



Hacettepe University
Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of International Relations

**The Taliban Movement Before and After 2001: How the Taliban
Became Suicide Bombers?**

Abdullah Rahimi

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2013

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KABUL VE ONAY

Abdullah Rahimi tarafından hazırlanan "The Taliban Movement Before And After 2001: How The Taliban Became Suicide Bombers?" başlıklı bu çalışma, 05.09.2013 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Abdullah Rahimi

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ABSTRACT

Abdullah Rahimi. *The Taliban Movement Before and After 2001: How the Taliban Became Suicide Bombers?*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2013.

The Taliban still remains one of the major issues in Afghanistan. The Taliban emerged as a movement with the discourse of bringing justice and peace, and establishing a system based on Islamic Law in Afghanistan. The war weary people of Afghanistan firstly welcomed the Taliban; however, after seeing their radical and strict rules they once again faced the consequences of power greed.

The Taliban lost the control of Afghanistan after the invasion of United States-led coalition. The case of Taliban was closed and its forces were defeated. However, in 2003 the Taliban once again came to the scene of Afghanistan creating further trouble for the people of Afghanistan and blocked the process of reconstruction and development. The Taliban has become more radical and adopted suicide attacks as a strategy in their insurgency, a tactic that was never used before by them.

This thesis tackles the research questions of what pushed the Taliban to become more radical and how the Taliban became suicide bombers. By comparing the movement of Taliban before and after 2001, I will look for the shift in the balance of power among the actors in Afghanistan and draw a conclusion whether the symmetric or asymmetric balancing has impact on the radicalization of the Taliban or not.

Key Words

Taliban, Taliban Insurgency, Suicide Attack, Asymmetric Balancing, Mullah Omar, 9/11, Afghanistan

ÖZET

Abdullah Rahimi. *2001 Öncesi ve Sonrası Taliban Hareketi: Taliban İntihar Bombacıları nasıl oldu?*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2013.

Taliban sorunu halen Afganistan'da önemli konulardan biri olmaya devam etmektedir. Taliban, adalet ve barışı sağlama ve Afganistan'da İslam Hukukuna dayalı bir sistem kurma söylemi ile ortaya çıkmış bir harekettir. Savaş yorgunu Afganistan halkı öncelikle Taliban'ı hoş karşılamıştır ancak Taliban'ın radikal ve katı kurallarını gördükten sonra bir kez daha güç elde etme hırslarının acı sonuçlarıyla karşılaşmıştır.

ABD liderliğindeki koalisyonun işgalinden sonra Taliban Afganistan'ın kontrolünü kaybetti. Taliban'ın defteri kapanmış ve güçleri yenilmişti. Ancak Taliban, Afganistan halkı için daha fazla sorun yaratacak ve Afganistan'ın yeniden yapılanma ve gelişmesi sürecini engellemek için 2003 yılında bir kez daha Afganistan sahnesine çıkmıştır. Daha radikal bir tavır almış ve daha önce taraflarınca hiç kullanılmamış intihar saldırılarını direniş stratejileri olarak benimsemişlerdir.

Bu tez, Taliban intihar bombacılarının nasıl ortaya çıktığını ve Taliban'ı daha radikal olmaya iten sebebi araştırmaktadır. 2001 öncesi ve sonrası Taliban hareketini karşılaştırarak, Afganistan'daki aktörler arasında olan güç dengesinin değişime uğrayıp uğramadığına bakacağım ve simetrik ya da asimetric dengelemenin Taliban'ın radikalleşmesi üzerinde etkisi olup olmadığına bir sonuç çıkaracağım.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Taliban, Taliban Direnişi, İntihar Saldırısı, Asimetric Dengeleme, Molla Ömer, 9/11, Afganistan

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The factors of establishment of non-state organizations that have high capacity and propensity for collective violence has attracted many researchers to understand and find the reasons behind them. As the interactions among states go through a different way, as a result of the changes in the international system, the actors within the international arena shift their appearance and target. It seems that there has always been groups that burden the fulfillment of confronting and drag the international system towards conflicts.

As the cold war ended, the world, specially the western states, was engaged in the excitement of a new era. The Soviet Unions were broken down, new states emerged in the international arena, the United States and the western countries, the western bloc, were making the most of their winning. And when they started to realize the existence of a fundamental regime in Afghanistan, the emergence and rise of the Taliban movement was a phenomenon to their eyes.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union troops from Afghanistan, the country went through a series of unending struggle for power. The war weary people of Afghanistan again had to face the bitter face of the conflicts with massive casualties. Afghanistan was divided among warlords and *mujahideen*¹. The warlords and *mujahideen* were at fight with each other and they were constantly changing sides. The country was engaged in a series of alliances, betrayals and bloodshed.²

These conflicts between warlords and *mujahideen* extremely troubled the people and the violence, especially towards women, that warlords and *mujahideen* created was so harsh that the people of Afghanistan was ready to accept any group that will end the chaos within the country.

¹ Plural form of Mujahid, an Arabic term that is used to describe the Muslims who struggle in the path of Allah, Jihad.

² For detailed information on the situation of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union see: Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, (Yale University Press, 2002)

The Taliban emerged as a movement with the discourse of bringing justice and peace, and establishing a system based on Islamic Law in Afghanistan. Afghans firstly welcomed the Taliban; however, after seeing their radical rules they once again faced the consequences of power greed.

Unlike other armed parties in Afghanistan, the Taliban showed a rapid rise and within few years they managed to remove the troops of Masoud from Kabul and overthrow the government of Rabbani. Established in 1994, the Taliban controlled almost 90% of the Afghanistan until October of 2001.

Following the attacks of 9/11, the United States declared war against terrorism and called the western countries to extend cooperation in bringing the perpetrators of the terrorist act to justice. As the United States blamed the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda for the attacks of 9/11, the United States started on the mission to search for Osama Bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leaders.

Osama was in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban, he had no other place to go because no country was ready to accept his presence in their territory. The Taliban leaders denied United States call for handing over Osama. They made it clear that delivery of Osama directly to the United States was unacceptable.³

After the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama, the United States formed a coalition to fight against terrorism and on 7 October 2001 United States-led coalition started military operations in Afghanistan. Within two months of massive bombardments and on-foot military operations, the Taliban forces pulled back and abandoned their last stronghold in Kandahar.⁴

³ This was not Taliban's first denial of handing over Osama. For the previous negotiation of Osama's surrender see: Barbara Crossette, "U.S. Steps Up Pressure on Taliban to Deliver Osama bin Laden", *The New York Times*, October 19, 1999, accessed September 23, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/19/world/us-steps-up-pressure-on-taliban-to-deliver-osama-bin-laden.html>

⁴ See: David Rohde and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Last Stronghold; Taliban Abandon Last Stronghold; Omar Is Not Found", *The New York Times*, December 08, 2001 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/08/world/nation-challenged-last-stronghold-taliban-abandon-last-stronghold-omar-not-found.html?ref=kandahar>)

During the year 2002, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were defeated and an emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) was proposed to select the head of the state and to establish a Transitional Authority. Hamid Karzai was selected to the head of Afghanistan Transitional Administration.

On 2003, the Taliban re-emerged to the scene of Afghanistan as an insurgent group. The re-emergence of the Taliban was a shock to the people of Afghanistan. This time the Taliban was more radical and adopted different tactic and combat strategies further creating trouble for the people of Afghanistan and blocked the process of reconstruction and development.

The movement that was rigorously against internet and media, then started to obtain many websites and journals publishing regularly consisted of writings about their mission and jihad against foreign invaders. Most of their materials are in Pashtu, showing the targeted audiences of the Taliban leadership. In addition, mainstream media is used to attract international attention.

Although suicide is undesirable concept both in Islam and in Afghanistan, the Taliban adopted this new strategy to confront the forces of United States-led coalition. The question how and why the Taliban insurgency involved in suicide bombing is somewhat a significant phenomenon yet to be understood.

During the civil war, following the ten year of guerilla war against Soviet troops, no suicide bombing incident occurred in Afghanistan. The first suicide bombing took place during the Taliban regime was the assassination of the Tajik leader Masoud by two Arabian happens to be member of al-Qaeda.

In this thesis, we will examine the Taliban and bring about an understanding to mission, target and aim of the movement. The Taliban movement is considered as an insurgent group not only after 2003 but also during their first emergence in 1994. Mullah Omar gathered the religious students and some former *mujahideen* to rebel against the warlords and quasi *mujahideen*.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the country went through a civil war. Afghanistan, prior to the emergence of the Taliban, was almost in a straggle situation. The territory of the country was divided between the privileged warlords and jihadi⁵ groups. These warlords and *mujahideen*⁶ were at fight with each other and were constantly changing sides.

In 1994, a small group of people, with the leadership of Mullah Mohammed Omar, came together to fight against the corrupted system established in Afghanistan. Their initial objective was to form a just system in the country based on Islamic Law, *Sharia*. The people consisted the group were of *madrassa* students and masters. These students are called *talib*, which means the seeker of knowledge. As the existence of this newly formed group spread through the country, the word Taliban⁷ became the agnomen of the group.

Established with the discourse of bringing peace and justice to Afghanistan, the Taliban showed a rapid rise and within two years they overthrew the government of Rabbani. After the fall of Rabbani government, the Taliban formed their own administration and started to implement their unique interpretation of Islamic Law. Although the people of Afghanistan firstly welcomed the Taliban, after seeing their strict rules they once again faced the consequences of power greed.

During their opposition the Taliban were in close relationship with Osama Bin Laden. Osama had joined the jihad and fought beside Afghan *mujahids* against Soviet Union. During the last years of jihad against Soviets he formed Al-Qaeda. In 1992, he was exiled from his country Saudi Arabia. Then, he shifted his base to Sudan and in 1996, upon the pressures of United States, he decided to leave Sudan. During their regime the Taliban welcomed Osama to stay in Afghanistan as he had no other place to go because no country was

⁵ Jihad is an Islamic term that means 'Holy War'.

⁶ Plural form of Mujahid, an Arabic term that is used to describe the Muslims who struggle in the path of Allah, Jihad.

⁷ Taliban is plural form of talib that means religious students.

ready to accept his presence in their territory. After shifting his base to Afghanistan, Osama declared jihad against United States.

After the 9/11 incident, United States started on his mission to search for Osama Bin Laden and other Al-Qaeda leaders. The Bush Doctrine described the policy that the United States had the right to secure itself against countries that harbor or give aid to terrorist groups.

The Taliban leaders denied United States call for handing over Osama. They made it clear that delivery of Osama directly to the United States was unacceptable. After the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama, the United States formed a coalition to fight against terrorism and on 7 October 2001 United States-led coalition started military operations in Afghanistan. Within two months of massive bombardments and on-foot military operations, the Taliban forces pulled back and abandoned their last stronghold in Kandahar.⁸ After the collapse of the Taliban regime, a new government was constituted as a result of the International Conference on Afghanistan, Bonn (2001)⁹.

During 2003, the Taliban re-emerged to the scene of Afghanistan. The United States-led coalition firstly regarded the insurgency of the Taliban as weak and insufficient. However, the Taliban proved them wrong and showed great resistance against the foreign invaders. The insurgency, solidity and strength of the Taliban were past the expectation of United States-led coalition. They admit that the guerilla forces of Taliban become more sophisticated, better organized and more numerous than before.¹⁰

There are points to be taken in consideration in the second opposition period of the Taliban. The Taliban included new tactics to their offensives. Suicide

⁸ See: David Rohde and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Last Stronghold; Taliban Abandon Last Stronghold; Omar Is Not Found", *The New York Times*, December 08, 2001 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/08/world/nation-challenged-last-stronghold-taliban-abandon-last-stronghold-omar-not-found.html?ref=kandahar>)

⁹ Also known as Bonn Conference, is an international conference aimed to improve the conditions of Afghanistan after the Taliban regime.

¹⁰ See: Nasreen Ghufuran, "Afghanistan in 2006: The Complications of Post-Conflict Transition", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2007), pp. 92-93, also see: Nasreen Ghufuran, "Afghanistan in 2007: A Bleeding Wound", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2008), pp. 154-163

attacks, ambushes, roadside bombs, and sometimes attacks on district headquarters in the relatively lawless south and east of the country have become frequent. The Taliban made changes in their strategy of accession to power. These changes made the Taliban more radical.

As a movement, the Taliban were regarded as fundamentalist before 2001. However, after the invasion of the United States-led coalition, the Taliban became a terrorist movement. The Taliban changed their strategy of confronting an enemy that is great in power. The suicide attacks were used and adopted in the Taliban insurgency.

The aim of this study is to compare the strategies used by Taliban until 2001 with the strategies used after the invasion of United States-led coalition forces, and to explain the reasons for the changes occurred in the Taliban strategies after the invasion of Afghanistan.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on conflict studies is very widespread and rich in the international security studies. Most of the studies; however, are on inter-state conflict and international conflict. The literature on intra-state conflict or civil conflict is relatively less. Regardless of the reasons that attract the scholars to study on inter-state or international conflict, the civil conflict has become one of the important phenomenon and the internal conflicts are rapidly growing especially in the Middle Eastern region.

Although there are various definitions for civil war, the one that defines best the situation of Afghanistan is Kalyvas's description of civil war that is "armed combat taking place within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority in the outset of the hostilities"¹¹

¹¹ Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 5 and 17.

Greed and grievance are counted as two mainstream theoretical approaches to the causes of civil conflict.¹² Grievance and greed issues trigger the possibility of internal conflict. Grievances are mostly related to economic factors. Economic favoritism against groups based on ethno-linguistic or religious differences. Greed is directly related to the economic condition of individuals. This happens in terms of the desire to control resources and capture rents.¹³

Ted Robert Gurr, a prominent scholar of civil conflict, who explores the factors of insurgency, rebel and riots, has combined the both terms greed and grievance in his study. Gurr emphasizes on the term 'relative deprivation'. According to Gurr, whenever the feeling of deprivation appears with aggression eventually will end up to conflict. Gurr points out that the grievance is not always related to materialistic and does not need to be economic, it could be political or cultural.¹⁴

Interestingly, civil conflicts and terrorist issues happen in the regions that are relatively poor. Underdevelopment must have a direct impact on the emergence of conflicts and terrorist organizations. According to Collier and Hoeffler, civil war is mainly product of development problem. They argue that the civil war is mostly occurred in the poor countries.¹⁵

One of the major factors of the contemporary civil conflicts is identity problem. Religious and ethno-national division is the root of the most of the internal conflicts. The mobilization of minority group against majority group mostly results in civil conflict.

David Galula claims that ideology is the most important prerequisites of a successful insurgency. According to Galula ideology of an insurgent group has significant role in the success of their mission. Galula indicates that what makes

¹² Nil S. Satana, "Causes and Prevention of Armed Conflict," edited by Pinar Bilgin and Paul Williams, in Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS), Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, Oxford, UK, (2010) [<http://www.eolss.net>]. pp. 18

¹³ S. Mansoob Murshed, "Conflict, Civil War and Underdevelopment: An Introduction", of Peace Research, Vol. 39, No. 4, Special Issue on Civil War in Developing Countries (2002), pp. 387-393.

¹⁴ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton University Press, 1970)

¹⁵ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", Oxford Economic Papers 56, (2002), pp. 563-573

an insurgency prospering are a cause, weakness of the counterinsurgent, geographic conditions and outside support.¹⁶

Lately, literature on religious conflicts is growing swiftly. Scholars like Juergensmeyer points out that the religious conflicts are on the rise globally¹⁷. Religious conflict has become an important concern for many countries. The rise of terrorism made the religious conflicts one of the vital issues in international relations studies. Jonathan Fox states that a believer becomes sympathizer whenever her/his constructed reality is under attack for some reason¹⁸. As it's understood from Fox's account, the contemporary issue of terrorism and religious conflict is mainly because of the crises between cultures and believes.

