, Defence Secretary Rumsfeld ordered two senior officers, in a top-secret memo:

***“.....devise a plan for how we are going to deal with each of these warlords — who is going to get money from whom, on what basis, in exchange for what, what is the quid pro quo, etc - Let’s get on it....”***

A follow-up memo of two months later, from Rumsfeld to Doug Feith, was also available on record asking: *'Is the DoD giving any food, weapons or money to any of the warlords or to Karzai? Is the CIA doing that? Is State doing it? We need to get a sense of that balance.'* The said memo was a part of top-secret record-files called **SNOWFLAKES** that Rumsfeld had dictated about the Afghan war during 2001-05.

President Bush maintained a light US military footprint in Afghanistan [around 8,000 troops in 2002, increasing to about 20,000 by the end of 2005] aimed at completing the defeat of al Qaeda and the Taliban and helping set up a new democracy. The idea was to withdraw eventually, but there was no clear plan for how to make that happen, other than killing or capturing the innocent villagers labeling them as al Qaeda members.

**On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003;** NATO agreed to take command of the INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE [ISAF], which included troops from 42 countries. The decision came at the request of Germany and the Netherlands, the two nations leading ISAF at that time, and all nineteen NATO ambassadors approved it unanimously.

**In June 2003;** the CIA published a report titled, *'11 September: THE PLOT & THE PLOTTERS.'* This document analyzed the 9/11 attack and also included CIA's intelligence notes on al-Qaeda and the attack, including detailed biographical pages on each of the hijackers. As per report, the CIA found that most of the attackers had traveled back and forth to Afghanistan to pledge their loyalty to bin Laden. However, this report was also turned down by the world media because it contained no reference of cogent evidence for involvement of Al-Qaeda like other numerous government sponsored reports.

**On 11<sup>th</sup> August 2003;** NATO formally took over charge of the ISAF operations and became involved as an alliance. Taliban leader Mullah Omar had started reorganizing his group and launched an insurgency against the Hamid Karzai government and ISAF. NATO was initially charged with securing Kabul and surrounding areas from Taliban, al Qaeda and factional warlords, so as to allow for the establishment of the Afghan government.

**On 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003;** Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, drafted a secret memo stating that:

*"I have no visibility into who the bad guys are in Afghanistan or Iraq. I read all the intel from the [intelligence] community and it sounds as*

1           *though we know a great deal but in fact, when you push at it, you find*  
2           *out we haven't got anything ... We are woefully deficient in human*  
3           *intelligence."*  
4

5 Rumsfeld was correct; ever since 9/11, the West's understanding of the  
6 tribal communities and family networks that decide war and peace in  
7 Afghanistan, was shabby, ragged and tattered.  
8

9 On the other side, the Taliban were rebuilding themselves. In early 2003,  
10 Mullah Omar, though still was in hiding, sent a voice recording to his  
11 subordinates calling on them to reorganize the movement and prepare for  
12 a major offensive within a few years. Key Taliban figures founded a  
13 leadership council known as the ***Quetta Shura***, after the Pakistani city  
14 where they assembled clandestinely. Recruitment was allegedly done from  
15 Afghan refugees settled in and around Quetta and after little training at  
16 camping grounds, were sent back into Afghanistan. In Washington,  
17 however, the narrative of success continued to hold sway loudly.  
18

19 **In October 2003**, the UN Security Council authorized the expansion of  
20 the ISAF mission throughout Afghanistan, and ISAF subsequently  
21 expanded its mission over the whole country.  
22

23 **On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2004**; During his visit to Islamabad, Gen Colin Powell,  
24 US Secretary of State, announced the decision of the Bush Administration  
25 to designate Pakistan as a **Major Non-NATO Ally [MNNA]** of America  
26 - granting it the authority to purchase strategic and advanced military  
27 equipments from the US and the West. But immediately after, the US  
28 army launched countless drone strikes in FATA [***Federally Administered***  
29 ***Tribal Areas***] of Pakistan near Pak-Afghan border. The drone strikes  
30 aimed to target supporters of al Qaeda; however, the strikes resulted  
31 in large civilian deaths and caused much opposition from the Pakistani  
32 populace.  
33

### 34 **THE TALIBAN's RESURGENCE:**

35

36 During early months of year 2005, violence started hiking up in the rural  
37 southern Afghanistan as the Taliban reasserted their presence with new  
38 tactics modelled on insurgent activity in Iraq. During the preceding four  
39 years, the Taliban had focused on retaliating the US and NATO forces in  
40 open combat—an approach that largely failed and the group suffered  
41 with significant damage—their suicide bombings and buried bombs,  
42 known as IEDs [*improvised explosive devices*], had caused more losses  
43 to their own warriors at most places.

