

TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN

Prof Nazneen Jan Qurashi

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, GDC for Women, Pulwama, India

Received: 20 Mar 2018

Accepted: 25 Mar 2018

Published: 31 Mar 2018

ABSTRACT

The Arabic word “Talab” defines an urge for knowledge and the seekers of the same are accordingly called Taliban, a name on which emerged an unprecedented radical social socio-religious and political movement towards the later 20th century in Afghanistan. The movement was organized by a group of some young people who claimed their decent from different ethno-tribal groups. In the beginning, the movement was confined to a limited area but soon spread to other parts and assumed an appealing character with the takeover of the Afghan government with its fundamentals based on the Qur’an (Holy Book of the Muslims) and the Hadith (Sayings of the Prophet)^{PBUH}

KEYWORDS: *Taliban, Afghanistan, Nineteenth Century*

INTRODUCTION

Brief

The Taliban emerged as a radical socio-religious and political movement in Afghanistan towards the late twentieth century. The movement was organized by a group of some young people who claimed their decent from different ethno-tribal groups. In the beginning, it was confined to a limited area but soon spread to other parts and assumed an unprecedented character. Since the movement aimed at Islamic revivalism, socio-economic and educational institutions were, as such, framed in accordance with the laws of Qur’an and Hadith. Accordingly, knowledge was mostly imparted in the Muslim educational institutionalism, the deeni Madrass’s. Reason being that the architects of the movement, by and large, were the products of these institutions. Given this kind of religious orientation, the Taliban subordinated their age-long tribal interests to religious supremacy. Quite precisely, these Deeni Madrasas provided a comprehensive curriculum which was admixture more of religious and less of modern science. Its common feature was the invocation of struggle against the un-Islamic rule for building a just society as laid down in the Qur’an and Hadith both of which abound with instances urging the believers to wrest themselves from the clutches of the non-believers. The Qur’an and Hadith also contain instructions to the effect of evolving a state based on peace wherein protection of life and property could be guaranteed to all irrespective of caste, creed and colour. It is a fact that in their individual capacity, the Muslims undertook missionary and other sorts of activities for the spread of Islam. But at the institutional level, these Madrassas did not lag behind for they produced number of youth imbued with the idea of Jihad. Indeed long before the emergence of the Taliban, the Afghans under the spirit of Jihad offered Persistent resistance to the imperial British power in the nineteenth century and the Soviets in the twentieth century while ignoring their complex nature of tribal animosity. They irresistibly stood against the alien rule probably because the idea of jihad as deeply entrenched into their psyche. This is why the Taliban carried forward the given legacy in the late 20th century. However, in context to the Taliban, the term Jihad was explainable in terms of war

against the most murderous snare of some bandit Afghan groups who after the Soviet withdrawal had rendered the life of the commoners fairly miserable.

No doubt, after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, a government had been formed under the President ship of Najibullah (1989-92). But the said government could not withstand the test of time and soon collapsed, which culminated in a devastating civil war among warring Afghan factions for politico-territorial and tribal domination in the country. The civil war resulted in huge human losses and unprecedented property damage in whole Afghanistan. In absence of a centralized authority, there was no name of law and order which made life usage and insecure from diversified point of view, this of course included the trade. Most of the significant trade routes had, as such, become a crucial flesh point for several local and armed groups. The traders, merchants and civilians were subjected to huge and uncalled for levies.