In understanding the rebellions within a country it is also important to explore the insurgent group's characteristics and the ways they will likely grow through. Mao Tse-tung was the most prominent theorist of insurgency. In Maoist guerrilla warfare, the insurgents move through three stages. The first is the agitation-propaganda phase, where they would form bases and prepare the battlefield and the population for the struggle.

The second stage proposed by Mao is the defensive phase. In this stage the insurgents would begin guerrilla warfare operations against the government and conduct terrorism against the resistant population. As the insurgents grow strong on their successes in phase 2, the final stage, the offensive phase, would be carried out. In the last stage the increasingly powerful guerrilla groups could fight as conventional forces, confronting government forces in direct combat.¹⁹

The economical issues, as of greed and grievance, and ethnicity are not sufficient conditions for a rebellion group to achieve what it claims. Nonetheless,

¹⁶ David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1964)

¹⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, (University of California Press, 2003)

¹⁸ Jonathan Fox, *Ethnoreligious Conflict in the Late 20th Century: A General Theory*, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2002)

¹⁹ Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith II, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), cited in Joseph Collins, *Understanding War in Afghanistan*, (NDU Press, 2011), pp.54

identity is an influential factor that could be used to mobilize individuals suffering from relative deprivation. Thus, an Islamic identity and ideology can be attributed to the movement of Taliban.

However, unlike most of the scholars, Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason analysis the Taliban and their insurgency from a different approach. Rather than the mainstream view of the Taliban as a radical Islamic movement, they examine the Taliban as a tribal movement. Johnson and Mason argue that United States-led coalition counterinsurgency strategy is insufficient of ending the war because they do not give much credit for the culture and traditional rules of the region, especially the *Pashtuns*. They suggest alternative strategies and ways to defeat the Taliban.²⁰

Johnson and Mason have indicated an important point in understanding the Taliban. However, the *Pashtun* nationalism itself and alone would not be sufficient enough to characterize the ideology and identity of the Taliban. The explanation of the Islamic theme in the Taliban could be made by the statements of I. William Zartman. He highlights the importance of foreign aid in internal conflict. Zartman points out that without external support a rebellion movement would not come to power or achieve the desired circumstances.²¹ Thus, to attract the external support riot groups choose to emphasis on wider identity, like religion and/or common ideology.

Taking in consideration the *Pashtun* nationalism of the Taliban proposed by Johnson and Mason and the need of foreign aid, it could be claimed that the Taliban has used the Islamic identity to attract the Muslim worlds support in order to bring the *Pashtuns* to power and to annihilate the relative deprivation that *Pashtuns* suffering.

The studies on the Taliban miss to regard the Taliban as an insurgent group before the collapse of Rabbani government. In this study, the emergence of the

²⁰ Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, (2007), pp. 71-89

²¹ I. William Zartman, ed., *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, (Lynne Rienner Publisher Inc, 1995)

Taliban is taken and studied as an insurgency. Another important point in the Taliban insurgency is the use of suicide bombing as a tactic that previous studies on Taliban fail to bring up the reasons behind the radicalization of Taliban after 2001.

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Roughly, the Taliban movement came to birth in 1994 consisted of almost all *Pashtuns*. Their initial aim was to establish an Islamic regime in Afghanistan. After 2001, the emphasis on Islamic identity continued, however; the struggle method of Taliban has changed. The literature explicitly explains the movement of the Taliban until their accession to power. But it is essential to this thesis to understand the radicalization of the Taliban after their overthrow from power.

During their years of struggle for power starting from 1994, the Taliban had a symmetric conflict with the other groups within Afghanistan. The military and man power of the groups, including Hekmatyar and the government of Rabbani and the troops of Masoud, were relatively close to each other. There was no big difference or rift among the powers of these groups.

As the capability of these groups was close to each other, and none of the actors had great power, the Taliban engaged in conventional conflict. The type of struggle of the Taliban from 1994 to 2001 was of traditional. Not only the Taliban but the other actors as well were in direct combat with each other.

After the collapse of the Soviet domination in Afghanistan, there were too many parties within the country. None of them accomplished to control the bigger part of Afghanistan but Taliban. To eliminate its rivals the Taliban used Islam to get external support. It is important to not that this strategy was not new to Afghanistan as during the years of Jihad against Soviet Union Islam was used as an effective way of attracting Islamic world's attention and support.

This strategy, providing support from outside the country, happened to work quite effectively. The Taliban managed to get the support of Pakistan and the

Gulf Countries especially Saudi Arabia and eventually defeated its rivals one by one.²² In contrast to the importance of external support in the rise of the Taliban, some authors, like Abdulkader Sinno, believe that ethnic bounds are important in legitimating power in Afghanistan.

According to Sinno, ruling Afghanistan without *Pashtuns* is not possible. He argues that the rapid success of the Taliban in their early stages was that they managed to mobilize *Pashtuns*.²³ However, the inability of Taliban after 2001 to mobilize massive numbers can only be explained with the lack of external support.

After 2001; however, the Taliban lost their position in power and the Islamic ideology, which provided economic means before 2001, did not provided the sufficient power that was requisite to resist the United States-led coalition forces. After the invasion of the United States, the Taliban not only failed to received the support they were getting during 1994-2001 to defeat their rivals, but also the number of warriors procured by the Islamic identity was insufficient to be a counterforce against the foreign forces.

The existence of an actor with great power had changed the balance of power within Afghanistan. The nature of conflict has changed from symmetric, which was constituted during 1994-2001, to asymmetric conflict²⁴; thus, the Taliban changed their strategy and used asymmetric balancing.

Symmetric conflict gets in question whenever each side of a war has relatively close capability and strength of military force and economic means. The groups in the civil war of Afghanistan, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Unions, were somewhat eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. On the other hand, after 2001 the symmetric balancing that was constituted among the groups within

²² See: John F. Burns and Steve Levine, "How Afghans' Stern Rulers Took Hold", *New York Times*, December 31, 1996, accessed August 22, 2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/31/world/how-afghans-stern-rulers-took-hold.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

²³ Abdulkader Sinno, "Explaining the Taliban's Ability to Mobilize the *Pashtuns*", in *The Taliban and The Crisis of Afghanistan*, edited by Robert Crew and Amin Tarzi, (London: Harvard University Press, 2008) pp. 59-89

²⁴ For detailed understanding of asymmetric conflicts see: T.V. Paul, *Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Afghanistan was broken as an actor with great power entered to the scene of conflict. Under this circumstance, the weaker actor(s) perceive different ways to balance the struggle.

According to T.V. Paul, asymmetric balancing steps in whenever a weaker state or non-state entity confronts a powerful side. He further adds, in resistance against a great power the weaker side often chooses the use of insurgency or terrorism.²⁵ Taking into account the expressions of Paul, it is possible to refer to the radicalization of the Taliban as a balancing option towards the forces of United States-led coalition.

The Taliban had no chance in facing the United States-led coalition forces in traditional direct conflict. Having weak artillery and means of military, the best strategy for Taliban was to leave engaging in direct combat and to find other types of struggle that would balance the conflict despite the gap of power that Taliban had against its enemy.

Lately, especially in Muslim countries, groups engaging in asymmetric conflict often choose to resist through terrorism. By demonstrating terror attempts, they not only originate trouble for the powerful side in means of military, but also bring about a difference in the public opinion.

Accordingly, Lieber and Alexander point out the use of terrorism as an asymmetric balancing and its consequence on the public opinion of United States. Taking into account the inability of weaker actors for engaging in traditional balancing, the alternative for these actors is to engage in terrorism to result in a fall down of support among the American citizenry for a United States military and political presence abroad.²⁶

Relatively deprived groups facing symmetric rivals engage in finding external support. In order to insure the external support, these groups not only bring forward the interest of their ethnic, but also resort to common and wider identity.

²⁵ T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, Michel Fortman, eds, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, (Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 16

²⁶ Keir A. Lieber, Gerard Alexander, "Waiting for Balancing: Why the World Is Not Pushing Back", *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 138

The external support would become the back bone of the groups facing symmetric rivals; however, in an asymmetric conflict the external support would be insufficient for these groups to confront the powerful rival. For this reason, they would easily legitimate the radical Islam. Consequently, these groups would try to eliminate the dominant power in the country through suicide attacks.

H1: To attract the external support, the rebelled groups choose to emphasis on wider identity, like religion and/or common ideology.

H2: In communities suffering from civil war, the conflict method would be traditional as long as the struggle among groups is symmetric. Accordingly, as the capacity and strength of the groups differ, the possibility of asymmetric balancing increases and eventually the weaker actor would use suicide attacks as a method of struggle.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology of the thesis is presented. The section outlines the research design and essentially maps out the method that is used in researching the reasons of the radicalization of the Taliban after the invasion of United States-led coalition.

The Taliban become radical and started to use suicide attacks after 2001. The entrance of a great power has changed the balance of power within Afghanistan. The shift in the balance of power and the transition from symmetric conflict to asymmetric conflict is regarded as independent variable.

The dependent variable of the research is the type of struggle used by Taliban. To see whether the invasion of United States has pushed the Taliban to make a shift in their strategy of conflict or not, a comparative method is performed. By comparing the movement of Taliban before and after 2001, the type of struggle and conflict methods used by Taliban in each period will be explored. Each

period will be examined separately and the struggle type of the Taliban will be taken under scope in each era.

Before comparing the two periods, to provide a ground in understanding the Taliban, the ideology, origin, structure and leadership of the movement will be put under the scope. The external powers behind the Taliban are analyzed to test the accuracy of the first hypothesis that is mentioned in the previous section.

The source of the thesis is provided through literature and archives. No surveys or questionnaires are conducted for this research. However, some of the books used as source are written as a result of direct contact and interviews made with the leaders of the Taliban, which contributes useful and reliable information on Taliban.

Ahmad Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* is the main source of the Taliban movement until 2000. Rashid provides an in-depth view of the Taliban as a movement and its ideology, origin, structure and leadership. The book throws light on the emergence and rise of the Taliban phenomenon. Rashid's research takes the reader through a journey of how the Mullah Omar with a few men started a movement and managed to capture most of the country in a very short time. External hands behind the Taliban are also mentioned through the book. Rashid, in his book, also discuss in detail the impact of Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline Project, which will transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India through Afghanistan, on the region and Taliban.

In the *The Taliban Phenomenon*, Kamal Matinuddin also gives great information about the emergence of the Taliban and the capture of Kabul. Matinuddin's book provides very clear and accurate detail on the advent of the Taliban in its early days.

In *How the Taliban Became a Military Force*, Anthony Davis provides in depth detail on the Taliban's military power from its emergence till becoming the

strongest group within Afghanistan. The military operations and expansion of the Taliban is explored in great detail.

Riaz Mohammad Khan's *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity* study's the conflict in Afghanistan from point of view of Pakistan. The author discusses Pakistan's contradiction on supporting the United States, post 9/11, on one hand and showing empathy for the Afghan Taliban on the other.

The changes in the method and tactics of the Taliban after their revival post the collapse of the Taliban regime is studied by Antonio Giustozzi in *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: the neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* and by Joanna Nathan in *Reading the Taliban*.

After comparing the two periods, a conclusion on how the Taliban, emerged with an aim to bring peace to Afghanistan, became suicide bombers would be carried out.

CHAPTER 2: IDEOLOGY, ORIGIN, STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP OF THE TALIBAN

2.1. IDEOLOGY

Afghanistan is one of the countries where Islam is accepted and applied very commonly. The history of religious schools, the *madrassas*, began with the entrance of Islam to the Afghanistan. Throughout the history of Afghanistan, religious leaders and *Ulema* always came together whenever Afghanistan or its people were at danger. According to Musa M. Maroofi the history of *madrassas* and *taliban* (religious students) is as old as the advent of Islam in Afghanistan. Both religious schools and religious students existed in Afghanistan long before the modern system of schools and education was implemented there nearly a century ago. Taliban, since the introduction of Islam to Afghanistan, has been an inseparable part of the social structure in some way as a religious proletariat. In addition, *madrassas*, mosques, shrines and everything that is related with religion characterize themselves as *mujahideen* whenever the cause of Islam and Afghanistan was at stake. For these matters, Maroofi claims that the Taliban is not a newly emerged movement in the history of Afghanistan.²⁷

There is no doubt that the Taliban's very basic ideology was constructed upon the Islamic Law, *Sharia*. However, they had a very unique interpretation of Islam. There were three tendencies in Afghanistan, radical pan-Islamism, Sufism, traditionalism. The ideology of Taliban, yet, was different from these and even they did not accept any other form of Islam but their own interpretation of Islam. Meanwhile, According to Rashid, it was not that the Taliban did not have any ideological root. They represented an extreme interpretation of

²⁷ Musa M. Maroofi, "The Afghan Taliban: Like it or not, It Occupies Two-Third of Afghanistan and Shows No Sign of Weakend", *Washington Report, On Middle East Affairs*, (April 1998), p.47

Deobandism that was preached by Pakistan Islamic parties in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan.²⁸

The Taliban was recruited mainly from *madrassas* in Pakistan and these *madrassas* were based on the extreme Islamic form of *Deobandi*. Thus, it could be said that the Taliban had a form of *Deobandism* as an ideology. However, this would not be a firm explanation to count on. Most of the commanders of Taliban, including Mullah Omar, were from *Pashtun* villages where tribal customs and rules are very important. They started to enforce their rules and ideology after they captured Kandahar. The people living in Kandahar had no problem with their regulations as most of the rules were accepted for years before the Taliban. The Taliban, however, later would try to apply their ideology on other parts of Afghanistan where the people are from different ethnicity and origin.

Immediately after the invasion of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban formed a six-member council of Mullahs, under the leadership of Mullah Rabbani (no relation to President Rabbani). The council of mullahs constituted a strict Islamic code, women working outside their houses was prohibited. In addition, they ordered that women must wear the traditional Afghan Islamic dress, *chadari*, and men must grow beard.²⁹ They also banned music, cassette tapes, kite flying, homing pigeons and chess.³⁰ Moreover, great numbers of civilians were arrested in house-to-house searches. The human rights organization Amnesty International thus warned that a 'reign of terror' had applied on the city.³¹

²⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 88-89

²⁹ Ralph H. Magnus, "Afghanistan in 1996: Year of the Taliban", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (Feb., 1997) pp. 113

³⁰ For the decrees of the Taliban see Final report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, submitted by Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/75 (UN: E/CN.4/1997/59. 20 February 1997) pp. 32-36.

³¹ "Afghanistan: Taleban Take Hundreds of Civilians Prisoner", London: Amnesty International, ASA/11/07/96, 2 October 1996, accessed September 23, 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA11/007/1996/en/2ed0555c-eadd-11dd-b22b-3f24cef8f6d8/asa110071996en.html>

The Taliban has very close relation with the madrassas of Pakistan. *Jamiat-i Ulema*, one of the important Islamic entities within Pakistan, has direct relations and connection with these madrassas.

The most important ruptured faction of the *Jamiat-i Ulema* was Maulana Sami-ul Haq, a religious and political leader elected as deputy and senator, had and an important educational base in the leadership of the Taliban. Sami-ul Haq was in constant contact with Mullah Omar; he was assisting him in the international relations affairs and he pursued giving advice on the important decisions regarding interpretation of *Sharia*.³²

Although after 2001 the Taliban claimed to have modifications in their strict rules, like banning girls from going to school, the basic form of their ideology has never changed. In fact, important aim of Taliban is, same as their objective at their emergence, to establish a system based on Islamic Law without the influence and existence of the foreigners in the country.

