

Syed Umair Jalal \*

Bakhtiar Khan †

Muhammad Usman Ullah‡

## Peeking into Afghan's history: A study from 1988 to 2010

Vol. VI, No. 1 (Winter 2021)

URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021\(VI-1\).17](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021(VI-1).17)

Pages: 179 – 191

p- ISSN: 2521-2982

e- ISSN: 2707-4587

p- ISSN: 2521-2982

DOI: 10.31703/gpr.2021(VI-1).17

### Headings

- [Introduction](#)
- [Objectives of the Research](#)
- [Research Questions](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Significance of the Research](#)
- [The Emergence of the Taliban](#)
- [Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan](#)
- [Catastrophic Event of 9/11](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

### Abstract

The study will elaborate the Afghan historical events that took place right after the Geneva accord of 1988 when USSR forces pullout from the country till 2010. The article will explain the emergence of the Taliban and their establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Moreover, the paper will elaborate on the Taliban's nexus with al-Qaeda and their efforts to settle them in Afghanistan. Furthermore, this particular research tends to analyse the US retaliation and war on terror after the catastrophic event of 9/11. Additionally, the paper will illustrate the launching of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Taliban's bloody resurgence and their belligerence after the said mission. Consequently, the research will examine Obama's administration war strategies and tactics after his presidential victory over John McCain.

**Key Words:** Afghanistan, US, ISAF, Taliban, withdrawal, 9/11, NATO troops

### Introduction

After the withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan in the '90s, peace restored in war-torn Afghanistan for a short span of time. The United States, being the frontline economic and logistic supporter of the Mujahideen, halted their assistance soon after the USSR left the country. That stoppage of funds from the United States ultimately brought the former blood brothers into hardcore foes of each other. A ruthless civil war started in Afghanistan among the various groups of Mujahideens. Different factions of Mujahideen fought to fill the vacuum created after the Soviet drawdown from Afghanistan. The Taliban emerged victorious in the civil war under the undisputed leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar. Soon after taking control of the country,

Mullah Omar declared Afghanistan the Islamic Emirates in September 1996. After the declaration of the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan, the Taliban regime not only provided shelter to al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Ladin but also protected them against external threats. The unprecedented event of 9/11 on American soil utterly changed the whole world scenario. Al-Qaeda accepted responsibility for the attack, which approximately killed three thousand people. The United States administration demanded the Taliban's regime to hand over the attack's mastermind, but they refused. With the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approval, the American troops intervened in Afghanistan to deal with the culprit with an iron fist and dismantle

\* (M.Phil. in Political Science), SST, Government Higher Secondary School, Kati Garhi, Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

Email: [syedumairjalal@gmail.com](mailto:syedumairjalal@gmail.com)

† Assistant Professor. Department of Political Science, University of Buner, Buner, KP, Pakistan.

‡ M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Politics & IR, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

The Taliban regime provided shelter to them. Regarding the American retaliation, a conference was arranged in Bonn, Germany, where the NATO allies of the US agreed to initiate an international security assistance force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Soon after the arrival of the ISAF mission, the US administration toppled the Taliban regime and installed a pro-American government of Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan. After the installation of Karzai's government, the Taliban suffered a lot of hardship and were scattered entirely in the neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan, besides the hilly areas of Afghanistan ([Afridi, Afridi, & Jalal, 2016](#)). They took quite some time to reorganised themselves in 2006 and begun a new wave of assaults on US-led NATO forces. In 2008 Barrack Hussein Obama became the 44<sup>th</sup> US president who altered the war strategy in Afghanistan and sent surge troops to deal with the Taliban more severely.

### Objectives of the Research

- To figure out the emergence of the Taliban.
- To study how the US and NATO allies retaliate after 9/11.
- To know the significant goals of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

### Research Questions

- How the Taliban emerged victorious in the civil war after the Soviet withdrawal?
- What measures the United States took in retaliation for the 9/11 attack?
- How did the Taliban respond in return to the NATO forces intervention in Afghanistan?

### Methodology

The research article aims to discover the answers to the above-given research questions through the qualitative method. Secondary sources will be used in order to find out the possible solution to the questions mentioned above. In this regard, research articles, magazines, reports, books and newspapers will be taken into consideration.

### Significance of the Research

The research will try to fill the lacuna in the existing

literature regarding the aftermath of the USSR withdrawal from Afghanistan. The study will provide maximum understanding to its readers about the advent of the Taliban and how the US forces retaliate after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