Between January 2005 and August 2006, Afghanistan endured 64 1 suicide attacks—a tactic that had been virtually unknown in the country’s 2 history before then. 3

The US repeatedly threatened Pakistan to expand its drone strikes 4 beyond Pakistan’s tribal areas and into regions such as Balochistan but 5 certain commanders of the Pak-Army and the general populace strictly 6 warned the US to refrain otherwise the incoming drones would be 7 intercepted and would be shot down on entrance into their territory. *The 8 US thus had to drop this idea despite the fact that political leadership 9 and President Zardari had given them the green signal.* 10

**ON 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2005:** Elected Afghan President Hamid Karzai signed an 11 agreement with President Bush, giving US forces access to Afghan 12 military facilities. For doing so, Karzai charged full price to the White 13 House; he expanded his extortions by looting the American funds 14 through his favourite warlords and some cabinet members. 15

Referring to SIGAR’s one interview dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in which 16 a senior US official said: 17

*“We were giving out contracts to pretty nasty people, empowering people 18 we shouldn’t have empowered, in order to achieve our own goals.” 19*

In fact, the warlords were cruel tyrants whose misrule destroyed the 20 country so how could be they considered helpful for the Americans – 21 they were responsible for creating hatred and distance between Afghan 22 villagers and the US military. Most senior US officials acknowledged in 23 their interviews that the warlords were odious and corrupt. 24

One warlord who was both loved and hated by US officials was **Sher 25 Mohammad Akhundzada** [a.k.a SMA], the Governor of Helmand 26 during 2001-05. In 2005, the US and Afghan Narcotics raided 27 Akhundzada’s offices and found an enormous stash — nine tons — of 28 opium. He denied wrongdoing - but under international pressure, he was 29 removed from governorship after a short while. 30

With the absence of Akhundzada’s iron hand, the province quickly 31 became a magnet for insurgents, and its drug-trafficking problem 32 exploded. Some US officials regretted his departure. Gen Dan McNeill 33 later described that: 34

*“Akhundzada was ‘a simple-minded tyrant but effective as governor 35 because he kept other bad guys at bay – Akhundzada’s removal was a 36*

*huge mistake. He was dirty but he kept stability because people were afraid of him. It's not good and I'm not advocating dancing with the devil, but maybe one of his disciples....."*

Akhundzada became a provincial senator later but remained unapologetic about his ruthless tactics. In an interview with UK's daily '**the Telegraph**', [later, in 2009] he said that ***after he was fired as governor, 3,000 of his followers switched sides and joined the Taliban*** because they had lost respect for the government.

**In February 2006;** violence from the Taliban increased on slow pace but then they pounced. Thousands of insurgents overran entire districts and surrounded provincial capitals. The **Quetta Shura** built up as a rival regime to Karzai's national forces. Over the course of the next three years, the Taliban captured most of the country's south and much of its east. The US forces and their NATO allies were sucked into heavy fighting.

**In May 2006;** a US military vehicle crashed and killed several Afghans, an event that sparked violent anti-American riots in Kabul—the worst since the war began. Later that year NATO's ISAF took command of the war across the country; the war in Afghanistan was still being painted in Washington as huge success. For commanders on the ground, however, believed that the Taliban had escalated their campaign and launching more frequent attacks on US forces.

The Taliban then opted to intensify its fund-raising from wealthy individuals and groups in the Persian Gulf. Another source of money was Afghanistan's resurgent opium industry. It was a comeback from 2001's complete ban. Western-backed campaigns to eliminate poppy cultivation or to encourage farmers to grow other crops had little discernible impact; Afghanistan soon became the supplier of over 90% percent of the world's opium – of course, for survival of the general population in villages.

**On 31 July 2006;** the ISAF additionally took over military operations in the south of Afghanistan from a US-led anti-terrorism coalition. Later France allowed a squadron of Mirage 2000 fighter aircrafts to be moved into the area, to *Kandahar*, in order to reinforce the alliance's efforts because fighting in the south was gradually gaining intensity.

**In early 2007,** Mullah Dadullah—one of the Taliban's top military commanders—was killed in fighting with US forces. Earlier, Mullah



Obaidullah Akhund—the Taliban’s number three leader—was also 1 captured in Pakistan but those were the exceptions. Top Taliban or 2 Al-Qaeda leadership remained at large. 3

The US and NATO alleged that many of the Taliban Leaders were taking 4  
refuge in the Pakistani tribal regions at Pak-Afghan border. This 5  
prompted the US to target insurgent leaders with missiles fired from 6  
remotely piloted drones. The CIA program of targeted killings was 7  
publicly denied by US officials but was widely acknowledged in private. 8  
9

**In November 2007;** in an attack, at least 70 people—many of them 10  
children—were killed as a parliamentary delegation visited the northern 11  
town of *Baghlan*. Less than a year later, a bombing at the Indian embassy 12  
in Kabul killed more than 50; the Afghan government accused elements 13  
of Pakistan’s intelligence service [ISI] of complicity in the attack; a charge 14  
Pakistan denied vehemently. 15  
16

The Taliban’s resurgence corresponded with a rise in anti-American and 17  
anti-Western sentiments among Afghans. Those feelings were nurtured 18  
by the sluggish pace of reconstruction, allegations of prisoner abuse at 19  
US detention centres, widespread corruption in the Afghan government, 20  
and civilian casualties caused by US and NATO bombings. 21  
22

**In 2008;** Pakistan’s then ruling [PPP] leadership, especially the President 23  
Zardari in turn denounced the strikes in public but privately approved 24  
the drone-attacks, allegedly after gaining personal favours, but the 25  
American intelligence was totally flopped there; most casualties were of 26  
civilians while no significant leader of the Taliban could be harmed. By 27  
the end of the year, the US troop levels had risen to over 30,000 yet the 28  
overall strategy did not change. Bush remained determined to defeat the 29  
Taliban and Al Qaeda which were not visible in fact. 30  
31