2.2. ORIGINS AND STRUCTURE OF THE TALIBAN

The Taliban were a phenomenon waiting to occur in a condition wrecked and ruined by ten years of Soviet intervention and five years of deadly conflict. The Taliban were the offspring of *Madrassas* that had emanated in the tribal areas and refugee camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly after withdraw of the Soviet troops. Thousands of Afghan refugees were settled in Pakistan during the war between Soviet troops and the *Mujahideen*. Education of these Afghani refugees was completely left to these *Madrassas*. These religious schools were supported by Muslim charities worldwide.³³

Most of the reserves and funds came from Gulf countries and from fund raisings of religious political parties of Pakistan. Both the United Nations and the

³² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 90-92

³³ Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*, (Widrow Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 2011), pp.56

Pakistan government did nothing to constitute proper schools in the refugee camps. A great number of afghan *Madrassa* students had moved to Afghanistan and took part in fighting the Soviets side by side with the *Mujahideen* commanders. The students were disappointed with the internal conflict of the major *Mujahideen* leaders. The rest of the Afghan population was also disappointed and angry as these *Mujahideen* groups failed to bring peace, tranquility and economic health to Afghanistan.³⁴

The ones gathered around Mullah Omar were the children of the Jihad that once got disappointed with the crimes and factionalism of the *Mujahideen* leaders they exalted in their ideals. Therefore, they regarded themselves as restorers and purifier of improper functioning of a social system and Islamic way of life endangered because of decayedness excesses. Many of them were born in refugee camps in Pakistan, trained in Pakistani *Madrassas* and learned fighting skills in *Mujahideen* parties based in Pakistan. In this state, young Taliban had very limited knowledge about their own country and its history, they formed a community that learned the ideal Islamic society founded by the Prophet Mohammed 1400 years ago from *Madrassas* and aimed to re-simulate this ideal at the present time.³⁵

There are over eight thousand *madrassas* in Pakistan. Over 200 thousand Pakistani and Afghan students attend in these religious schools.³⁶ Many *madrassas* was born in Deobandi movement of Uttar Pradesh during the Islamic revival in 19th century in northern India. Deobandi is a strict movement, even taking photo is not allowed within the movement. Fifty years ago there was only one single *madrassa*. There are eight thousand students in a *madrassa* in Karachi today. Approximately 30% of the students attending the *madrassas* are

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 56-57

³⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 23

³⁶ David Rohde, "Pakistan's Terrorist Factory: Fact or Figment?", *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 87, Issue. 97, (1995)

from, particularly from Afghanistan, Middle East, Central Asia and African countries.³⁷

Students who attend the *madrassas* are usually children of very poor families. The period of their education changes from two to nine years. Most of the educations in these schools are on Quran memorization and some basic religious knowledge. However, after the emergence of the Taliban, "Jihad" focused ideological education is given to the students.³⁸

An internal affairs officer Abdur Rauf Chaudhry states that some reports indicate that military trainings are given in these *madrassas*. However, the teachers of these *madrassas* strictly reject this and claims that they don't have any arm in their camps and they are not creating terrorists or soldiers. *Hareketu'l Mujahideen* (known as *Hareketu'l Ansar*), operating in one of these *madrassas* is listed as terrorist organization in United States list.³⁹

Taliban's highest body was the Supreme *Shura* (council). The council was composed of ten permanent members, predominantly Mullah Omar's first friends and colleagues who were *Durrani Pashtuns*. However, military commanders, tribal elders and *ulema* were taking part in the council meetings that would make it a flexible and amorphous structure consisted of generally 50 people. Six of the ten permanent members were of *Durrani Pashtuns*, only one Tajik and the rest were of other *Pashtun* tribes (see Table 1). The constitution of the council always was based on a narrow basis and therefore never represented the interests of the whole country. The Taliban had two more councils. The first was Council of Kabul, the cabinet formed by ministers in Kabul. The second was the military committee, in other words the military *Shura* (see Table 2). The members of these councils as well were mainly from *Durrani*

³⁷ Robert Marquand, "US Missiles Struck Graduates Of Pakistani Islamic Schools", *The Christian Science Monitor*, (August 26, 1998)

³⁸ David Rohde, "Pakistan's Terrorist Factory: Fact or Figment?", *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 87, Issue. 97, (1995), pp. 1

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 2

Pashtuns. These two councils were held responsible to report all their activities to the council in Kandahar.⁴⁰

Table 1 Ethnic Composition the 10-Member *Shura* Based in Kandahar

Names	Ethnicity
Mullah Mohhamad Rabbani	Kakar <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Mohammad Ghaus	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Mohammad Hassan	Ghilzai <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Mohammad Fazil	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Abdul Razzaq	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Seyid Ghiyasuddin Agha	Tajik
Mullah Khayrullah Khayrkha	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mawlawi Abdul Sattar Sanani	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mawlawi Ehsanullah Ehsan	Durrani <i>Pashtun</i>
Mullah Abdul Jelil	<i>Pashtun</i>

Table 2 Military *Shura*: The Structure of Military Command of the Taliban

Names	Position
Mullah Mohhamad Omar	Commander in Chief
Mullah Mohammad Hassan	Military Chief of Staff
Mullah Rahmatullah Akhund	Chief of the Army Staff
Mullah Mohammad Fazil	Commander of the Army Staff
Mullah Juma Khan	Army Division Chief
Mullah Mohammad Yunus	Army Division Chief
Mullah Mohammad Gul	Army Division Chief
Mullah Mohammad Aziz Khan	Army Division Chief
Mullah Mohammad Zahir	Armored Force No. 4

⁴⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 98-99

2.3. MULLAH MOHAMMED OMAR AND HIS LEADERSHIP

The Taliban is an organization that was born in special circumstance of Afghanistan and their leader is Mullah Mohammed Omar. Since its inception in 1994, he is earthly ruler and spiritual leader of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.⁴¹

The same year, a group of students from Dar al-Ulum Hakkaniye *madrassa*, located in Akaro Khattak province of northwestern Pakistan, came to join to the movement of one-eyed religious leader and *Mujahid* commander, Mullah Omar. These young people, firstly, were the children of war and mostly consisted of the refugee families fled the Soviet occupation. Secondly, they hadn't grown up in Afghanistan and they were not aware of their own historical, cultural and tribal features. Thirdly, ethnically they were *Durrani Pashtun*. And fourthly, they were too young in the struggle of Afghanistan against the Soviets.⁴²

Omar was born in 1959 as the son of a peasant farming. He grew up in mud nuts in Sange Hisar village located near Kandahar. His leadership, in contrast to the leadership that is strongly based on nobility, was beyond all possibility. He was mullah in one of the *madrassas* close to Kandahar. However, he fought from 1989 to 1992 against Soviet troops and Najibullah's regime. He was terribly appalled because of the behavior of the former *Mujahideen* commanders. They were doing robbery, rapping women and young boys and were intercepting the ways of international relief employees.⁴³

Having long black beard and wearing a black turban, tall and well-built, Omar was deprived of sense of humor and sarcastic intelligence. He is very shy in the face of foreigners, especially those coming from other countries, but he is extremely comfortable between Taliban. When the movement began, he used to mingle freely with the crowd in Friday sermons of the main mosque in Kandahar, but later he would return to his solitude outside the government

⁴¹ Johanna McGeary, vd "The Taliban Troubles" *Time*, 10/01/2001, Vol. 158, Issue 15, p. 36

⁴² Laxman Bahroo, "The Taliban: Pakistan's Proxy and Regional Impact", *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, Volume 3(6), (May-June 2001)

⁴³ Rober Marquand, "The Reclusive Ruler Who Runs the Taliban", *The Christain Science Monitor*, (October 10, 2001)

buildings of the Kandahar. Sometime later, he started to visit his village very rarely and when he visits, a convoy of ostentatious Japanese jeeps with tinted windows and dozens of guards accompanies him.⁴⁴

Omar speaks up very little in the council meeting and usually prefers to listen to others' perspectives. He could not make strong speeches in front of people because of his timidity and now despite of the legend surrounding him, his charismatic character is also very limited. He executes the daily works from his small office in his home all day long. At first, he sat on the cement floor when the Taliban came to visit him but now, emphasizing on his leadership position, he settled himself on a bed. He has couple of secretary that records the conversations with commanders, ordinary soldiers, *Ulema* and plaintiffs. In important meetings, Omar's trusted confidant and official spokesperson Mullah Vakil Ahmad usually stands by him.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.24

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp.24-25

CHAPTER 3: THE TALIBAN MOVEMENT BEFORE 9/11

Afghanistan, before the emergence of the Taliban at the end of 1994, was almost in a straggle situation. The territory of the country was divided between the privileged warlords. The warlords were at fight with each other and they were constantly changing sides. The country was engaged in a series of alliances, betrayals and bloodshed. While the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, consisted of mainly *Tajiks*, was controlling Kabul and its surroundings and northeastern, Herat centered three province of western Afghanistan was under the control of Ismail Khan. A council of *Mujahideen* commanders based in Jalalabad province achieved dominance in the three *Pashtun* provinces at the eastern boundary of Pakistan. A small area extending from the south and east of Kabul was under the control of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. In the north Uzbek warlord General Rashid Dostum ruled over six provinces. *Hazaras* were holding control of Bamyan province in the central Afghanistan. Southern Afghanistan and Kandahar were divided between dozens of small *Mujahideen* warlords and bandits.⁴⁶

These conflicts between warlords and *mujahideen* extremely troubled the people and some again chose to leave Afghanistan. The violence, especially towards women, that warlords and former *mujahideen* created was noted by Amnesty International as this:

“Women and girls all over Afghanistan live in constant fear of being raped by armed guards. For years, armed guards have been allowed to torture them in this way without fear of reprimand from their leaders. In fact, rape is apparently condoned by most leaders as a means of terrorizing conquered populations and of rewarding soldiers. Some women have attempted suicide to avoid being raped... Fear of rape and other abuses has led many families to leave Kabul. Torture of civilians in their homes has become endemic. Women and girls are treated as the spoils of war, being raped by armed guards or sold into prostitution. Unarmed civilians suspected of belonging

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.27

to a rival ethnic group are routinely beaten and otherwise ill-treated.”⁴⁷

3.1. THE HISTORY OF THE TALIBAN UNTIL 9/11

In a very plain language the meaning of the Taliban is “Islamic students”. After occurrence of Mullah Omar’s political movement the word “Taliban” became the agnomen of the group. The group was predominantly consisted of the students in *Madrassas*, the religious schools.

For some scholars the emergence of the Taliban is not a new event in Afghanistan. According to Musa M. Maroofi the history of *madaris*⁴⁸ (religious schools) and *taliban* (religious students) is as old as the advent of Islam in Afghanistan. Both religious schools and religious students existed in Afghanistan long before the modern system of schools and education was implemented there nearly a century ago. Taliban, since the introduction of Islam to Afghanistan, has been an inseparable part of the social structure in some way as a religious proletariat. In addition, *madrassas*, mosques, shrines and everything that is related with religion characterize themselves as *mujahideen* whenever the cause of Islam and Afghanistan was at stake. For that matter, Taliban is not a newly emerged movement in the history of Afghanistan. However, the international community chooses to understand them differently and seems to be confused by the Taliban phenomenon.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Amnesty International, November 1995

⁴⁸ Plural form of *madrassa*.

⁴⁹ Musa M. Maroofi, “The Afghan Taliban: Like it or not, It Occupies Two-Third of Afghanistan and Shows No Sign of Weakend”, *Washington Report*, On Middle East Affairs, (April 1998), p.47

3.1.1. The Emergence Of The Taliban And The Seizure Of Kandahar

Mullah Mohammed Omar was one of the Jihad veterans from the district of Maiwand in the west of Kandahar. He took a stand with Yunis Halis' Hizb-e Islami and fought against the Soviets and regime of Najibullah. In the years of Jihad he had wounded four times and lost one of his eyes. After Jihad he gave all of his weapons and ammunition to Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and returned to Maiwand to maintain his studies at Sang-i Hisar Madrassa.

He was very disappointed with the events that followed the ouster of Najibullah regime. In the late September 1994, he decided to work on establishing a truly Islamic State in Afghanistan. Then, he started to gather students around his objectives. He visited local mosques and spread his mission. During the early days of his mission he had no money or weapons. The first apparent assistance came from Haji Bashar of Maiwand. Haji Bashar was a commander of Mawlawi Yunis Halis, he gave his small arm depot to Mullah Omar.⁵⁰

After a few weeks, Mullah Omar and his follower gained the necessary arms and vehicles to accomplish their goals. The first attempt of the Taliban towards their mission was the seizure of Spin Boldak. Before this incidence few legends about the emergence of the Taliban was rumoring among the citizens. One story of the emergence of the Taliban was described in Kamal Matinuddin's study as this:

“On 20 September 1994, a Herati family, while on its way to Kandahar from Herat, was stopped at a check point ninety kilometers short of Kandahar by local mujahideen bandits. The men and women were separated. The boys were taken away and molested. The girls were repeatedly raped until they became unconscious. Later all of them were killed and their bodies partially burnt. It was Mullah Omar (sometimes referred to as Mullah Mujahid) who was the first to arrive on the scene. He is reported to have gathered some talibs who helped him in collecting the bodies. These were washed and given a decent burial. He then gathered the [religious] students and pledged to

⁵⁰ Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.25-27

*start a campaign to get rid of such criminals... The Taliban movement had begun.*⁵¹

The situation on the verge of the appearance of the Taliban movement that is noted in Ahmad Rashid's book is quite same with Madinuddin's: in the spring of 1994 Mullah Omar had gathered some 30 Talibs⁵², only 16 of them armed with rifles, to rescue two teenage girls who had been abducted and repeatedly raped at a military base in his hometown of Sang-e Hisar. The Talibs set free the girls and hung the camp commander from the barrel of a tank. Large quantity of weapons and ammunition was also seized in the raid. Asking for no reward and helping in establishing an Islamic system, Mullah Omar's prestige grew rapidly.⁵³

Spin Boldak, a very small Afghan border post between Afghanistan-Pakistan, was under control of Hikmetyar's men. The goods and transportation trucks coming from Pakistan had to cross this post. The fuel sent from Pakistan to support the troops of the warlords had to get inside the Afghanistan through this way. This pass was also important for the Transportation mafia in order to keep the city under control. In 12 October 1994, up to 200 Taliban coming from Kandahar and Pakistani *madrassas* had reached to this post located right across Chaman in Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Mullah Omar had given several hundred thousand Pakistani rupees to clear the roads and if the safety of the truck traffic is provided they promised to make a payment each month.⁵⁴

Upon this the Taliban separated into three groups and assaulted Hikmetyar's men. After around two hours of fighting, seven men of Hikmetyar were killed and just one Talib died. Immediately after this incident, the Taliban seized Pasha arm depots, a large weapon depot that had been moved across the border in 1991. This was the first major military operation of the Taliban. The ammunition taken from these operations become the backbone of the Taliban at

⁵¹ Ibid, pp.25-26

⁵² Singular form of Taliban that means student.

⁵³ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.25

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 27-28

their initial stage. The Taliban captured 18 thousand Kalashnikov rifles, dozens of artillery material, large amount of ammunition and several vehicles.⁵⁵

The takeover of Spin Boldak was the first real sign of an imminent shift of forces in Afghanistan. This incident took little attention of Rabbani's government who was putting up the fight to survive the pressure of Hekmatyar and his allies of the Supreme Coordination Council, Uzbek warlord Dostum and the Shiite Hezbe Wahdat-e Islami (Islamic Unity Party). But it attracted a great deal of attention of the *Mujahideen* warlords who had misruled the city of Kandahar since the fall of Najibullah.