### Geneva Accords of 1988 and the Soviet Union Withdrawal

In April 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union's last leader, agreed to a United Nations resolution regarding the pullout of all troops from Afghanistan. The superpowers, the USA and USSR, decided to find out a diplomatic solution to the Afghan conflict ([Katzman & Thomas, 2017](#)). The withdrawal of forces was initiated in 1988 and completed in the very next year, February 1989. The event was followed by the more calamitous one in the shape of the USSR's disintegration because they were not in the position to support other communist regimes worldwide. The US state department issued a document; accordingly, the American government has spent about three billion dollars in economic assistance and covert military support to Mujahedeen against the Soviet Union in the period of their invasion. Americans considered that drawdown as their triumph and emerged as the sole superpower of the world. Consequently, the US reduces its economic aid primarily to support Mujahedeen and secondary for the rebuild of Afghanistan, which ultimately produced a panic situation among Mujahedeen's different factions. Not only had this, but America also closed their embassy in Kabul in 1989 until the fall of the Taliban regime's in 2001. Despite the Soviet forces pulled out in 1989, the then president of Afghanistan, Najibullah, enjoyed the USSR's financial and advisory backing for his communist government. Things went complicated within three years, and it was hard for Najibullah to maintain his government when the USSR stopped their aid in 1992. He publicly announced his resignation and stepped down on the condition that the interim government will soon be formed ([Katzman & Thomas, 2017](#)).

### The Emergence of the Taliban

An Islamic scholar, Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, became president of Afghanistan for a brief period of just two

months in 1992 after Najibullah. He was replaced by a protuberant Tajik leader Burhannudin Rabbani through an agreement among Mujahedeen parties. Under that agreement, it was decided that Rabbani will remain president of the state till 1994. He was joined by Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ahmad Shah Masoud, also known as the Lion of Panjshir. The step down of communist Najibullah badly exposed splits among the Mujahedeen warlords of Afghanistan as Rabbani refused to give up the government in 1994. He stated that the state's authorities and administration would be collapsed because there is no clear successor who will lead the multi-ethnic nation of Afghanistan. Mujahedeen leaders severely criticised Rabbani, including Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Pashtun and leader of his Hizb-e-Islam party.

Rabbani signed a treaty with Gulbuddin Hikmatyar; accordingly, he became the Prime Minister, but their continuous mistrust did not allow both to enjoy their privileges. At that particular point, a power hunger game was started among the seven different Mujahedeen parties, headed by prominent leaders of that time ([Katzman & Thomas, 2017](#)). In 1993-94, Afghan clergymen and their pupils mostly belonged to rural areas formed the Taliban movement. They have radical and revolutionary ideologies and thoughts ([Burke 2012](#)). Taliban is mainly the Pashtun-based Islamic group that governed Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 when the US-led NATO forces invaded Afghanistan accused them of giving protection to al-Qaeda and their supreme leader Osama Bin Laden (OBL). Before the civil war in Afghanistan, the Taliban did not exist – the war that followed Soviet soldiers' withdrawal in 1989 after a decade of occupation. The Soviet pullout left the country divided into socio-economic fragments, 1.5 million dead, millions of people were displaced, and took refuge in Pakistan and Iran, creating a political vacuum ([Tristram, 2018](#)). The Afghan leaders of the Mujahedeen unleashed a civil war to gain power and rule the country on their terms to fill that gap created by the withdrawal of the former superpower. They were joined by those Pashtun tribes who had conflicting and had antagonistic ideas and perceptions regarding America and the West. After four years of conflict (1992-1996) among the

Mujahedeen factions, the motion gained support after the post-Soviet era's relief and gained promising stability and the rule of law. The Taliban arrived in Kandahar under the undisputed leadership of Mullah Muhammad Omar in November 1994 to experience the southern criminal city and occupied the capital city Kabul in September 1996 from President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who belonged to Tajik ethnicity. According to analysts, the Taliban regime made up 90% of the country before the 2001 abolition. Taliban have implemented their version of justice by gaining territorial control across the country. Pashtun's pre-Islamic tribal code inspires their jurisprudence, and the understanding of Sharia colored by a doctrine strongly inspired by Wahhabism practised in Saudi Arabia ([Maizland & Laub, 2020](#)). The Core concern of the Taliban was to disarm the local mob, end the civil war, impose and protect the sacred code of Islamic Sharia, and defend Afghanistan's integrity from outside threats ([Rashid, 2000](#)).

### Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was established in September 1996 after the fall of Kabul by the Taliban. At the peak of the Taliban's rule, they had controlled almost 90% of the country. In comparison, the rest of the 10% was under the command of the Northern Alliance, which has retained widespread international recognition as a prolongation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The areas directly under the Taliban's control were mainly cities, key points, and highways of Afghanistan. The administration of some municipalities, towns and rural regions was under local tribal leaders' dominance. In the initial days, the Taliban faced many complications in transforming their war-waging ideas into state-making, but with the passage of time, they learned how to deal with the local inhabitants ([Burke, 2011](#)). The Taliban has tried to maintain a strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia law in Afghanistan. During the Islamic emirate's five-year history, the Taliban urged residents, especially women, to observe the veil and avoid obscenity. Besides, opponents were punished who opposed the Taliban's ideology of strict Islamic Sharia. Communists were regularly