To address to this most unpleasant state of affairs, the Taliban surfaced on the Afghan soil as a conglomerate of several Afghan groups. The reasons underlying their emergence were many; one of them was connected with the rape of three innocent Afghan girls on the grounds of tribal rivalry. Since the Taliban had distinguished itself by its strong religious ideology based on social justice and political stability, lots of rural-urban people rallied round it under the charismatic leadership of Mulla Mohammad Omer. To reiterate, Mulla Omer organized activities aimed at disarming the most power hungry and marauding factions and helping the oppressed sections of the Afghan society. Along with the armed activists, he made noble efforts to motivate the warring factions through peaceful means. In his efforts, the United States helped the Taliban for they wanted the Taliban to act as a watch dog against the growing Russian influence in the region. Pakistan had also many considerations in extending moral and material support to the Taliban. One of them was really to see an end to the Afghan refugee problem following civil war in the pre-Taliban period. Moreover, Pakistan intended to import Central Asian huge gas and oil resources through the shortest Afghanistan-Pakistan route. A stable government in the Afghanistan was quite essential for the accomplishment of these multifarious objectives. All sorts of evidences point to the Pakistan's involvement in supporting the Taliban. The magnitude of support was so large that some believed and rightly so that the Taliban was the 'brain-child' of Pakistan. That the Taliban metamorphosed into a strong military power controlling 85% of the Afghan territory in 1994, was essentially due to the Pakistan's adequate patronage.

In short, the Taliban originated from an indigenously organized and deep-rooted movement that was meant to restore Islamic values in the Afghan society. That is way, it was a strong reaction against the self-seeking, anarchic, corrupt and immoral order that obtained in Afghanistan prior to the Taliban; indeed, it was a reaction against an un-pleasant state of affairs which had made life of the most credulous and innocent Afghans quite miserable. On that, therefore, came the Taliban as a savior for it gave a centralized command to an otherwise fragmented country. With that, came in peace and normalcy, exception apart. Economic transaction began to be conducted smoothly which in turn gave a sigh of relief to the agriculturist's, traders and merchants. Above all, women felt shielded and protected against some marauding and inhumanly behaving Afghan tribal groups. The Afghans hereafter were domesticated to live a modest and pure life that was bereft of moral waywardness. In that process, women were asked to wear (Burqa) veil. For keeping the moral standards, they were debarred from seeking the government services and working in the public enterprises. Their education was suspended and they were confined within the four walls of their houses. They were debarred to seek education in schools. However, those of them who were in the minor age-group were allowed to seek education in the traditional Muslim educational institutions where curriculum and knowledge imparted was purely of religious nature. Being essentially the products of the Deeni Madrasas, the minds of the Taliban were occupied by the Islamic thought. They had, therefore to see

them conventionally and emotionally attached to the Deeni Madrasas which served as the nurseries of Jihad from within and outside besides an alternative mode of modern education. Thus the underlying objective of the Taliban was to institute a pure Islamic state which was better able to enforce Shari'ah and eradicate social vices promoted by power hungry group of the so called Mujahidin after the withdrawal of the soviets and the end of the civil war.

The policies of the Taliban were no doubt praise worthy. But the means devised to execute them were at times immethodical and harsh and which probably created the grounds for the collapse of the Taliban after a very brief spell. The educational policy was appreciable in terms of its moral objective. But it deprived the Afghans especially the women from the basic right to education. Consequently, they, more or less, remained illiterate and backward compared to their counterparts in and outside the Asian continent. Likewise, the education imparted in the medieval institutions, rendered the Afghans conservative and ignorant about scientific development taking place at the global level. It was perhaps this factor that made the Taliban fanatic and intolerant towards other religions. The demolition of some relics of ancient culture at Bamiyan suffices to prove the argument.

REFERENCES

1. *W Arnold, Anthony, Afghanistan, The Soviet Invasion in Perspective, Leland Stanford Jr. University, 1981*
2. *Akiner, Shireen Islamic peoples of the Soviet Union, Kegan Paul International London, 1983.*
3. *Anwar, Raja The Tragedy of Afghanistan, London and New York, 1988.*
4. *Allworth, Edward The Modern Uzbek from the 14th century to the present, Hoover Institute press, 1990*
5. *Arney, George; Afghanistan, Mandarin, London,1990*
6. *Arnold, Anthony The Fateful Pebble, Afghanistan's Role in the Fall of the Soviet Empire, Presidio Press, California 1993*
7. *Bellew. H.W Afghanistan and the Afghans, Shree Publishing House, Delhi 1982.*
8. *Bonner, Arthur among the Afghans, Duke University, Press, 1987.*
9. *Chopra, V.D Afghanistan Geneva Accords and After, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1988.*