Strain rose promptly between the Taliban and the Kandahar commanders soon after the fall of Spin Boldak. The Kandahar commanders claimed that the Taliban were being supported by the Pakistani authorities and clearly feared the religious students had bigger things in mind. But typically they took no step in the direction to toss out their differences and put forward a united front. Even though Ghaffar Akhundzadeh of Helmand showed efforts to mediate between the two sides, tension finally caused open conflict over the celebrated convoy incident that had become an important part of Taliban lore.⁵⁶

In order to obtain western financial support for upgrading trans-Afghan Highway project of worth \$300 million US dollars, on 29 October, a Pakistani convoy, provided from National Logistics Cell (NLC) of Pakistan army established by ISI in 1980s in order to transport USA weapons to *Mujahideen*, under command of Pakistani General Babar, loaded with medicine, consumer goods and foodstuff left Quetta en route for Turkmenistan via Kandahar and Herat. On 2 November the convoy was stopped by some local commanders (Amir Lalai, Mansur Achikzai and Ustaz Halim) and the 30-vehicle convoy held as hostage. The commanders were angry that the Pakistan was backing the new force, thus, the incident was not usual casual banditry, it rather was a political ransom. While the negotiations were continuing between commanders and the convoy

⁵⁵ Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp. 45-46

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 46-47

authorities, Islamabad was looking for solutions to rescue the convoy. After taking in consideration all the possible scenarios, Pakistan decided to give the rescue mission to the Taliban. On 3 November 1994, the Taliban attacked those who took the convoy. The commanders thought that the attack was a raid of Pakistan army and escaped.⁵⁷

This incident was their second successful military operation. Not just the Taliban captured notable amount of ammunition and guns from these commanders but also the people of the region started to realize the power of the newly risen student movement. The same evening the Taliban moved against Kandahar with the power they gained from the clashes of these operations. The most prominent commander in the city Mullah Naqib, who had 2500 men under his command, showed no resistance against the Taliban.⁵⁸

Mansur, Lalai, Halim, and Sarkateb were the commanders who showed resistance. They were swept away in two days of fighting. In this process the Taliban seized dozens of tanks, armored cars, military vehicles and weapons. The most important ones among the booty were six MIG-21 fighters and four Mi-17 transport helicopters. 20 tanks and two additional Mi-17s were captured at the base of Sarkateb. From both Lalai and Naqib the Taliban inherited extra armor, including tanks and armored vehicles.⁵⁹

Thus in a few weeks an unknown and newly risen force had taken control of Afghanistan's second biggest city. And by just a few losses of lives they grow from several hundreds to some 2500-3000 disciplined and motivated fighters.

Rauf Beg, in his study, describes the first days of the emergence of the Taliban as: "The people of the Afghanistan, for the first time, met with name of the Taliban in summer months of 1994 when a group of people turned up at the gates of east. Being unaware of the situation, the people first thought that they

⁵⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.28 Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp. 47-49

⁵⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.28-29

⁵⁹ Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp. 48-49

were peacekeeping troops of UN and they came to apply its decision. They reported that they have no interest and contact with any fraction after they attacked Spin Boldak with around 150 Pakistani paramilitary force and 50 tanks belonged to Pakistan. Many rumors were circulating, and the most important one was that, UN, quazi, brought together the former soldiers and put them on the payroll to clean the Afghanistan from arms. The leadership was given to a person named Mullah Mohammed Omar Ahun.”⁶⁰

The rapid growth of the Taliban was a phenomenon among politicians and western diplomats. Mullah Omar and his small numbered followers managed to successfully finish two military operations and seize a weapon depot and the second city of Afghanistan, Kandahar, in a very small period of time. After the domination of Kandahar the Taliban, without losing time, started to implement a very strict version of *Sharia* of Muslim world. All girls’ schools were closed and women’s working outside their houses was banned. The men were commanded to grow beard and not to shave.

3.1.2.The Occupation Of Herat

The success in Kandahar gave the Taliban a great deal of moral and very soon 20 thousand Afghan and Pakistani *madrassa* students came in crowd to join Mullah Omar's movement. The Taliban's' popularity increased so much that it also received lots of recruits from Kandahar and surrounding cities. After the occupation of Kandahar, the Taliban broke the deadlock of Afghan civil war by capturing 12 out of 31 provinces of Afghanistan and proceeded to the foothills of Kabul in the north and to Herat in the west. ⁶¹

Just in a few months the Taliban scored a series of significant successes and swept through Uruzgan, Zabul, Paktia, and Paktika, where they met little resistance. These cities fall one by one almost without a fire shot. The

⁶⁰ Rauf Beg, *Adı, Afganistan'dı Talibanların Eline Nasıl Düştü?*, (Turan Yayıncılık, 2001), pp.205

⁶¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.31-32

commanders of these areas didn't show resistance either by bribing or by fear of punishment and/or because of Taliban's popularity they chose to surrender. The Taliban seized both fighters and weapons from the surrendered *Mujahideen*. Then the Taliban reached to Ghazni in the northeast and Herat in the east.⁶²

Hekmatyar was busy rocketing Kabul to overthrow Rabbani government when he had to face the Taliban at the gates of Ghazni. At first the Taliban bypassed Ghazni and seized the territory beyond it. When they turned back to enter Ghazni, Hekmatyar launched an offensive against the Taliban to prevent them from seizing the city. The governor of the Ghazni was Qari Baba. He was appointed by the Rabbani regime and because Hekmatyar and Rabbani were bitter rivals at that time he defected to the Taliban. And again the Taliban captured the city without much fighting. Hekmatyar counter attacked the Taliban to retake the Ghazni, to prevent them from spreading to the territories he command. Rabbani's and Nabi Mohammadi's (Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami) forces came to help the Taliban. The forces of Hekmatyar caught between two fronts and with heavy casualties his plan to retake Ghazni was far from realization. The Taliban cut the supply lines of him from Jalalabad and made a well-armed attack on Maidan Shahr. Hekmatyar lost his stronghold in Charasyab and the Taliban entered to Charasyab without facing much resistance. With leaving behind great stock of artillery he had to flee to Sarobi.⁶³

The Taliban was getting popular and bigger each day. They were like undefeatable soldiers of Allah. Then, the Taliban turned their face to the north, Kabul. Masoud was dealing with the resistance and attacks of Shiite Hazaras of Hezb-e Wahdat forces. He started an immediate assault and sent his tanks to the south neighborhood of Kabul and ejected the Hazaras from Kabul. Seeing the Taliban heading to Kabul, Hazaras proposed an agreement with the Taliban and gave their heavy weapon and position to Taliban. Masoud was not in favor

⁶² Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.70

⁶³ Ibid, pp.70-73; Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp.52-53

of giving the position of Hazaras to the Taliban. Thus, in 11 March 1995 after a deadly street conflict, Masoud withdrew the Taliban from the city. This was the first setback of the Taliban.⁶⁴

The Taliban then drew their attention to the west. They already took two cities, Nimroz and Farah that were under control of Ismail Khan by February 1995. They headed towards Shindan where an old Soviet air base was located. Ismail Khan was in trouble facing the Taliban and this situation worried the Kabul regime. Thus, Mesoud's planes started to bombardment the front line of Taliban. In addition, he built an air bridge between Kabul and Herat and sent 2000 of his experienced soldier to the frontline of Ismail Khan.⁶⁵

Taliban had no air power and the logistic support from Kandahar base was very weak. They started to give heavy casualties as they attacked to the emplacements of the government around Shindan. By the end of March 1995, the Taliban was driven from Shindan. They gave at least 3 thousand casualties and had to leave most of the territories they captured.⁶⁶

After the rapid rise, this situation was a disaster for the Taliban. The forces of government defeated the Taliban in front. The Taliban left Kandahar with great deal of moral and hope, however; they gave heavy casualties while returning back to Kandahar. Ahmed Rashid notes the harsh conditions of the Taliban and mentions his interview with Salih Mohammed stating the situation of those days: "We have never seen such an inhospitable environment. Every day we are bombed, 10 to 15 times. There is no food or water and my friends have died of thirst. We lost communication with our commanders and we don't know where our other troops are. We ran out of ammunition. It was a great misery."⁶⁷

The Talibans set-backs occurred outside Kabul and Shindand triggered some analysts to anticipate the end of Taliban expansion and even their ending under

⁶⁴ Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan: the Forgotten Crisis", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, vol: 15, No: 2, UNHCR, (1996), pp. 27

⁶⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.36

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp.36

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp.36

the pressure of *Pashtun* tribal royalties.⁶⁸ The number of provinces that were under the control of Taliban decreased from 12 to 8. The seizure of Herat was not only important for the Taliban but also it had a fundamental role for *Pashtun* transportation and drug mafia that wanted to streamline their business to Iran and Central Asia through Herat.

This defeat made the Taliban to improve their military tactics and facilities. A great importance in the training of Taliban were given, especially in mobility. Large number of new pick-up trucks came from across the border of Pakistan. Meanwhile, Taliban made an agreement with Uzbek warlord Dostum to send his technicians to maintenance the Taliban MiG-21 fighters. Recruitment was too increased during the summer. New forces were coming both from the *madrassas* from cross the border and from *Mujahideen* groups of internal *Pashtuns*.⁶⁹

In the meantime, Ismail Khan, by the backup of Rabbani government, started an offensive attack and marched towards the south. As the Taliban were unprepared, he captured Dilaram and Helmand in a few weeks and started to threaten Kandahar. The troops of Ismail Khan were spread in a large area. Soon enough, the Taliban got back their strength and cut supply lines of Ismail Khan. The Taliban came outmaneuver over the troops of Ismail Khan in Girishk. Ismail Khan then ordered a general retreat. In a few days, the Taliban repulsed the troops of Ismail Khan from Shindan. In a blockade panic Ismail Khan, with his commanders and a few hundred soldiers flee to Iran. Now Iran was sharing the border with the Taliban and was displeased and concerned about their radical Sunni ideology. The loss of Herat came as a terrible impact to government moral. The government was blaming Pakistan and ISI for their support to Taliban. A group of pro-government attacked the embassy of

⁶⁸ Anthony Davis, "Afghanistan's Taliban", *Janes Intelligence Review* 7, (1995), pp. 315-321

⁶⁹ Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp. 60

Pakistan in Kabul and the relations between Kabul and Islamabad fell to their lowest point since the fall of Khost in the days of Najibullah.⁷⁰

The Taliban obtained the control of trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan on Turghundi by the capture of Herat. Thus, the source of income of Taliban was increased. Taliban also capture some significant amount of military supplies. Fifty-two MiG-21's, some helicopters and around sixty pieces of artillery fell into the hands of the Taliban. The seizure of Herat; however, brought Taliban into direct conflict not only with Iran but also with Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Iran was not happy with the increased number of Afghan refugees. In addition, the sectarian differences between Iran and the Taliban triggered Iran to raise its support to the anti-Taliban forces. The fear of the spread of fundamentalism in Central Asia alerted the secular governments of Central Asia and Russia. India was also disturbed by the increase of Pakistan influence in Afghanistan. The issue was further internationalized by the possibility of constructing oil and gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan.⁷¹

Then the Taliban marched on Ghor, without any resistance the Taliban seized Ghor promptly. The province of Khost had two training camps (al-Badar 1 and al-Badar 2). These camps had been formed by Hekmatyar's Hizb-e Islami and they were giving military training to some Islamic militants. When the Taliban marched towards Khost; however, the militants in them did not stand out against the Taliban either.⁷²

3.1.3.Fall Of The Rabbani Government

After taking over Herat, Ghor and Khost, the Taliban shifted their troops from Kandahar and Ghazni into Logar province and Maidan Shahr and announced

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 61-63; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press), 2000, pp.39-40

⁷¹ Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.76-78

⁷² Ibid, pp.78-80

major attack on Kabul. The Taliban gave five-day ultimatum to Rabbani to resign otherwise they would incept the attempts toward invading Kabul. Rabbani; however, severely rejected Taliban conditions for capitulation.⁷³

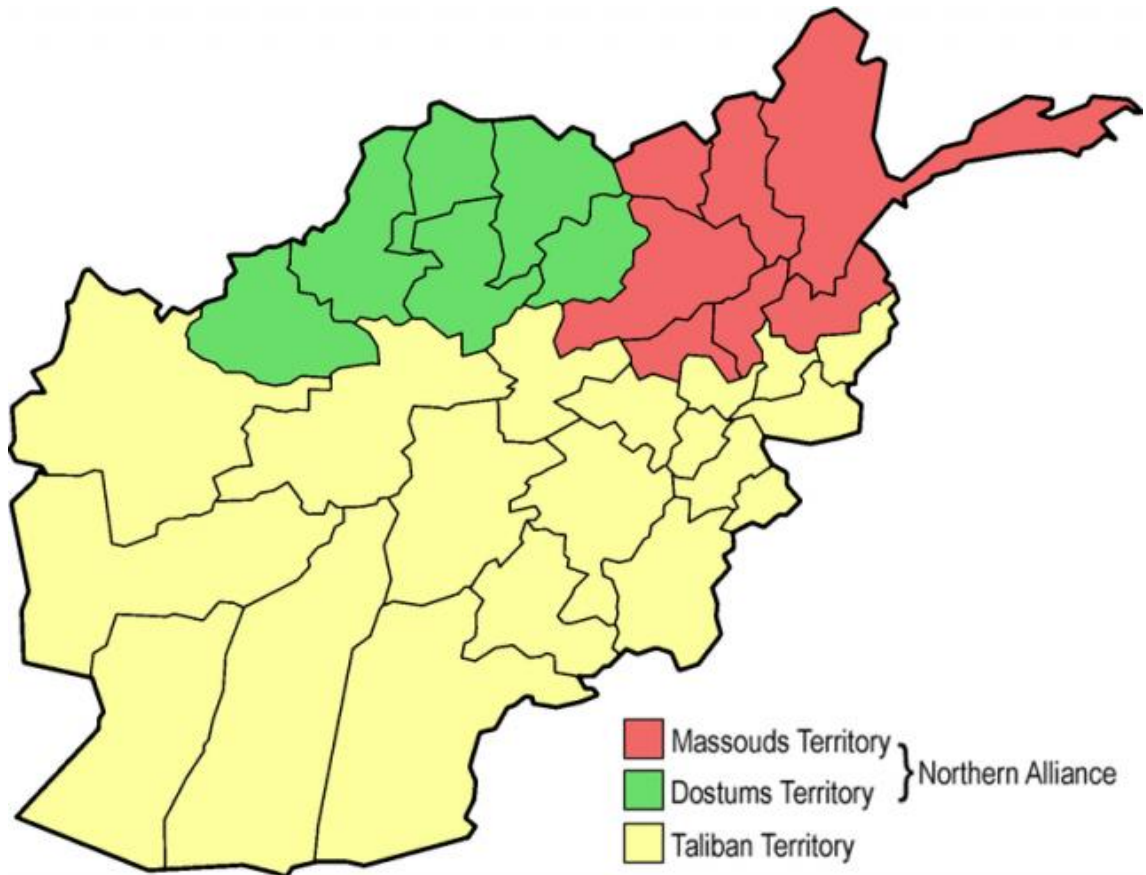
In the spring of 1996, not more than a quarter of Afghanistan's territory was controlled by the Rabbani government. The Taliban gained domination over Kandahar, Herat and most of the eastern *Pashtun* areas. The areas that were not aligned were the other northern *Pashtun* areas, Dostum's area in the north and the Hazara areas in the center. In May Gulbuddin Hikmatyar agreed to join the government of Rabbani as Prime Minister and took some of his remaining troops into Kabul to accompany in the fight against the Taliban. This was a symbolic political success accomplished by Rabbani and Massoud.⁷⁴