hanged, and thieves were punished by amputating their feet and hands. At the same time, the Taliban virtually eliminated opium production in 2001. Ministers and parliamentarians were mostly mullahs who have gotten their education from Islamic institutions locally known as Madrasah. A number of these ministers, especially the health minister and the State Bank Governor, were willing to leave their administrative positions to fight, if necessary. At the national level, all senior bureaucrats from various ethnicities, including Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, were substituted by Pashtuns whether they qualified for that post or not. In the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the decision-making process was based on the traditional Pashtun code of conduct known as the Jirga system. Taliban recognised it as the early Islamic model of making decisions. The consensus was made among the members of the shura led by Mullah Omar himself. Later on, when the power grew up, Mullah Omar used to make decisions without the shura's consent and had no objection to it. He visited Kabul, the de jure capital of Afghanistan, twice while in power and remained in Kandahar for years. Mullah Omar made Kandahar the de facto capital of the Islamic Emirate. Instead of elections, the leaders' legitimacy came from an oath of allegiance known as Bayah in Islam. Everything was going well and good according to their plan, but then the catastrophic event of 9/11 happened on the soil of the United States of America. Which ultimately changed the whole scenario of Afghanistan, and international resistance to the regime grew significantly. The United Arab Emirates and Pakistan revoked diplomatic recognition of the Taliban's regime due to international pressure. Islamic Emirate established by the Taliban was overthrown on December 17, 2001, by the Northern Alliance, who received unswerving support from US-led NATO forces.

### **Taliban and al-Qaeda Nexus**

Al Qaeda and Bin Laden were well settled in Sudan at the invitation of the Sudanese politician and Islamic scholar Hassan al-Turabi from 1992 to 1996. That event was followed by a successful coup led by Colonel Omar al-Bashir, who promised the people of Sudan that he would reshape the country's political structure and impose the Islamic

laws in the true form for the betterment of the people ([Hendawi, 2019](#)). During those four years, Bin Laden stabilised the Sudanese economy and its industries by investing heavy money ([Astill, 2001](#)). Bin Laden entrenched so much deeper than he established training camps in Sudan for global jihad. The year 1995 was not convivial for Bin Laden. It was the beginning of the end for al-Qaeda and its leadership in Sudan when an assassination attempt was held on the then president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, when he was on the way from the airport to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. Fortunately, Mubarak survived that attack while two of his police officers have died. Egyptian president flew back to Cairo safe and sound, where he accused al-Qaeda of the attack and blamed the Sudanese government for allowing them to get flourished in their country ([Kasturi, 2019](#)). Global pressure was mounted upon Omar al-Bashir to expelled out Bin Laden from Sudan and destroy his network. In 1996 al-Qaeda had no option but to left Sudan and looked for a new place to organise and unify their affiliates to continue their core aim, global jihad. The same year Taliban took control of Afghanistan, and Osama Bin Laden was warmly greeted. Bin Laden found a welcoming atmosphere and liberty that he had neither in his own country Saudi Arabia nor in Sudan, where he lived before ([Zahid, 2015](#)).

Al Qaeda and Taliban alliances have survived for many years. Both groups remain committed to working together with collaboration for a successful future. The alliance does not mean that they will always be united or accept each other's cause. They were free to track their own goals; even sometimes, they have to ignore one another's ideas for their identifiable commitments. Both al-Qaeda and the Taliban did it in the past as they have diverse strategies, priorities, and commitments to achieve their aims since the beginning of their nexus. The Taliban were still much focused on Afghanistan only and had no intentions of bringing Global Jihad. While on the other hand, al-Qaeda main objective is to triumph over the world with Global Jihad. However, they worked together in Afghanistan and expected future cooperation and consultation in this area. They wanted to expel American troops from Afghanistan and reform the Taliban regime. Besides, they are now facing a new challenge in the shape of

the emerging Islamic State in the region ([Bacon, 2018](#)).

Training camps established by Bin Laden in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan were quite significant for them because these camps provided so many well equipped and trained foot soldiers against the Taliban foes in the hour of need and especially against the Northern Alliances. Bin Laden recruited freedom fighters from all around the globe and provided them to the Taliban cause, particularly in the second attack on Mazar-e-Shariff. Not only armed assessment but in the time of financial crises, Bin Laden supported the Taliban regime, which was quite indeed cherished for them. Another milestone for al-Qaeda was to support the Taliban regime among the Arab sympathiser. That move by al-Qaida strengthen the alliances with the Taliban. Arab supporters began to send millions of dollars to the Taliban regime, weapons and equipment, including some high-quality vehicles as well. Countries from the Middle East sent Zakat money (charity) to Afghanistan to support the Taliban regime only because of Bin Laden's personal contacts. Al Qaeda also partnered with the Taliban on the poppy-growing issue. There is sufficient evidence that both of the groups cooperated in this sphere. Taliban required a good economy to run the government but had no support except for Saudi Arabia and some rich Arab supporters. Likewise, al-Qaeda needed funds to manage its field and recruit young Islamic radicals worldwide to carry out some operations that will reinforce their fundamental purpose. United States counter-narcotics officials confirmed Bin Laden's direct involvement in drug smuggling to strengthen his camps ([Zahid, 2015](#)).