The Taliban started their military expeditions against Kabul with the attack on Charasyab. After invading Charasyab, the Taliban surrounded Kabul from three sides. The hills enclosing Kabul were not only suitable for the Taliban to disguise but also to emplace heavy weapons that were going to be used for the bombardments of the city. However, the resistance of Ahmad Shah Masoud troops showed that the nut was too hard to crack this time. These attacks cost the Taliban incommensurably high casualties and worn out their capacity for further serious ground attacks. The condition turned into a no-win situation for the Taliban, as the intense resistance continued, because the increase in the civilian casualties would place them on the same position with the other *Mujahideen* leaders and they would lose the sympathy of the people.⁷⁵

⁷³ "Document - Afghanistan: Further Information On Fear For Safety And New Concern: Deliberate And Arbitrary Killings: Civilians In Kabul", *Amnesty International*, ASA 11/15/95, 16 November 1995, accessed September 24, 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA11/015/1995/en/6d874caa-eb2a-11dd-92ac-295bdf97101f/asa110151995en.html>

⁷⁴ Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan: the Forgotten Crisis", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, vol: 15, No: 2, UNHCR, (1996), pp. 1-35

⁷⁵ Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.80-81; Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp.63-64



Map of the situation in Afghanistan in 1996: Ahmad Shah Massoud (red), Abdul Rashid Dostum (green) and Taliban (yellow) territories.⁷⁶

In the first months of 1996, hundreds of Mullahs and *Ulema* were heading towards Kandahar. This would be the biggest meeting of modern Afghan history. To discuss the future plan of action, more importantly to justify its position as the leader of the Taliban and the most powerful leader of the country, Mullah Omar summoned only the religious leaders to the meeting.⁷⁷

The moderate people in the movement were clearly talking about the necessity to start negotiations with Kabul regime during the long months of winter. The regoristics, however, defended the continuation of the conquest of the whole

⁷⁶ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a0/1996afghan_%281%29.png

⁷⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.41

country. Even there were deep divisions within the *Pashtuns*. While the group of Kandahari (*Pashtuns* of Kandahar) gathered around Omar wanted to continue war, the *Pashtuns* of the regions that the Taliban seized were pro-peace and wanted to search for ways to resolve the conflict.⁷⁸

The meeting of council continued day and night for two weeks. Agendas such as political and military future, how to best implement the *Sharia* law and how the education of girls in the areas that Taliban rule will be were discussed separately. These discussions, of course, were made highly confidential and the entrances of foreigners to Kandahar were banned during the council meeting.⁷⁹

The Taliban take a strategic step and nominated Omar to Amir-ul Mumineen⁸⁰ which would make his the undisputed leader of Jihad and Emir of Afghanistan. On 4 April of 1996 Omar appeared in the middle of city wearing cloak of the Prophet Mohammad and this way he gained the legitimacy rulership. The council meeting ended with the announcement of Jihad against the regime of Rabbani.⁸¹

Rabbani and Masoud were aware of the expansion of Taliban. In order to maintain existence of the government and to be able to oppose to the Taliban they needed back up. The regime of Kabul then took steps in direction of unifying anti-Taliban warlords and parties.

To shift the internal balance of power, Rabbani and regime strongman Massoud invited Dostum in the hope of persuading him to join with them; they also looked for Iranian, Uzbek, and Russian help in pushing Dostum to withstand the Taliban. But Dostum refused these suggestions and pressures, and made use of Kabul's weakness to seize some territory from the government. While Dostum and the Taliban confront Massoud and Rabbani and collaborated tacitly, the two groups were very suspicious of each other. Dostum worried a

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 41

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp.42

⁸⁰ Usually translated Commander of the Faithful or Leader of the Faithful, is the Arabic style of Caliphs and other independent sovereign Muslim rulers that claim legitimacy from a community of Muslims. It has been claimed as the title of rulers in Muslim countries and empires and is still used for some Muslim leaders.

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 42

Taliban takeover of Kabul because he was convinced they might move against him next, and he suggested for a transfer of power in the capital to a broad coalition which would include his own forces. It was not just Dostum, the Shiites, Hekmatyar, the Nengarhar Shura (council), Mujaddedi, Gailani, and Khalis factions preferred a transfer of power from Rabbani and Massoud but objected a Taliban takeover of the country.⁸²

Being anxious of Rabbani's achievements, Pakistan started attempts to draw the same war lords toward Taliban and to form an anti-Kabul alliance. However, Taliban strictly refused proposal of Pakistan and once again showed that they would not cooperate with the warlords and *mujahideens*. Taliban's stubbornness in refusing to make an agreement with the warlords disappointed Pakistanis. However, they relieved as the Taliban convinced Pakistan and Saudi Arabia that they will engage in a major attack to seize Kabul before winter.⁸³

In May Gulbuddin Hikmatyar agreed to join the government of Rabbani as Prime Minister and took some of his remaining troops into Kabul to accompany in the fight against the Taliban. This was a symbolic political success accomplished by Rabbani and Massoud.⁸⁴

Soon after the minister-ship of Hekmatyar, the attacks of the Taliban on Kabul became stronger. In August, Taliban forces overcame the forces of Hekmatyar in Paktia and captured his main base at Spin Shighar close to Pakistan border. From Paktia the Taliban, with a sudden attack, moved directly into Nangarhar (capital of Jalalabad province). Facing a surprise attack, there was a panic in Jalalabad and the Shura splintered into two. On 11 September 1996 the Taliban forces under the command of Mullah Borjan entered the city. Without losing time, the Taliban forces headed to Laghman and Kunar provinces. In the night of 24 September, the Taliban moved towards Sarobi that is 70 kilometers away

⁸² Zalmay Khalilzad, "Afghanistan in 1995: Civil War and a Mini-Great Game", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, No. 2, *A Survey of Asia in 1995: Part II*, (Feb., 1996), pp. 191

⁸³ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.44-46

⁸⁴ Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan: the Forgotten Crisis", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, vol: 15, No: 2, UNHCR, (1996), pp. 31

from Kabul and functions as the entrance door of the capital. Taliban forces were at their full speed.

Facing thunderbolt, the government troops pushed towards Kabul and the Taliban forces entered Sarobi and without stopping chose to follow them to Kabul. As the Taliban forces turned towards Kabul, the government forces tried desperately to form defense lines to rein back the expansion of Taliban. However, none of them could stop them. While one party of the Taliban were attacking Kabul from south, another party headed towards north and captured Bagram airfield, the only air connection of Masoud was cut off. On 26 September 1996 Masoud announced a general retreat and fled with his troops to their stronghold, Panjsher Valley. A few hours later the Taliban forces entered Kabul.⁸⁵

The first and most bloody action of the Taliban after entering the capital was the execution of former president Dr. Najibullah and his brother who were under the auspices of the United Nations since his withdrawal from presidency in 1992. Dr. Najibullah and his brother were killed after being brutally tortured and hanged on a traffic pole just outside the Saray (palace), not so far from the UN building.⁸⁶

The seizure of the Kabul by the Taliban pretty much de-potentiated the claim of the Rabbani's government to be the only lawful authority in the country. Even some military analysts foresaw that the possibility of peace returning to Afghanistan had somewhat increased.⁸⁷

Pakistan was long waiting to reach to the market of Central Asian countries. Afghanistan being divided between warlords made this slightly impossible.

⁸⁵Anthony Davis, "How the Taliban Became a Military Force", in *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, edited by William Waley, (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), pp. 65-68; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.48-49; Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 84-87

⁸⁶ Kathy Evans and Phil Goodwin, "From the archive: Kabul falls to Islamist Taliban militia", *The Guardian*, (Originally published on 28 September 1996), Monday 28 September 2009, accessed September 23, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2009/sep/28/taliban-afghanistan-kabul>

⁸⁷ Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.89

Pakistan hoped the Taliban would capture the rest of the country and restore a friendly regime to Pakistan, which would give Pakistan a chance to establish commercial contacts with the Central Asian states, her primary objective for years.⁸⁸

3.1.4. Efforts To Take Over The Northern Provinces And Mezar-e Sharif

In the wake of the fall of Kabul, Masoud withdrew to his home base in the Panjsher Valley. The Taliban didn't want Masoud to recruit and recure his power; thus, they gain ground to forty kilometers north of Kabul and invaded Charikar. Then they captured Jabal Siraj in the intake of the Salang pass. From there they moved to Pansher Valley. Masoud was very experienced in the combat skills and the Taliban fell into one of Masoud's regular traps. For years Uzbek warlord Dostum been a strict opponent of Masoud, however, the threat of Taliban to Northern Afghanistan pushed Dostom into alliance with Masoud. With the backing of Dostum, Masoud was able to force the Taliban to pull back. Though, the Taliban managed to resist Masoud's counterattack to some 25-30 kilometers north of Kabul. Masoud chose to spread the war to a wider area instead of attacking on Kabul directly.⁸⁹

Dostum suddenly found himself regarded as savior by neighboring states and many Afghans and as a last hope against the Taliban. There were some problems between Dostum and his commanders and soldiers. His soldiers were anxious because they were not paid for five months. Also, Dostum's second in command General Abdul Malik doubted that the death of his step-brother General Abdul Rasul was an act of Dostum. By betraying Dostum, Malik, with three senior Uzbek general, agreed with the Taliban and *Pashtun-Uzbek* alliance was established. The Taliban moved quickly from Herat and Kabul and

⁸⁸ Ibid pp.89-90

⁸⁹ Ralph H. Magnus, "Afghanistan in 1996: Year of the Taliban", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 2, (Feb., 1997), pp. 113-114; Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 91-93

turned to the north. Dostum with his 135 military officer and soldier fled initially to Uzbekistan and from there to Turkey. In a short period of time the Taliban captured the northern provinces including Mazar-e Sharif. Malik had plans to share the rulership with the Taliban; however, he was assigned as the Deputy Foreign Minister by Mullah Omar, an unimportant position. Even though Malik realized that the Taliban was not ready to share power with him, he continued to betray Dostum and delivered Ismail Khan, who was fighting in Faryab against Taliban, to the Taliban.⁹⁰

Now that the large part of Afghanistan was under the control of Taliban, Pakistan with Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban's government. On the afternoon of 28 May 1997 a quarrel between Taliban troops and Hazaras occurred. The disagreement was upon disarmament of Hazaras. This incident caused a chain effect and in a short period of time the people raise against the Taliban. After fifteen hour of intense fighting about 600 Taliban was killed in the streets and over thousand Taliban was captured when they were fleeing towards airport.⁹¹

Malik, once again shifted side and captured most of the cities the Taliban had seized five days ago. The Hazaras proceeded attack and split nine months of Talibans blockade on their homeland Hazarajat. Taking advantage of Talibans fell back; Masoud pushed on the northeastern of Afghanistan and entrapped the Taliban by blowing off the entrance of the tunnel of Salang Pass.⁹²

This was the most tragic defeat of the Taliban since their emergence. During a ten-week conflict between May and July, over three thousand Taliban either died, lost or injured. Besides, 3600 man of Taliban had fallen prisoners. Upon this Mullah Omar called an emergency on the students of Pakistan to succor. 5 thousand new volunteers came to join the ranks of the Taliban. The situation of

⁹⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 55-58

⁹¹ Ralph H. Magnus, "Afghanistan in 1997: The War Moves North", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 2, A Survey of Asia in 1997: Part II, (Feb., 1998), pp. 110

⁹² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 59

Taliban seemed so serious that Mullah Omar visited Kabul for the first time to discuss with his commanders and to raise the moral of the troops.⁹³⁹⁴

The internal rivalry between Dostum's and Malik's supporters pushed Taliban, by the support of local *Pashtun* tribes, to undertake a major attack on Malik. Malik could not resist the Taliban because of revolts of Dostum's supporters and lost Tashkhorgan on 7 September 1997. The seizure of Tashkhorgan caused a panic in Mazar-e Sharif and Malik together with Rabbani fled to Faryab and then to Iran through Turkmenistan. Soon after the Taliban entered the city, Dostum came back from Turkey, organized his troops and pushed back the Taliban from Mazar-e Sharif. The clashed between Uzbek and Hazara soldiers rose and the control of the city had passed to the Hazaras and Dostum was forced to shift his headquarters to his homeland Shibirghan. Then the Taliban seized the strategic town of Hairatan on the Afghan-Uzbek border just to cut the supply lines of Dostum.⁹⁵

Taliban continued to blockade the Hazarajat Region during the Fall of 1997. Despite several attempts of UN and World Food Program, the Taliban prevented humanitarian convoys to enter into the region. Starvation was used as force for the first time in the past twenty years of war within the Afghanistan. This was revealing precisely the severity of ethnic group and sectarian differences arose among people of Afghanistan. The Taliban strengthened the blockade over Hazarajat and got ready for a new attack on Mazar-e Sharif.⁹⁶

In July, the Taliban forces that gathered in Herat marched north and defeated Dostum forces. The Taliban captured approximately 100 tanks and vehicles and arrested around 800 Uzbek soldiers. The Taliban then forced some the commanders of Dostum to change side by bribing and entered to his headquarters in Shibirghan. To avoid being captivated, Dostum again fled to

⁹³ Ibid, 59-60

⁹⁴ Luke Harding, "Afghan Massacre Haunts Pentagon", The Guardian, Saturday 14 September 2002, accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/sep/14/afghanistan.lukeharding>

⁹⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.62-63

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp-67-70

Turkey through Uzbekistan. The escape of Dostum bring uncertainties among his commanders and most of his remaining commanders also accepted the bribes that the Taliban had offered and left about 1500 Hazara soldiers alone against the Taliban. The Hazara soldier resisted the Taliban to the bitter end, only 100 of them could remain alive after the attack. The Taliban once again entered to Mazar-e Sharif. However, this time the capture of the city was followed by the massacre of the civilians specially the Hazara civilians by the Taliban. Even, some of the local *Pashtuns* living in the city showed the houses of the Hazara families to the Taliban soldiers.⁹⁷

Although there were no independent observer to estimate the number of people had been killed, United Nations and International Red Cross latter announced that around 5000-6000 civilians were massacred in the Mazar-e Sharif. According to Rashid, this number increased as the Taliban captured Maymana and Shibirghan.⁹⁸

During the capture of Mazar-e Sharif one another incident occurred that almost bring the Taliban on the verge of war with Iran. The Taliban entered the Iran consulate in Mazar-e Sharif and killed 11 Iranian diplomats, intelligence officials and a journalist in the basement. Apart from that, the Taliban took prisoner 45 Iranian truck drivers that were carrying weapons to Hazaras.⁹⁹

3.1.5. Bamyan And Beyond

The military successes gained during the last clashed encouraged the Taliban. Not only controlling most part of Afghanistan but also the backup of Pakistan pushed Taliban to declare jihad against United States and Saudi kings family. On 7 August 1998 the supporters of Bin Ladin blew the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. After this incident, on 20 August United

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp.72-73

⁹⁸ Ibid, pp.74

⁹⁹ Douglas Jehl, "Iran Holds Taliban Responsible for 9 Diplomats' Deaths", The New York Times, September 11, 1998, accessed on 23.09.2013, <http://query.nytimes.com/search/sitesearch/#/taliban/from19940101to20011109/>

States launched missile strike on training camps of Bin Laden in the northeastern of Afghanistan. Later United States announced that Bin Laden was in these camps but managed to escape from there alive. However, during these strikes 20 people died and over 30 people got injured. The Taliban was very angry and many protests against these strikes took place in various cities of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰

On 13 September 1998, the Taliban organized an attack on Bamyan. Before they started attack they forced the Hazara commanders to surrender. The Hazara leaders and civilians evacuated the city. When the Taliban troops arrived the city, they faced no resistance and entered the city without any fire. The tension between Iran and the Taliban was already at its top, by the capture of Bamyan Iran got passed endurance. Soon after this incident, Iran started a large-scale military maneuver on the Iran-Afghanistan border. In October, up to 200 thousand Iranian military were regularly performing military exercises. As a precaution against a possible invasion of Iran, the Taliban kept five thousand men armed. UN Security Council didn't want an Iranian attack on Afghanistan; thus, on 14 October Ladhar Brahimi met Mullah Omar and the tension was reduced.¹⁰¹

The Taliban for the first time came close to a war with extra-territorium forces. The tension between Iran and Taliban rose after the invasion of Bamyan; however, according to Adam Tarock, Iran's concern about the developments in Afghanistan goes far beyond the murder and holding of Iranian nationals and the Taliban killing the Shiite in Mazar-e Sharif or Bamyan. For Iran those incidents fade into insignificance in comparison to the threat that the Taliban can potentially demonstrate to Iran's national security and economic interests if the Taliban eventually manage to reinforce their hold on Afghanistan. The relations of Tehran and Washington was not good, thus the US primary objective in supporting the Taliban has been to persuade international oil companies to consider Afghanistan rather than Iran as the exit-route for oil and

¹⁰⁰ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 75

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp.76

gas from Central Asia to world markets. Being an important actor in the region, Iran did not want to lose her position in the region and concerned about new alternative route for oil and gas.¹⁰²

Masoud made use of the opportunity, the tension between Iran and the Taliban, and organized a series of attacks on the Taliban during September and November. He captured some territory including strategically important from Taliban in the Northern Afghanistan. The Taliban gave serious casualties during these attacks. As the leaders of Uzbek and Hazara soldiers left their positions, Masoud found the opportunity to organize them and become predominated over others. Thus, Masoud was chosen the military commander of all anti-Taliban troops.¹⁰³

The clashes between Taliban and Masoud continued till 2001. During these years Taliban's most important step was the capture of Taloqan. Masoud retreated to Badakhshan, the last city that was under his control. Thousands of people became refugee and a new wave of refugee was at arrival. There were disputes within the Taliban as well. *Pashtuns* were angry because of Taliban's levity on governing rules and the pain the people suffered during the war. On 27 January 2000 over 20 thousand people protested the actions of Taliban in Khost. People were also blaming Taliban for receiving Bin Laden with open arms.¹⁰⁴

On 09 September 2001, just two days before 9/11, Afghanistan was shaken by the report of Ahmad Shah Masoud's assassination in a suicide attack organized by Al Qaeda members. The suicide bombers were meeting Masoud for an interview. They managed to enter explosives mounted in the camera. The death of Masoud was very terrible news for the people of Afghanistan especially for the Northern people.

¹⁰² Adam Tarock, "The Politics of Pipeline: The Iran and Afghanistan Conflict", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (August, 1999), pp. 801-819

¹⁰³ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 76-77

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp.77-80

3.2. EXTERNAL POWERS BEHIND THE TALIBAN

During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there were various groups of *Mujahideen* supported by external powers. USA did not want the Soviets to take over Afghanistan and become neighbor to southern Asia. Thus, a proxy war of cold was era between USA and the Soviet Union was at stake in Afghanistan. Just to empower the confronting groups United States poured tons of money and guns to Afghanistan through Pakistan. Pakistan also had its own agenda and interests. Long looking for a way to reach to Central Asian states, Pakistan supported the groups that would establish a friendly regime to Pakistan.

After the fall of Najibullah's regime, a new government was established by the *Mujahideen*. Although Hekmatyar was looking for power within the government, Rabbani became the president of Afghanistan. The conflict of interest between Hekmatyar and Rabbani brought Afghanistan to a civil war. Pakistan wanted a *Pashtun* and friendly regime thus was supporting Hekmatyar. There were other actors as well doing their part in this mini game. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, India were other major competitors during the era.

When the Taliban emerged to the ground of chaos, Pakistan shifted its support from Hekmatyar to the Taliban. Saudi Arabia sought to limit Iranian influence in Afghanistan. As Rabbani got closer to Iran, Saudi Arabia became closer to the Taliban. Although its support was not as much as it was during 1980s, still Saudi Arabia continued to provide financial support to the newly emerged Taliban movement.

3.2.1.Pakistan

Afghanistan shares its longest border with Pakistan. The two countries have their own particular interests toward each other. Geography and location of the countries, especially for Pakistan, comes first in the list of interests. Each country is a passageway to the other. In order to get to Central Asian States,

Pakistan has to go through Afghanistan. Meanwhile, as Afghanistan is a landlocked country, Pakistan is the easiest way to reach to sea ways.

In addition, both countries have *Pashtuns* within their population. To understand relations between two countries one has to look not only to the relations of Kabul-Islamabad, but also to some other aspects. Because there are large scale informal interactive relations among a range of interest groups and people, including tribes and traders, operating in the border regions independently of government of the two countries.¹⁰⁵ Thus, looking for the government of Pakistan's activity within the Taliban would not be enough to understand the impact of Pakistan in the emergence and rise of the Taliban.

The *madrassas* of Pakistan *per se* are significant enough to study the external hands behind the Taliban. These *madrassas* continued to be an important source of recruitment from the very early days of the advent of the Taliban. Not only voluntary soldiers were educated in these *madrassas*, but also the leaders of them were mentors and supporters of the Taliban movement. Even these religious leaders were effective in the policy making of within the government of Pakistan.

Early in the year of 1995, a gas pipeline project starting from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan caught the attention of Pakistan. An Argentinean company, Bridas the first and only western company working in Turkmenistan, found great reserves of natural gas in Yashlar region of Turkmenistan. Carlos Bulgheroni the owner of the company, a workaholic and idealistic businessman, had bigger plans not only for his company but also for the welfare and peace of the region. After the discovery of Yashlar natural gas reserves he started to work on an alternative pipeline project that would enable him to present the natural gas to the international market. The project was offering a pipeline covering 1400 kilometers from Turkmenistan through the southern region of Afghanistan to Pakistan, and even from Multan region of Pakistan to India. The project was promising great acquisitions for the region

¹⁰⁵ Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*, (Widrow Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 2011), pp. 163

countries. For Pakistan, this proposal of Bidas was offering even greater opportunities compared to their existing interests.¹⁰⁶

Many scholars, and most of the Afghan scholars, address Pakistan as a reason behind the rise of the Taliban. In this context, Daniel P. Sullivan study's the reasons and motives behind the mysterious rise of the Taliban. According to Sullivan, as many factors contributed to the rise of the Taliban, their ideology and external support, especially addressing support of Pakistan, stand out as of primary importance. Furthermore Sullivan argues that without unique legitimacy, discipline, and cohesion of their ideology and/or the support of Pakistan, the Taliban would not accomplish to control over 90% of Afghan territory.¹⁰⁷

3.2.2.Saudi Arabia

During the war against Soviet troops (or as called 'Jihad'), Saudi Arabia supported the *Mujahideen* groups to confront the Soviet forces. Saudi Arabia backed the *mujahideens* in the war between Muslims and non-Muslims. After the retreat of Soviet Union from Afghanistan, however, Saudi Arabia continued to support some of the *Mujahideen* groups.

Saudi Arabia had its own agenda in the civil war of Afghanistan. It was to disseminate its primarily anti-Iranian Wahhabi Islam. Saudi Arabia did not want the Iranian influence to dominate in Afghanistan, or any other Muslim country.

As the Taliban appeared in the scene and started to grow as a movement, Saudi Arabia added them in their list. The Taliban was an important investment for Saudi Arabia to increase again its decreased effect on Afghanistan. Two Saudi companies, Delta and Ningarcho, were interested in the gas pipeline project of Afghanistan and pressures on Riyadh toward further support to Taliban

¹⁰⁶ For detailed explanation see: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000)

¹⁰⁷ Daniel P. Sullivan, "Tinder, Spark, Oxygen, and Fuel: The Mysterious Rise of the Taliban", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 1, (2007), pp. 93-108

were increased. Taliban, as a tribute to these attempts of Saudi Arabia, put into effect setting up religious police, a Wahhabi rule.¹⁰⁸

3.2.3. United States

During the war against Soviet troops in Afghanistan, United States was at another proxy war against Soviet Union. United States supported anti-Soviet groups through CIA-ISI channel. After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, United States stopped its campaign towards *Mujahideen* parties. It is quite hard to say that United States had interests in the early days of the Taliban. As a matter of fact the Taliban was regarded as a peace provider of Afghanistan in the western countries.

United States came to the scene as the gas pipeline project brought up. A U.S. company, UNOCAL, and a Saudi company, bypassing the Argentinean company Bridas, signed the project agreement with Turkmenistan. The pipeline projects' Afghanistan route was in the southern region. As the Taliban got the control of Southern Afghanistan, the movement became one party of the project.

However, after the Taliban's failure in Mazar-e Sharif the authorities of UNOCAL started to have doubts about them as establisher of a stable regime in Afghanistan. The project depended on a peaceful and a willing to cooperate government within Afghanistan.¹⁰⁹

There is no explicit evidence supporting United State's backing the Taliban. However, it is quite clear that United States had or started to have interests in the region. According to Barnett R. Rubin, although United States likely did not

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (Yale University Press, 2000), pp.201

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 172-173

participate directly in setting up or helping the Taliban, the movement appeared to serve some of its strategic and economic interests.¹¹⁰

In this chapter, we studied the movement of Taliban from its early days till the incident of 9/11. Established with very few men, the Taliban accomplished to take control of almost 90% of Afghanistan in not more than four years. Occurrence of the Taliban to the scene of Afghanistan broke the deadlock of Afghan civil war and the Taliban swept many of the warlords and *mujahideen* that were controlling certain territories of the country.

The Taliban's first act after the capture of Kandahar was to ban girls from going to school and women's working outside their houses. Their strict rules were not only for women, the men were commanded to grow beard and not to shave. These rules of Taliban clearly show that they were committed to their unique ideology that was a radical interpretation of Islamic code.

It is quite obvious from the implementations of the Taliban that they were trying to make happy the madrassas of the Pakistan. The Taliban was aware of the potential manpower of these madrassas that could be used as soldiers. Interestingly, as they started to apply their strict rules, thousands of Afghan and Pakistani *madrassa* students came in crowd to join their movement.

These *madrassas* continued to be an important source of recruitment from the very early days of the advent of the Taliban. Not only voluntary soldiers were educated in these *madrassas*, but also the leaders of them were mentors and supporters of the Taliban movement. Even these religious leaders were effective in the policy making of within the government of Pakistan.

The more the Taliban received financial and recruit aid from Pakistan, the wider they spread and in a very short period they managed to capture 12 out of 31 provinces of Afghanistan proceeding to the foothills of Kabul in the north and to Herat in the west.

¹¹⁰ Barnette R. Rubin, "Women and Pipelines: Afghanistan's Proxy Wars", *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 73, No. 2, Asia and the Pacific (April, 1997), pp. 288

Despite the fact that Afghanistan is constituted from many ethnic groups, very few non-*Pashtun* people were placed in the government of the Taliban. It is explicit from the council members of the Taliban that the movement is formed by *Pashtun* majority and will serve for the interests of *Pashtuns*.

Although the uprising of the Taliban was because the *Pashtuns* were suffering from relative deprivation as they had little place in the government of Rabbani and the insurrection of the Taliban was a nationalistic act, to eliminate its rivals the Taliban used Islam to get external support.

In this context, it can be said that to attract the external support, the rebelled groups choose to emphasis on wider identity, like religion and/or common ideology. Hereby, the first hypothesis of this research is tested. The Taliban used the identity of Islam not only to attract the students of madrassas, but also to get the support of rich Muslim countries like Saudi Arab and United Arab Emirates.

The external aids provided enough power for the Taliban to confront its rivals. The actors within Afghanistan had relatively close power to each other. During their opposition and after the establishment of Taliban regime, the Taliban engaged in traditional direct conflict.

The only suicide attack recorded until 2001 was the assassination of Masoud, which was organized and conducted by Al-Qaeda members. The Taliban did not engage in any suicide attack towards its rivals.

CHAPTER 4: THE TALIBAN MOVEMENT AFTER 9/11

The assassination of Masoud was a gift of Al Qaeda to the Taliban. The Taliban, however, could not celebrate this incident properly as two days later another earth-shattering suicide attack news was circulating all over the world. Early in the morning of September 11, 2001 a sequence of coordinated attacks took place on United States soil. Four commercial passenger airplanes were hijacked. The hijackers deliberately crashed two of the airplanes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Both buildings fall down within a few hours. The hijackers crashed a third airplane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The flight crew and some of the passengers on the fourth plane attempted to take over control of the plane and in this attempt the plane crashed into a field near Shanksville in rural Pennsylvania. It is noted that the target of the last plane was White House or the Capitol.

Immediately after this incident the United States government called for Pakistan to extend cooperation in bringing the perpetrators of the terrorist act to justice. On 21 September, President George W. Bush stated: "This is not just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom".

In the same session he indirectly point to the obligation of NATO countries to support the United States government in its declaration of war against its enemies:

*"Perhaps the NATO charter reflects best the attitude of the world: An attack on one is an attack on all. The civilized world is rallying to America's side ... They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror unanswered can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments."*¹¹¹

President Bush and his administration made it clear that the United States bring the attackers to justice. Thus, it was clear from then that the United States

¹¹¹ George W Bush speech to Congress, 20 September 2001.

would search for Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda and would also punish those who backed and supported Al Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden was staying in Afghanistan under the guard of the Taliban. He did not have any other place to as no country was ready to accept his presence in their territory.

As a supporter of the Taliban regime and regardless of its return to the interest, Pakistan had to choose side in the war against terrorism. The influence of the 9/11 was so massive and fresh that the matter of denying support to the United States appeared out of the question.¹¹²

The Taliban leaders denied United States call for handing over Osama. At first they made it clear that delivery of Osama was impossible. All in the same breath of accepting to support United States, Pakistan tried hopelessly to convince the Taliban leader to change their decision on the refusal of surrender of Osama.¹¹³ The officials of Pakistan arranged few meetings with the leaders of the Taliban, including Mullah Omar, regarding this matter. The answer of the Taliban was quite clear.

In a last throw of the dice at the end of September 2001, the ISI built up a delegation of *Ulema* from the *madrassas* where the Taliban taken their education. The delegation met with Mullah Omar and spent a day with him. The meetings concluded with the cooperation of the Taliban. Afghan religious leaders disclosed a request to Osama to leave the country. However, this request of the leaders ended up unsuccessful as Osama had nowhere to go and the United States did not accept anything other than Osama's delivery. Haji Abdul Kabir, the deputy minister of the Taliban, offered a different scenario, to hand over Osama to a third country. As the United States wasn't accepting any other condition, the delivery of Osama to a third country was not approved.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*, (Widrow Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 2011), pp. 88-89

¹¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 90

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 92

4.1. FALL OF THE TALIBAN GOVERNMENT

After the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the United States, on 7 October 2001, the United States government started military operations in Afghanistan. Within four weeks after 9/11, the United States managed to form a coalition against the Taliban regime. The military action was called Operation Enduring Freedom. At first the forces of coalition did not set foot on the ground of Afghanistan, the tactic of the operation was to target the military sites of the Taliban through aerial bombardment and promote and establish a confronting side inside the Afghanistan.

The first targets of the air strikes were the areas around Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar. After the first few days the operation, air defense of the Taliban and their training sites were destroyed. Later, the operation focused on communication ways of the Taliban.