Besides the decent alliance and all those good events shared between Taliban and al-Qaeda, the former costs heavily for minimal benefits from the latter. Taliban have been involved in the alliance with al-Qaeda for over twenty years. This relation contributed to the international isolation of the Taliban during the regime, including a big blow in the shape of Saudi Arabia, one of the three countries that recognised the Taliban government, left the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in the middle of nowhere. They stopped the economic as well as military support of the Taliban. Nonetheless, al-

Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan made some serious concerns for the Taliban administration because of which some close personals of Mullah Omar suggested ousting the group from the state ([Bacon, 2018](#)).

### Catastrophic Event of 9/11

On September 11, 2001, a catastrophic incident happened on US soil, which utterly changed global politics. When nineteen Islamic radicals belonged from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and some other Arab countries of the Middle East, hijacked four passengers' aeroplanes and utilised them like a bomb on different targets in the United States. Amongst those four planes, two airlines targeted the "Twin Towers" of the World Trade Center in New York, which destroyed the entire buildings. The third aeroplane was crashed in the Headquarters of the US Ministry of Defense, the Pentagon, while the last one was on the way to Washington DC but fortunately crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. That incident claimed the lives of 2,973 in total, while round about 6000 were injured. The whole world was shocked because of that disastrous episode ([Bysyuk, 2010](#)). These attackers were sponsored by al-Qaida and their supreme leader, Osama bin Laden who was well settled in Afghanistan, having the full protection of the Taliban regime. They wanted to take revenge on America because of supporting Israel, participating in the Gulf War and constant their military existence in the Middle East. After the deadliest attacks, the Security Council of the United Nations decided to pass the resolutions regarding those deadliest attacks. In those resolutions, the Security Council condemned the horrific terrorist attacks and permitted them to take all required steps to deal with the culprits of the attack with an iron fist. Various states took some essential steps to make antiterrorism legislation and froze some suspected bank accounts of al-Qaeda and its affiliates. In the aftermath of 9/11, tens of thousands of people left Afghanistan of a possible military operation by the United States to destroy al-Qaeda camps and their sleeping cells.

### US retaliation and War on Terror

After the ruinous attack on US soil, leaders of the

world were briefed by their security and secret agencies about the incident and alerted them who were responsible for the attack. The US counter-terrorism coordinator, Richard Clarke, told Condoleezza Rice, who was national security advisor to the Bush administration, that al-Qaeda was behind the assault. Furthermore, Clarke told the advisor, Rice, that the initial reports of the inquiry showed that hijackers were directly in contact with Bin Laden, founder of al-Qaeda. NATO forces immediately summoned an emergency meeting within twenty-four hours. They instantly invoked article five of the treaty, which defines that an attack on the one-member state will be considered an attack on all. Besides, diplomats from different countries stressed the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to instantaneously impose sanctions on those behind the attacks, including governments who provided shelter to these outfits (Burke, 2011). Not only were NATO states furious about the assault, but Russia also showed their concern to deal harshly with those who are responsible for these barbaric attacks. Leaders of Arab countries, mainly Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, and Jordanian King Abdullah, showed their sympathy towards the victims and supported the US retaliation later. Moreover, Clerics and general masses of the Muslim world had a mixed opinion regarding the incident. Among them, some considered Bin Laden as their Global hero who was against the US agenda in the Middle East, while on the contrary, some pitied all of the casualties.

American authorities have demanded to hand over Osama Bin Laden from the Afghan Taliban, who was the mastermind of the attack, along with his senior personals. Additionally, they told the Taliban to destroy their hideout, training camps and sanctuaries, which they built in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. But Taliban ignored and defied the American's claim until they provided the required evidence that Bin Laden and al-Qaeda were involved in the 9/11 attack on US soil. Abdul Salam Zaeef, Afghan ambassador to Pakistan before the US invasion of Afghanistan, appeared before the media and told the US to restrain and investigate before making any decision. Further, Zaeef requested the Organization of Islamic Conference

(OIC) to step forward and look into the matter; if America imposes a war on Afghanistan, then it will be a holy war for all Muslims to participate in it (Spillius, 2001).

After the decline of the Taliban to extradite Osama Bin Laden, the United States retaliated horrendously on October 7, 2001, with all NATO allies taking vengeance on those who died in the assault under a code name of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). US has started a war on terror against militant organisations with the approval of UNGC officially. The core aim of OEF was to topple the Taliban regime and destroyed sanctuaries, sleeping cells and training camps established by al-Qaeda and their affiliates within Afghanistan (Burke, 2011). Successful negotiations were held between the US and Uzbekistan to allow NATO troops to build their bases over there. Moreover, Pakistani dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, agreed on seven fundamental demands from the United States, including full intelligence sharing and halted the nation's support for the Taliban. Pakistan has become the non-NATO ally of the USA in the war on terror. Within three months, NATO forces were able to oust the Taliban from power in December 2001 (McFadden, 2001).

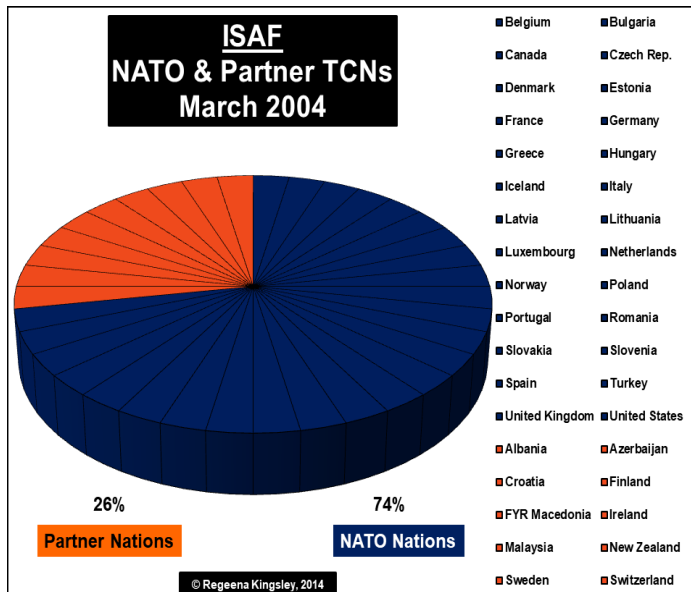
### **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)**

In December 2001, a conference was arranged in the city of Bonn, Germany, in which NATO forces had an agreement with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to initiate an international security assistance mission for Afghanistan. Its fundamental reason for existing was to prepare the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and Afghan Security Institutions (ASI) to face the upcoming challenges inside and outside the country and help the Afghan administration modify their key governmental foundations. Besides these meaningful purposes, ISAF was engaged in a war with the Taliban as well (Barakat & Smith, 2015). ISAF was at first assigned a role of securing Kabul and the encompassing zones from the further threat of Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other dissenting warlords. In October 2003, the United Nations Security Council permitted the expansion of the ISAF throughout Afghanistan and prolonged the mission

to four fundamental phases over the entire nation. From 2006 to 2011, ISAF was progressively engaged with increasingly concentrated operational activities in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

ISAF is composed of military personals mainly from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other NATO states belonging to different countries. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown believed that it was possible that China could send their troops to Afghanistan during US presence in Afghanistan and joined ISAF forces. But China clearly opposed sending troops to Afghanistan (Qayum, Jalal, & Isfaq, 2018). The force of the battle looked by contributing countries changed extraordinarily, with the United States continuing the most losses in general. In mid-2010, there were almost seven hundred army installations within Afghanistan. Out of these installations, four hundred were utilised by American forces alone. ISAF halted operational activities and was disbanded in December 2014, with certain soldiers staying behind assigned them to train the successor to be followed. Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) took over the complete security duty of the country in January 2015 after the ending of both Operation Enduring Freedom and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

mission by American and NATO forces, respectively (Jalali, 2015). The ANDSF confronted an upsurge of guerilla assaults in 2015 and stood its ground to a great extent, but with a higher setback rate (Giustozzi & Ali, 2016). The ANDSF is relied upon to confront proceeded with security dangers and brutality at any pace in the immediate future, while worldwide military and monetary help wane. The ascent of emerging dangers of fierce radicalism in the zone, including from nearby supporters of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), may change Pakistan and Afghanistan's locale into a center for global terrorism. A definitive objective for the ANDSF and America ought to assemble and continue indigenous resistance and security limits to manage existing and rising dangers in the district. This includes creating and keeping up satisfactory powers as well as guaranteeing the ANDSF's money related maintainability, operational effectiveness, and capacity to frustrate versatile foes in basically non-conventional battle. The Afghan National Army (ANA) was poorly exposed in recruiting new soldiers when ISAF concluded its mission in 2014. The Afghan National Army was facing some severe problems regarding Ghost soldiers who were not available and serve but were on the ranking list at that time.



Graph I

## The Combat of Tora Bora and Bin Laden Escape

It was a two-week battle in December 2001, when US - drove alliance assault on the cavern complex of the White Mountains at Tora Bora, Afghanistan. The complex is situated on the eastern fringe of the country near Pakistan's border. It was one of the most significant military assignments of the principal period of the Afghan War (Swift, 2020). American special operational team find out the presence of the foremost person of al-Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, hiding out there (Lowrey, 2009). Choosing Tora Bora was not an incident. Bin Laden picked precisely this location because he knew the place quite well. During Afghan jihad against USSR, Mujahedeen and leaders of al-Qaeda used bulldozers and other heavy machinery to build a smooth way that could easily allow freedom fighters' movement across the mountains. Bin Laden himself spent six months building the road (Bergen, 2009). After chasing Bin Laden, to the cavern complex of Tora Bora which was well-equipped, situated to the southeast of Kabul, the Afghan army participated well in a furious fourteen-day fight in the long stretch of December with the belligerent insurgents of al-Qaeda. In his interview, an American military personal stated that "al-Qaeda insurgents were using insecure radios lines, which gave the US-led NATO forces an edge in tracking their movements". Because of this advantage, NATO troops bombed the complex pinpoint accurately. During the two weeks' battle, one of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives picked up active and functional wireless from an al-Qaeda fighter who was already dead. American got access directly to al-Qaeda's communication channel because of that incident. On that particular radio, NATO forces heard Bin Laden's voice often. The interviewer further illustrated that Bin Laden's men address him with the specific name of "Sheikh" (Lowrey, 2009).