In the meantime, Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum returned to Mazar-e Sharif and started regrouping his forces. Northern Alliance troops including Dostum troops stood against the Taliban by repulsing their stand. On 9 November 2001, Northern Alliance forces, under the command of Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ustad Atta Mohammed Noor, launched attack on the Pul-i-Imam Bukhri bridge. There they met some resistance and captured the city's main military base and airport.¹¹⁵

The fall of Mazar-e Sharif was a great lose for the Taliban. It was expected that the Taliban would organize a fight and show resistance in Kabul. The expected tactic from the Taliban was that they would make the city impossible for the allied troops to bomb without conducting serious damage to the civilians. However, the Taliban defensive lines in the north of the Kabul fell down under the severe bombardments as the forces of Northern Alliances surrounded Kabul under the command of General Muhammad Fahim¹¹⁶. As the Taliban faced strong front, in the watched of the night, they decided to retreat without showing

¹¹⁵ "The Liberation of Mazar-e Sharif: 5th SF Group Conducts UW in Afghanistan." *Special Warfare* 15, no. 2 (June 2002): 37-39.

¹¹⁶ A Panjshiri Tajik and longtime lieutenant of Ahmad Shah Masoud

any resistance. On 12 November 2001 the forces of Northern Alliances entered the city and the control of Kabul fell to them.¹¹⁷

The collapse of Kabul signaled the beginning of a fall of Taliban positions across the country. Within a day, all the Afghan provinces along the Iranian border, including the key city of Herat, had fallen. Local *Pashtun* commanders and warlords had taken over throughout northeastern Afghanistan, including the key city of Jalalabad. Taliban supporters in the north, mainly Pakistani volunteers, receded to the northern city of Kunduz to make a stand. Starting on November 16, Kunduz will be captured after nine days of massive fighting and aerial bombardment. The Taliban forces surrendered to the Northern Alliance troops on November 25-26, 2001.

On November 25, the day that Taliban fighters surrendered in Kunduz, they were taken into the Qala-I-Jangi fortress near Mazar-I-Sharif. A few Taliban attacked some Northern Alliance guards and took their weapons and opened fire. This incident soon triggered a widespread rebel by 300 prisoners. The control over Qala-I Jangi was finally taken after 7 days of massive attack and aerial operations.¹¹⁸

The first and immense success of the United States during the early phase of the war was the death of Al Qaeda's number three Mohammad Atef along with his guard and six others in an air strike between 14-16 November 2001.¹¹⁹

By November 13, Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces had come together and were intensifying their forces in the Tora Bora cave, on the Pakistan border 50 kilometers southwest of Jalalabad, to get ready for a stand against the Northern Alliance and the Coalition forces. By November 16, U.S. air strikes started bombing the mountain fortress. Meanwhile, CIA and Special Forces operatives

¹¹⁷ Riaz Mohammad Khan, *Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism, and Resistance to Modernity*, (Widrow Wilson Center Press, Washington DC, 2011), pp. 94

¹¹⁸ Alex Perry, "Inside the Battle at Qala-i-Jangi", *Time Magazine*, April 9, 2007, accessed August 25, 2013, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1001390-1,00.html>

¹¹⁹ "Taliban Confirms Death of Osama Bin Laden's Military Chief in US Strike", *Associated Press*, November 17, 2001, accessed August 26, 2013, <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/special/terror/front/1136330.html>

were already at work in the area, enrolling and putting on payroll the local warlords to join the fight and planning an attack on the Tora Bora.¹²⁰

By the end of November, Kandahar, the Taliban's birthplace, was Taliban's last remaining stronghold. Kandahar was under increasing pressure. Unlikely from the missions of other region of Afghanistan, the fighters against Taliban in Kandahar were consisted of tribal fighters of *Pashtuns*, Hamid Karzai, a loyalist of the former Afghan king, and Gul Agha Sherzai, the governor of Kandahar before the Taliban seized power. These fighters pressured Taliban forces from the east and cut off the northern Taliban supply lines to Kandahar.¹²¹

As the tribal leaders' forces attacked on the Taliban, the United States-led coalition forces backed them by air strikes. The bases of Taliban were destroyed by the bombardments.¹²²

The first notable numbers of United States combat troops had arrived. Nearly 1,000 Marines, set up a Forward Operating Base in the Kandahar on November 25. This foothold was the coalition's first strategic footing in Afghanistan, and was the initial step towards establishing other operating bases. Meanwhile, the airstrikes continued to smash Taliban positions inside the city.¹²³ It was assumed that Mullah Omar was still present and hidden in Kandahar. Omar remained defiant although his movement only controlled 4 out of the 30 Afghan provinces by the end of November and called on his forces to fight to the death.

¹²⁰ Josh Tyrangiel, "Inside Tora Bora: The Final Hours?", *Time Magazine*, December 16, 2001, accessed August 26, 2013, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,188521,00.html>

¹²¹ See Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Kandahar; Taliban Find Themselves Isolated in the South, With Escape Routes Cut Off", *The New York Times*, November 27, 2001, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/27/world/nation-challenged-kandahar-taliban-find-themselves-isolated-south-with-escape.html?ref=kandahar>

¹²² See Thom Shanker and James Dao, "A Nation Challenged: Bombing; U.S. Planes Bomb Taliban Compound In Kandahar Area", *The New York Times*, November 28, 2001, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/28/world/a-nation-challenged-bombing-us-planes-bomb-taliban-compound-in-kandahar-area.html?ref=kandahar>

¹²³ See: James Dao and Douglas Frantz, "A Nation Challenged: Taliban Holdouts; Militias From South Closing In On Taliban's Last Major Bastion", *The New York Times*, November 30, 2001, August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/30/world/nation-challenged-taliban-holdouts-militias-south-closing-taliban-s-last-major.html?ref=kandahar>

On December 06, the Taliban agreed to surrender. The case of amnesty was at question. The United States did not agreed any amnesty for Omar or any Taliban leader stating that Taliban leaders should not be allowed to go free.¹²⁴ Upon this, on December 07, Omar covertly left the city of Kandahar with a group of his faithful commanders and troops and headed northwest into the mountains of Uruzgan Province. After two months of massive bombardments of Afghanistan, the Taliban forces pulled back and abandoned their last stronghold in Kandahar.¹²⁵

General Fahim, the military leader of the Northern Alliance, stressed that a significant number of Arab fighters were in the Tora Bora region and determined to resist. He also noted the strength of Al Qaeda fighters and the difficulty of their capture.¹²⁶

The said camp of Al Qaeda was pushed by anti-Taliban forces backed by United States-led coalition troops and air support. Within a week or less the caves of Tora Bora were captured and the Al Qaeda fighters slipped away into the tribal areas of Pakistan to the south and east. Although the search for Osama and Al Qaeda members continued till the beginning of 2002, no sign of Osama was found and it was believed that he somehow managed to escape and leave the region.

¹²⁴ See: Michael R. Gordon and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Talks Continuing; Offer is Made To Surrender Taliban's Last Stronghold; Deal May Hinge On Amnesty", *The New York Times*, December 07, 2001, accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/07/world/nation-challenged-talks-continuing-offer-made-surrender-taliban-s-last.html?ref=kandahar>

¹²⁵ See: David Rohde and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Last Stronghold; Taliban Abandon Last Stronghold; Omar is Not Found", *The New York Times*, December 08, 2001, accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/08/world/nation-challenged-last-stronghold-taliban-abandon-last-stronghold-omar-not-found.html?ref=kandahar>

¹²⁶ See: Michael R. Gordon and Norimitsu Onishi, "A Nation Challenged: Talks Continuing; Offer Is Made To Surrender Taliban's Last Stronghold; Deal May Hinge On Amnesty", *The New York Times*, December 07, 2001, accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/07/world/nation-challenged-talks-continuing-offer-made-surrender-taliban-s-last.html?ref=kandahar>

4.2. THE NEO-TALIBAN INSURGENCY

After the fall of the Taliban in December 2001 and the collapse of Al-Qaeda network in the country, the task of Operation Enduring Freedom was not over rather opened a new and harsher stage of sweeping away the remaining of the Taliban and reinforcing the achievements gained until then. During 2002 very few operations waged since the operation of Tora Bora in December 2001. The last major operation of the year was the Operation Anaconda. This operation was launched against the regrouped Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in the Shahi Kot Valley of Paktika Province in March. Although this operation caused heavy casualties for U.S forces, it was a clear success. Throughout the year, anti-US and anti-government activities continued across the country. These insurgent attacks took place from the troubled southeastern provinces to the streets of Kabul.¹²⁷

During the year 2002, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were defeated and an emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) was proposed to select the head of the state and to establish a Transitional Authority. Hamid Karzai was selected to the head of Afghanistan Transitional Administration. It was the first time in more than two decades of war and instability within Afghanistan that leaders and representative of people came together to advance their interests through political process.

Despite the achievement of establishing a ground of peaceful negotiations, anti-regime actors also gained strength. Throughout the year 2003, especially in the *Pashtun*-dominated regions, resurgent and neo-Taliban, anti-government warlords, resistive al-Qaeda fighters carried out an insurgency that outgrow as the days go on. These groups attacked American, coalition, Afghan military forces, UN personnel and aid workers and Afghan government officials and average citizens, causing hundreds of casualties. Large sections of the rural areas became too dangerous for rebuilding activities of Afghanistan as the

¹²⁷ Ali A. Jalali, "Afghanistan in 2002: The Struggle to Win the Peace", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2003), pp. 182-183

resurgent Taliban and other anti-government forces continued to deployed their activities against the regime.¹²⁸

Started in 2003, the insurgency continued to increased during 2004, both civilians and military United States, international and Afghan casualties rose gradually. The increasing insecurity pushed the United States to increase its forces in Afghanistan during 2004. By early summer, the number of United States troops headed more than 22,000.¹²⁹

On September 2005, an important political development was achieved in Afghanistan, after 36 years the head of Afghanistan was singled out through elections. This was a major step toward democratic transition in a country suffered from series of conflict for about a quarter century. The Taliban caused great terror to deter people from voting. The atmosphere of fear and insecurity created by them had great impact, especially in the south, on the number of total voters. People were warned in the rural areas not to participate in the elections. During the election period fighting continued between Taliban and United States-led coalition forces. As a result of Taliban's attacks 14 civilians, seven parliamentary candidates and six election workers were killed. Throughout the year, the Taliban (also called as neo-Taliban) and Al Qaeda fighters continued their insurgency mostly in the south and east. In the terms of casualties among civilians and military personnel, 2005 was the bloodiest period since the fall of the Taliban regime.¹³⁰

Throughout 2006, the Taliban, again, regrouped and its insurgency revived. Suicide attacks, ambushes, roadside bombs, and sometimes attacks on district headquarters in the relatively lawless south and east of the country have become frequent. Causing the death of more than 3,000 people, farther than 100 suicide attacks have been performed up to October 2006. The Taliban became more visible; in many towns they walk around freely during the

¹²⁸ Larry P. Goodson, "Afghanistan in 2003: The Taliban Resurface and a New Constitution is Born", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2004), pp. 14-22

¹²⁹ Larry P. Goodson, "Afghanistan in 2004: Electoral Progress and an Opium Boom", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2005), pp. 88-97

¹³⁰ Nasreen Ghufuran, "Afghanistan in 2005: The Challenges of Reconstruction", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2006), pp. 85-94

daytime, they even preach openly in local mosques and attract more disappointed locals to their movement.¹³¹ This strategy seems to be working as the Taliban have gained the essential support of local people to sustain their military activities.¹³²

The Taliban started to give their messages through publications on internet and magazines. The checklist below is taken from an article published on Al Emarah that shows the view of the Taliban towards the existence of the foreign troops and the administration of Afghanistan.¹³³

Activities of the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan (The Administration of the Taliban before 2001)

Afghanistan was an independent Islamic country and had absolute Islamic rule;

Everyone's life, property and honour (namoos) was secure, there was no stealing or abductions;

Everyone's rights were protected in the light of *Sharia* Law and everyone had equal privileges and punishment before the law;

Sovereignty was enforce-the entire system was administered with the law, and all decisions were made by the Afghanistan themselves;

There was no moral or administrative corruption at all;

The interests of the country were protected and socially uplifting activities were underway. Those mines for whose exploitation Afghans lacked equipment were kept as country's [future] capital;

There was security at that time.

¹³¹ See: Carlotta Gall, "Taliban Threat Is Said to Grow in Afghan South", *The New York Times*, May 3, 2006, accessed, August 29, 2013,

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/03/world/asia/03afghan.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0

¹³² Nasreen Ghufuran, "Afghanistan in 2006: The Complications of Post-Conflict Transition", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2007), pp.87-98

¹³³ H.N. "I Tell in Brief the Long Story I Have Heard and Seen Myself", Al Emarah, 23 August 2008 cited in Joanna Nathan, "Reading the Taliban", in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, edited by Antonio Giustozzi, (Columbia University Press, 2009), pp.36-37

The circumstances of the current imported administration

Everything is under the control of foreigners, the name of Islam is only used to deceive people;

No one's life, property or honour is secure, kidnapping, stealing and sexual assaults happen not only on adults but children;

"Right" is now in the hand of those with money and power, those who do not have financial means are deprived of their rights;

The current administrative corruption has also surprised the foreigners. Moral corruption has increased to the level that cases of AIDS have jumped to thousands in the last few years – and this is only the people whose blood has been checked;

The mines of the country are exploited in various ways because the aim of the foreigners was to seize the mines. On the other hand the so-called aid Money mainly goes in the pockets of foreigners and the little that remains goes into the bank;

The insurgency, solidity and strength of the Taliban was past the expectation of United States-led coalition. They admit that the guerilla forces of Taliban become more sophisticated, better organized and more numerous than before. Besides, public criticism is increasing on NATO forces as the number of civilian deaths rise as a result of military operations against the Taliban.¹³⁴

The Afghan government's increasing inability to secure the country became evident in 2008. During this year, Afghan and international security forces proved unable to effectively counter the increasing Taliban insurgency, which spread from the insecure regions, the southeastern, to other prior secure regions. The rise of violent incidents in Afghanistan spread to the capital, once was the securest area. On 7 July 2008, the Taliban launched a suicide car bomb attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul. This incident brought both domestic and international observers to realize that the Taliban insurgency was coming off a wider regional problem.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ See: Nasreen Ghufraan, "Afghanistan in 2006: The Complications of Post-Conflict Transition", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2007), pp. 92-93, also see: Nasreen Ghufraan, "Afghanistan in 2007: A Bleeding Wound", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2008), pp. 154-163

¹³⁵ Rani D. Mullen, "Afghanistan in 2008: State Building at the Precipice", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2009), pp. 28-38

Later, the United States officials stated that the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan helped the Taliban fighters in bombing of Indian embassy. This dramatic event not only worsened the relationship between India and Pakistan, but also strained relations between the United States and Pakistan.¹³⁶

This incident showed that the long relations between ISI and al-Qaeda members and the Taliban were still to question. Even though if there is no direct relation between ISI and the Taliban, there must be some Pakistani officials having steady links with the insurgent groups within Afghanistan.