Daisy cutter bomb of the 15,000-pound bomb was dropped on December 9 on the cave complex of Tora Bora. These bombs were used in the Vietnam War; since then, they had not been utilised, and it was believed that the consequences would not be that lethal and disastrous. Later on,

the reports affirmed that the bomb hit with gigantic power. Later on, a caught al-Qaeda warrior disclosed to US investigative specialists that men somewhere down in the cave had been vaporised in what he called "a horrifying blast." On December 11, American troops wanted a ceasefire for the entire night, but United States Central Command (Centcom) refused to back their foot soldiers' demand. They determined to continue the assault. Allied forces were exhausted and reluctantly stayed on the Centcom order. The following day, they find out that hundreds of al-Qaeda warriors escaped from the cave taking advantage of the night, but Ben Laden was still there (Lowrey, 2009). Allied forces had the required aerial support, but the former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, George Tenet, illustrated that airstrikes were not enough to kill or catch the primary suspect.

As a result of this formidable battle, hundreds of al-Qaeda militias were haunted down, including some key figures, while on the contrary allied forces did not face any casualties in the said battle. American forces were searching the cave of Tora Bora and were hoping that someone would find out Osama Bin Laden's dead body, but it did not happen because he was not killed in that noteworthy battle. Later on, American intelligence records and writers and journalists demonstrated that Ben Laden and his bodyguards left the Tora Bora complex on December 16, 2001. With assistance from the local Afghanis who were paid in advance crossed the terrain by walk and on horseback over the mountains into the neighboring countries. An absolute deficiency for the inability to catch Osama lies not in the US exertion but in American strategy and tactics. Nonetheless, Americans knew of Bin Laden's presence in Tora Bora that night. They did not attack the cave, which was accomplished by a ragtag Afghan contingent driven by Haji Zaman, Haji Zahir, and Hazrat Ali. A few pundits will later address why US forces did not play an increasingly self-assured job in the said commitment.

## An Interim Government of Afghanistan

After a week of intense table talks and negotiations in Bonn, Germany, four notably Afghan groups marked a historical settlement in December 2001



to establish a new administration headed by anti-Taliban commanders, particularly the northern alliances. They finished up a memorable understanding planned for reestablishing harmony, stability and peace in Afghanistan (Oliver, 2001). The four factions were mainly composed of the northern alliances, a group representing the banished King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, and two exiled groups of the country. The entirety of the groups arranging Afghanistan's political future looked to accomplish an equal representation of all ethnicities; fundamentally, the Tajik, Pashtun, Hazra, Uzbek and especially women who were rejected from public life under the rule of the Taliban. In the aforementioned negotiations, parties to the agreement presented a list of twenty-nine candidates for its share on the same day to satisfy Western countries' needs and requirements (Weisbrode, 2001). Among that list, Hamid Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, got a paramount position. He was a moderate Muslim whose fighters played a vital role in ousting Taliban hold in Kandahar. After removing the Taliban from power, Karzai was appointed as the head of that interim government, mostly composed of northern alliances (Rising, 2001). The interim government was an utmost necessity because it filled the power vacuum created after overthrowing the Taliban regime. A ray of hope was spread among the deprived people of Afghanistan. They took a sigh of relief, and a triumphant cheer was heard in the streets of Afghanistan as a result of that agreement. Mostapha Zahir, the grandson of Ex-King Zahir Shah, said, "Under the circumstances, it is something honourable, something good. I think the future of Afghanistan looks very bright." Nonetheless, the UN emissary to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, recognised that the interim government would play a significant role in the integration of the country.

### **The Advent of Democracy in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan moved towards prosperity as the Afghan government gained more territorial control and resources from the Taliban's clutches. Afghan National Army (ANA) and the local police were highly trained and grew in number with the help of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The graph of security, health, education, economy,

agriculture, and most notable, democracy was stirring inclined. After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan started its journey towards democracy (Dalton, 2009). Many leaders of the United States claimed that they are struggling for democracy to make the globe safer since World War One. For instance, President Reagan, George W. Bush, Clinton and President Barack Obama also claimed that the promotion of democracy is the keystone of their foreign policy (Bibi, Jameel, & Jalal, 2018). In this regard, President Bush, in May 2005, addressed Hamid Karzai as the very first democratic and constitutionally elected president in Afghanistan's history. The country has been deprived of democracy since the beginning. To support the war on terror, both the United States and Afghanistan worked closely in the wake of bringing a democratic set up to the country. The desirable setup will ultimately prevent the state from breeding further al-Qaeda terrorists and eliminating insurgents from the environment. Through the American people's help, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) worked in several important areas to help reshape and rebuild Afghanistan for its inhabitants. The post-Taliban resurrection of popular government and civil society in Afghanistan went the correct way for its very own kith and kin. The United States has upheld the new majority rule government by enrolling more than 10 million Afghans to decide in favor of the October 2004 elections, supporting domestic election eye-witnesses who observed the presidential decisions across the country and giving established and lawful specialists to work with the councils drafting the constitution and new laws. USAID made an extensively acknowledged national government that can advance national solidarity, diminish the conflict among the people and reduce the role of extremists. The US worked barely with the Government of Afghanistan to build up the nation's first historical multi-party lawmaking body. Moreover, they showed that they support Afghan experts in making an authoritative help structure for the new parliament and setting up a preparation program to support new administrative and council members to play out their undertakings more successfully, bringing about the better conveyance of open administrations.

## Taliban's Bloody Resurgence

Taliban had suffered a lot after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The years that followed proved to be more severe and intense for them as they faced failure in every direction. In July 2006, violence escalated throughout Afghanistan as the Taliban started a new wave of resurgence after reorganising their group and rearranging their training. They have replaced their open combat tactics with new strategies. They strike the American and NATO troops with more severity. The former strategies were not that much influential and failed up to a greater extent. In the latter tactics, the Taliban adopted suicide attacks and buried bombs known as Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) from Iraqi insurgents against Americans and caused unprecedented casualties. Within a period of one year, Afghanistan was hit by sixty-four suicide attacks, a tactic entirely new to Afghans ([Witte, 2016](#)). Initially, IEDs and suicide attacks were not lethal as the casualties were low in the beginning, but after getting proper training, the fatality rate increased. In this regard, seventy-three people were killed, and more than a hundred were injured in one suicide attack in 2007. Increased attacks of IEDs escalated anti-American and Western sentiments in the local mob. People were fed up with the false promises of Americans to reconstruct Afghanistan and the rise of corruption in national government. Likewise, the protest against the West enlarged when a NATO-led airstrike slaughtered dozens of innocent people of Herat province in the district of Shindard. Besides, collateral damage increased up to a greater extent from NATO regarding chasing the Taliban and al-Qaeda's top leadership. Taliban accused NATO forces and American policies that they had failed to protect the people of Afghanistan, which added fuel to the ashes ([Witte, 2016](#)).

With the help of wealthy devotees and supporters Taliban gained much of their force in the fresh wave of attacks against NATO troops. Further, the Taliban got considerable control of their opium cultivation and industries back in 2007, which provided the required wealth to carry out their deadly warfare. The United States and NATO troops encountered significant setbacks after the bloody resurgence of the Taliban. They had failed

in a continuous struggle of capturing notable and prominent leaders of the Taliban with the exception of Mullah Obaidullah Akhund and Mullah Dadullah, who were the Taliban's third in command and top military commander, respectively.

## Obama Surge under his Presidency

In 2008, Barack Hussein Obama beat John McCain in the forty-four presidential election race of the United States of America and became the country's first-ever black president. In the election campaign, he promised the people of America that he would readdress the war efforts in Afghanistan ([Nagourney, 2008](#)). Ahead of thirty-two thousand troops of the United States and thirty thousand NATO, the Obama administration approved to send seventeen thousand surge forces to Afghanistan. A quarter of a year later, President Obama replaced General David McKiernan from the theatre of war with General Stanley McChrystal. The former one was trying to change the American war strategy in Afghanistan, while Obama and his team wanted a radical change. The purpose of bringing General Stanley McChrystal into the theatre of war was to change the strategy of killing a large number of militants to pay more attention to the protection of the general masses from the insurgents. The then-president of the U.S, Obama, also desired that the new General in charge will seek a way to bring a considerable truce between the Taliban and Karzai government leaders.

After assuming charge, General McChrystal concluded that the available troops in Afghanistan were not enough for the strategy which he wanted to execute in the wartorn country. In September 2009, McChrystal alerted Washington DC in a confidential report about his concern that the troops were not enough to carry out the appropriate mission. In that report, McChrystal prophesied the possibility to lose the war within a period of one or less than one year. He demanded from the Pentagon to send surge troops to help him in the said affair. In the last month of the same year, Obama delivered a speech at the US Military Academy at West Point and announced that thirty thousand additional troops would be deployed by the summer of 2010. In the initial phase of 2010, the upsurge has begun, and the Taliban was

smashed ferociously by NATO forces Marja, southern of Helmand province. American marines accomplished victory relatively quicker than it was thought. Obama visited for the first time Afghanistan and addressed the Karzai government to eliminate the rouge of corruption and ensured the fundamental needs of the people. In August 2009, Hamid Karzai won the second term of presidency and promised the people that he would deliver the basic necessities. In his second tenure, President Karzai invited Mullah Omar to the presidential palace to seek out a diplomatic solution to the ongoing war in Afghanistan, but he refused every time.