On 25 September 2008, Pakistani troops fired shots towards United States helicopters. This induced confusion and anger in the Pentagon, Pakistan was asked for a full explanation. Although United States brought forward that the United States helicopters were in Afghanistan airspace, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari denied it and stated that the Pakistani troops shot flares to warn the Americans that they were in Pakistani airspace. A further tension occurred when United States troops apparently landed on Pakistani soil to carry out an operation against militants in the South Waziristan. Pakistan reacted angrily to the action, saying 20 innocent villagers had been killed by United States troops.¹³⁷

Late in the year 2008, there were multiple incidents of major theft, robbery, and burning attacks against NATO supply convoys in Pakistan.¹³⁸ The Taliban was not only attacking on convoys of NATO, they were also troubling the local transportation companies. The United States-led coalition was paying taxes to Taliban for the safe pass of their supply. The transport companies in the south

¹³⁶ Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "Pakistanis Aided Attack in Kabul, U.S. Officials Say", *New York Times*, August 1, 2008, accessed August 29, 2013,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/01/world/asia/01pstan.html>

¹³⁷ "Pakistan Fires on Nato Aircraft", *BBC News*, 25 September 2008, accessed on August 26, 2013, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7635893.stm

¹³⁸ "Militant Attack Burns NATO Supply Containers", *CNN*, December 7, 2008, accessed on August 26, 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/12/07/pakistan.violence/>

of Kabul have also reported that they had to pay protection money to the Taliban.¹³⁹

They were showing their insurgency even in the territory of Pakistan. During December 2008, attacks by Taliban militants on NATO supply depots in Peshawar destroyed 300 cargo trucks and Humvee military vehicles. The Taliban continued their attacks on the allied supply convoys in the year 2009. On 3 February 2009, supply convoy intended for NATO forces in Afghanistan were suspended after Taliban militants blew up a highway bridge in the Khyber Pass region, northwestern tribal area of Pakistan.¹⁴⁰

As the attacks on the supply convoys continued, the United States, as a response to the increasing risk, worked on establishment of a Northern Distribution Network (NDN) through Russia and several Central Asian states. First permission for the United States military to transport troop supplies through the region was given on 20 January 2009, after a visit to the region by General Petraeus.¹⁴¹

During 2010 the United States increased their number of troops in Afghanistan. As the number of foreign troops in Afghanistan raised, the attacks of Taliban increased with it. The Taliban published an offensive for the spring 2010 and launched several attacks against Afghan government and United States-led coalition forces. The insurgent attacks of the Taliban became more frequent during the year.

After the arrival of new troops, the United States and Afghan military forces together launched a series of operations in Kandahar through out the late summer and fall in 2010. Unlike operations of previous years, these operations were held with the extensive use of Afghan National Security Forces.

¹³⁹ Tom Coghlan, "Taleban Tax: Allied Supply Convoys Pay Their Enemies For Safe Passage", *London Times*, December 12 2008, accessed August 27, 2013, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/asia/article2609493.ece>

¹⁴⁰ Salman Masood, "Bridge Attack Halts NATO Supplies to Afghanistan", *The New York Time*, February 3, 2009, accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/04/world/asia/04pstan.html>

¹⁴¹ Richard A. Opiel Jr., "U.S. Secures New Supply Routes to Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, January 20, 2009, accessed August 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/21/world/asia/21pstan.html>

After a Special Operation to kill or capture Osama Bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, on 1 May 2011, the United States officials proclaimed the death of Osama. The operation was carried out by CIA and United States Navy Seals in Pakistan's capital. This incident, death of Osama in his shelter close to the capital of Pakistan, approved the sayings of Hamid Karzai that the fight against terrorism is not in the rural areas of Afghanistan, but in the safe hands. This event occurred just few weeks after insisting of Pakistani officials that the United States military and intelligence should be stopped in Pakistan as the terrorism is within Afghanistan territory.¹⁴²

As expected, immediately after the death of Osama, the Taliban launched a major attack on government institutions and buildings in Kandahar, once was their capital. Although the Taliban spokesman stated that they were working on this mission months before the death of Osama, adding that their goal was to take over Kandahar city.¹⁴³ After massive bombing and suicide attacks by the Taliban, the attackers were pushed back by nightfall leaving several casualties from both sides behind.

The number of civilian casualties continued in 2013. The Taliban continued to cause the majority of casualties, stepping up violence through the indiscriminate use of roadside bombs and suicide attacks in major population centers.¹⁴⁴

In this chapter, we studied the Taliban after the occurrence of the 9/11 incident. The United States blamed Al Qaeda for the attacks of 9/11 and started on their mission to hunt Osama bin Laden, the leader of the Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda.

¹⁴² See: Jon Boone and Ian Black, "Death of Osama bin Laden puts pressure on Pakistan", *The Guardian*, 2 May 2011, accessed August 30, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/02/pakistan-pressure-osama-bin-laden-death?INTCMP=SRCH>

¹⁴³ See: "Taliban Attack Afghan Government Offices in South", *The Washington Times*, May 7, 2011, accessed on August 30, 2013, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/may/7/taliban-attack-afghan-government-offices-south/?page=all>

¹⁴⁴ See: Azam Ahmed, "As Afghan Pullout Nears, Civilian Casualties Rise", *The New York Times*, July 31, 2013, accessed August 30, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/01/world/asia/civilian-casualties-in-afghanistan-rise-23-percent.html?_r=0

The United States started military operations in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001, after the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the United States. Within two months of massive bombardments and on-foot military operations, the Taliban forces pulled back and left their last stronghold in Kandahar.

During the year 2002, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces were defeated and an emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) was proposed to select the head of the state and to establish a Transitional Authority. Hamid Karzai was selected to the head of Afghanistan Transitional Administration.

On 2003, the Taliban re-emerged to the scene of Afghanistan as an insurgent group. The re-emergence of the Taliban was a shock to the people of Afghanistan. As the Taliban could not resist the United States-led coalition troops in 2001, changes in their strategy occurred after their re-emergence.

The balance of power within Afghanistan was changed. Unlike the years of civil war and the years of Taliban, Afghanistan was controlled by an actor with great power. The external support was not enough for the Taliban in confronting the United States-led coalition. Thus, in order to balance the power the Taliban had to adjust itself in an asymmetric conflict.

After their re-emergence, the Taliban, also referred as neo-Taliban, was more radical and adopted different tactic and combat strategies further creating trouble for the people of Afghanistan and blocked the process of reconstruction and development. The Taliban adopted suicide attacks, a tactic that never was used before by them, as a strategy in their insurgency.

Before 2001, the only suicide attack recorded was the assassination of Masoud, which was organized and conducted by Al-Qaeda members. The Taliban did not engage in any suicide attack towards its rivals until the invasion of United States-led coalition.

In 2005; however, the Taliban became a serious threat to Afghanistan, with 25 suicide attacks taking place throughout the year. By the end of 2006, the figure had risen to 139 suicide attacks.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Brian Glyn Williams and Cathy Young, "Cheney Attack Reveals Taliban Suicide Bombing Patterns", *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (1 March, 2007), pp. 4-6

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the emergence of wars relatively increased in the world. It is important to note that most of the contemporary wars are civil wars. The emergence of the Taliban, in some point, was a product of civil war within Afghanistan. The occurrence of civil wars likely happens when there are issues like grievance and greed. Ethnic clashes and identity issues further trigger the possibility of war. Grievances are mostly related to economic factors. Economic favoritism against groups based on ethno-linguistic or religious differences. Greed is directly related to the economic condition of individuals. This happens in terms of the desire to control resources and capture rents.

Unending war and destruction in Afghanistan had sickened the people of the country. The constant instability within Afghanistan resulting from the internal rivalry, external influence, rising ethnic enmity and hatred, frustration and disappointment of the people and the reactions of *Pashtuns* towards the non-*Pashtun* group governing Kabul regime laid the way open for a fundamentalist *Pashtun* movement to rise within Afghanistan.

The Taliban emerged as a movement with the discourse of bringing justice and peace, and establishing a system based on Islamic Law in Afghanistan. Afghans firstly welcomed the Taliban; however, after seeing their radical rules they once again faced the consequences of power greed.

Unlike other armed parties in Afghanistan, the Taliban showed a rapid rise and within few years they managed to remove the troops of Masoud from Kabul and overthrow the government of Rabbani. Established with very few men, the Taliban accomplished to take control of almost 90% of Afghanistan in not more than four years.

Occurrence of the Taliban to the scene of Afghanistan broke the deadlock of Afghan civil war and the Taliban swept many of the warlords and mujahideen that were controlling certain territories of the country.

After the domination of Kandahar the Taliban, without losing time, started to implement a very strict version of *Sharia* of Muslim world. All girls' schools were closed and women's working outside their houses was banned. Men were commanded to grow beard and not to shave.

The implementations of the Taliban show that they were trying to please the leaders and students of the *madrassas* of the Pakistan. These *madrassas* were filled with volunteers willing to die in the course of Islam and the Taliban was aware of the potential manpower in these *madrassas* that could be used as soldiers. Interestingly, as they started to apply their strict rules, thousands of Afghan and Pakistani *madrassa* students came in crowd to join their movement.

These *madrassas* continued to be an important source of recruitment from the very early days of the advent of the Taliban. Not only voluntary soldiers were educated in these *madrassas*, but also the leaders of them were mentors and supporters of the Taliban movement.

Despite the fact that Afghanistan is constituted from many ethnic groups, very few non-*Pashtuns* were placed in the government of the Taliban. It is explicit from the council members of the Taliban that the movement is formed by *Pashtun* majority and will serve for the interests of *Pashtuns* (see Table 1).

Pashtuns were not happy with the government of Rabbani, in a sense they were suffering from relative deprivation as they had little place in the constituted government. The insurrection of the Taliban was to bring back the old gold days to *Pashtuns*. Although the Taliban's discourse was to bring justice and peace to Afghanistan, they clearly showed that their movement was a nationalistic act when they give little credit for other ethnic groups of Afghanistan.

To eliminate its rivals and for the interests of *Pashtuns*, the Taliban used Islam to get external support. In this context, it can be said that to attract the external support, the Taliban choose to emphasis on wider identity, Islam. The Taliban used the identity of Islam not only to attract the students of *madrassas* of Pakistan, but also to get the support of rich Muslim countries like Saudi Arab and United Arab Emirates.

Before 2001, the external aids provided enough power for the Taliban to confront its rivals. The actors within Afghanistan had relatively close power to each other. During their opposition and after the establishment of their regime, the Taliban engaged in traditional direct conflict, the balance of power among parties were of symmetric.

Following the collapse of the Taliban regime, international community was in favor of establishing a stable regime within the country, with a strong army and police that could maintain its existence through troubled events. However, after the withdrawal of the Taliban, specially starting during 2003, insurgent groups emerged against the United States-led coalition and the newly formed Afghanistan government. The Taliban showed to be the strongest insurgents among these groups. The survivals of the Taliban, also referred as neo-Taliban, no longer fight as a conventional force, but as a guerrilla force.

Facing with great power, the Taliban choose the terrorism to confront an enemy that is greatly superior in numbers, equipment, and training. The balance of power among the actors within Afghanistan was no longer a symmetric one. No party within Afghanistan, including the Taliban, had the power or capability to engage in a traditional conflict with the troops of United States-led coalition.

A new balance had to be constructed in Afghanistan. The Taliban was in a situation of balancing the power of the coalition asymmetrically. As T.V. Paul points out, asymmetric balancing steps in whenever a weaker state or non-state entity confronts a powerful side. He further adds, in resistance against a great power the weaker side often chooses the use of insurgency or terrorism.¹⁴⁶

Taking in consideration the points of Paul and the changes occurred in Taliban after 2001, it can be said that as a weaker side the Taliban chose the use of terrorism as a result of the shift occurred in the balance of power within actors of Afghanistan after the invasion of United States.

¹⁴⁶ T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, Michel Fortman, eds, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, (Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 16

The most notable attempt of Taliban in terrorizing the civilians during their first years of emergence was the torture and execution of former president Najibullah in Kabul. They managed to terrify people and characterized the Taliban in the minds of people as the worst enemy. Although, the Taliban was familiar with the power of terror as a way to convince people to their regime, they did not use it as a tactic during the years of their first opposition.

During the years of the Taliban's first opposition (1994-2001), no suicide attack incident was conducted by Taliban. In fact, suicide is an undesirable concept both in Islam and in Afghanistan. The first suicide bombing took place during the Taliban regime was the assassination of the Tajik leader Masoud by two Arabians who happened to be members of al-Qaeda.

In contrast to this, the Taliban carried out more than 150 suicide attacks by 2007. By using suicide bombing as a tactic, the Taliban started to make great troubles with less loss and the number of suicide attacks is rising each year. The Taliban leaders are aware that they cannot face the enemy in direct conflict, they tried to resist in the first stage of the United States-led coalition entrance in Afghanistan, which resulted in failure with vast casualties.

The changes occurred in the nature of the movement also have impacts in the involvement of new strategy and tactics in combating. In this context, the communication achievements of the Taliban after 2001 have a direct impact in the usage of suicide bombing as a tactic against the enemy. The use of communication channels obviously got the Taliban in connection with other Islamic *jihadi* groups, led them towards exchanging of ideas and tactics of operations.

During its time in power the Taliban had strict rules against music, television, computers and internet. Although they were mindful of their image, both nationally and internationally, no attempts were commenced to change what was known about them. After the fall of their regime and in their revitalization,

the Taliban gave much more importance to communication in their insurgency.¹⁴⁷

They used various other ways along with media and internet for the purpose of propaganda. The use of 'night letters' is a good example. They wrote messages and tracts in papers and widely distributed them to villagers or nailed them to the doors of houses, mosques and other public buildings.¹⁴⁸

The movement that was rigorously against internet and media, now has many websites and journals publishing regularly consisted of writings about their mission and *jihad* against foreign invaders. Most of their materials are in *Pashtu*, showing the targeted audiences of the Taliban leadership. In addition, mainstream media is used to attract international attention.

By late 2008, there has been enhanced output and outreach directed at Western audiences through English language efforts. They also follow the highlights from foreign news items and commentaries on the state of the Taliban insurgency and even make counter arguments in their websites.¹⁴⁹

The use of communication channels not only helped them spread their movement to wider audiences, but also assisted them to make connections with other Islamic insurgency groups around the globe, in particular the Iraqi Insurgency groups against United States existence in the country.

It is more than obvious that civil wars, insurgency and terrorist issues mostly happen in the regions that are relatively poor. Underdevelopment has a direct impact on the emergence of wars and terrorist organizations. However, it would not be sufficient enough to address economical issues the main source of the terrorism and insurgency.

¹⁴⁷ Joanna Nathan, "Reading the Taliban", in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, edited by Antonio Giustozzi, (Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 23-24

¹⁴⁸ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: the neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, (London: Hurst Publisher Ltd, 2007), pp. 121

¹⁴⁹ Joanna Nathan, "Reading the Taliban", in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, edited by Antonio Giustozzi, (Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 23-24

The decision of a person to join an insurgency movement is complex and often personal and situational. Apart from being a radical Islamic movement, the Taliban is a tribal movement. Consisted of almost 100 percent from *Pashtuns*, the Taliban should also be examined as a *Pashtun* movement. The *Pashtun* population of Afghanistan is very committed to their tribal rules and kinship. *Pashtunwali* is a non written ethical code and traditional lifestyle accepted by *Pashtun* people. In this context, the attempts of Afghans, in particular *Pashtuns*, to join the Taliban insurgency should be put under the scope.

Afghanistan is country best suited for guerilla wars. The mountains and valleys make Afghanistan an important place for insurgents to hid and survive. They geography of Afghanistan further steams the insurgency. Meanwhile, the counter-insurgency strategy of United States-led coalition happens to be insufficient in combating and ending the insurgency. In addition, inability of government of Karzai to spread the security to every corner of the country makes it clearer that the government and United States-led coalition troops failed to press the Taliban insurgency, rather increased the revolts as the number of civilian casualties continued to rise as a result of coalition offensives against the Taliban¹⁵⁰.

¹⁵⁰ See: Elisabeth Bumiller and Carlotta Gall, "U.S. Admits Civilians Died in Afghan Raids", *The New York Times*, May 7, 2009, accessed August 23, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/08/world/asia/08afghan.html? r=0>; Rod Nordland, "Afghan Leader Questions U.S. Military Operations", *The New York Times*, March 12, 2011, accessed on August 23, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/world/asia/13afghan.html>

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