### Conclusion

It is to be concluded from the above discussion that

The withdrawal of Soviet forces dragged Afghanistan into the quagmire of calamitous events that followed. The people of Afghanistan faced a lot of hardship in the shape of civil war and the rising of the Taliban. Fuel was added to the ashes when the incident of 9/11 occurred, and the US retaliated against the culprits who were under the protection of the Taliban regime. After the toppling of the Taliban regime, a pro-American government was installed, and hope of ray was spread among the desperate people of Afghanistan, but unfortunately, that didn't last long. NATO and American forces faced heavy casualties as a result of the Taliban resurrection in 2006. Two years later, Obama Presidential victory altered the theatre of war by sending the surge troops to Afghanistan.

## References

- Afridi, H. S., Afridi, M. K., & Jalal, S. U. (2016). Pakhtun Identity versus Militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA: Exploring the Gap between Culture of Peace and Militancy. *Global Regional Review*, 1(1), 2-3.
- Astill, J. (2001, October 17). Osama: The Sudan years. *The Guardian*.
- Bacon, T. (2018, September 11). Deadly Cooperation: The Shifting Ties between Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. September 10, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/09/deadly-cooperation-the-shifting-ties-between-al-qaeda-and-the-taliban/>
- Barakat, S., & Smith, B. S. (2015). *POST-ISAF AFGHANISTAN: THE EARLY MONTHS* (pp. 1-17, Rep. No. 20036). Doha: Brookings Doha Center.
- Bergen, P. (2009, December 30). The Account of How We Nearly Caught Osama bin Laden in 2001. *The New Republic*, 3-12.
- Bibi, F., Jameel, S., & Jalal, S. U. (2018). What is Democracy? Challenges for Democracy in Pakistan. *Global Political Review*, 1(1), 68-69.
- Burke, J. (2021). *The 9/11 Wars*. Penguin
- Bysyuk, V. (2010). Impact of 9/11 Terrorist Attacks on the US and International Tourism Development (Unpublished master's thesis). MODUL University Vienna.
- Dalton, R. J. (2009). The Road to Democracy in Afghanistan (pp. 1-23, Rep. No. 94119-3223). San Francisco: The Asia Foundation.
- Giustozzi, A., & Ali, A. M. (2016, March). AFGHANISTAN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT. *The Afghan National Army After ISAF*. Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Hendawi, H. (2019, January 3). Sudan under al-Bashir: Long history of turmoil, conflicts. *AP news*: <https://apnews.com/8c637e57658243aca3e36318a6b5e20>
- Jalali, A. A. (2015). *AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES*. Washington, DC: *United States Institute of Peace*.
- Kasturi, C. S. (2019, May 07). The Failed Assassination Bid That Ended al-Qaeda's Stint in Sudan. September 14, 2020, <https://www.ozy.com/trueand-stories/the-failed-assassination-bid-that-ended-al-qaedas-stint-insudan/85731/>
- Katzman, K., & Thomas, C. (2017). *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance*. Washington, DC: *Congressional Research Service*.
- Lowrey, A. (2009, December 11). How Osama bin Laden Escaped. *Foreign Policy*, 7- 16.
- Maizland, L., & Laub, Z. (2020, March 11). The Taliban in Afghanistan. Council on Foreign Relations: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan>
- McFadden, R. D. (2001, December 8). A NATION CHALLENGED: AN OVERVIEW: DEC. 7, 2001; Taliban Leader at Large, American Combat and 2 Dates Joined in Infamy. *The New York Times*.
- Nagourney, A. (2008, November 4). Obama Wins Election. *The New York Times*.
- Oliver, M. (2001, December 5). The new Afghan administration. *The Guardian*, pp. 4- 6.
- Qayum, H., Jalal, S. U., & Ishfaq, U. (2018). China's Growing Strategic Interests in Afghanistan. *Global Political Review*, 1(1), 95-96.
- Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban; Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. London: *Yale Nota Bene*.
- Rising, D. (2001, December 5). Afghan leaders sign a deal on the interim government. *The Independent*.
- Spillius, A. (2001, September 22). We won't hand over bin Laden, say defiant Taliban. *The Telegraph*.
- Swift, J. (2020, May 14). Battle of Tora Bora. June 14, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Tora-Bora>
- Tristram, P. (2018, January 24). History of the Taliban. *Thought Co.*: <https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-taliban-who-they-are-what-they-want-2352797>
- Weisbrode, K. (2001). Afghanistan Interim Government "solution" could leave regional

Problems are intact. Newyork: *Reliefweb*.

Witte, G. (2016, September). Afghanistan War. *Britannica*, 1-9. Britannica.

Zahid, F. (2015, May). The Al-Qaeda-Afghan

Taliban Connections "Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement. September 14, 2019, <https://cf2r.org/foreign/the-al-qaeda-afghan-taliban-connections-2/>