

## **Scenario 59**

### **PAK-ARMY ON 'WAR ON TERROR'-II:**

#### **TALIBAN BACKED BY ISI OR NOT:**

Then the situation cropped up that the US & its Western allies and Karzai government in Afghanistan considered that the Afghan Taliban were supported by Pakistan and its ISI. Pakistan kept the convincing record that the casualties of about 40,000 innocent citizens & about 4500 army troops coupled with loss of infrastructure worth \$70 billion were caused to them by the US, NATO and Afghan fighters merely on the basis of baseless assumptions.

A very cogent question at this stage that while there is customary to keep guns and Kalashnikov weapons by each male in the tribal areas then why the local tribesmen did not fight Al Qaeda or Afghani Taliban intruders themselves at the initial stage, a decade earlier.

The reply comes that there was enough potential for such awakening in FATA but the hurdle was the tribal-man's mistrust in Pakistani military leadership, especially the intelligence agencies deployed or working in proxy there. The Taliban and Al Qaeda had targeted many tribal leaders and killed about 120 of them labelling them 'spying for ISI & America'. The deployed military contingents did nothing to pursue the killers and failed to protect the tribal leaders.

However, a little different version came up from a research worker affiliated with the University of Oslo named Farhat Taj:

*'The target killing of the tribal leaders started in South Waziristan almost at the same time when the US was bombing Taliban and Al Qaeda hideouts in Afghanistan in 2001 and the militants ran towards Waziristan. They were not welcomed by the tribal leaders. In order to have a strong foothold in Waziristan, the militants killed more than 120 tribal leaders.*

*Clearly the then government of Gen Musharraf was playing a double game. On one hand it joined the US led war on terror, on the other hand it allowed the militants to kill the tribal leaders and replace the tribal order with the Taliban order.*

*Next the killing spree was taken to other tribal areas including Khyber, Orakzai and Bajaur agencies. There is a strong perception among many Pashtuns that this killing was carried out with tacit consent of the intelligence agencies of Pakistan to create full leadership space for Taliban in the Pakhtun tribal society.'*

Coming back and re-asserting that the remaining tribal leaders and young people in FATA hesitated from taking up arms against the Taliban and Al Qaeda due to non-cooperating rather humiliating strategy of one faction of officers within ISI though a strong potential was always available to place a challenge for them.

One more citation from Farhat Taj's version: *'that in tehsil Pranghar of Momand Agency, the people rose against the Taliban as soon as the Taliban first assaulted Momand Agency. Consequently, Tangi in district Charsadda is safe because of this event. Since 2004, we find sporadic uprisings against the Taliban but due to the inability of the Pakistani security forces, the leaders of Qaumi Lashkars (national force) were mostly target killed by the Taliban.'*

In nut shell, the problem remained that measures had never been taken by Army's high command to remove rift between officers of two schools of thought within the ISI. The policy should have been uni-directional. If for some professional reasons it was not possible then,

instead of becoming target of Taliban on one hand and of American drones on the other, the government should have called back army from the front line in Tribal areas to relatively 2<sup>nd</sup> position till re-defining of goals in the national interest. Unluckily Pakistan's decision makers mostly deployed their troops as per American strategy and not considering 'Pakistan first'.

The American, British or European governments never believed that Pakistani ISI did not know the names and hideouts of Taliban or gangsters using the title of Al Qaeda who had brought Pakistan to this stage of ruins and wreckage.

It became more difficult when Pakistan Army slogans of '**the best and thorough professional network of strategic intelligence in the world**' were continuously and constantly preached all around. Pakistan could not convince the world that their ISI and MI did not know the figures behind this rampage and wilderness. May be some mid-order army officers knew it but the high command was kept in dark.

The fact remains that fragrance of 'Rule on Afghanistan' had not faded away from minds of some of the military commanders as they used to do in Taliban's era before Karzai's appointment. Pakistan lived in hope of dictating 'ruling techniques' to Afghanistan through possible comeback of Taliban's government there.

Pakistan's leadership did not accept the reality of changing circumstances in Afghanistan through a decade's American occupation but pushed the innocent children and women into fire of greedy gangsters in pursuits of certain disillusioned ambitions.

The political rulers of Pakistan in post Musharraf era, the President and PM of an elected government, could not pull strings of that faction of ISI and other intelligence network to make them believe that Pakistan's own interest should be FIRST. A handful of officers played with innocent lives of the people just pursuing a hope of changing government in Afghanistan for their own interests and the PPP government remained mum or at least non-interfering.

Pakistan Army kept on nurturing a wishful thinking that, sooner or later, the US and NATO forces would leave Afghan soils because of rising financial crunch in America and other European countries. After they leave, these Taliban would definitely take over the government in Afghanistan.

On the other hand NATO's Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer, while speaking on the '**Security and Defence Agenda**', showered more fuel on fire on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009 that:

*'Urgent attention needed to be paid to South Asia as a victory for the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan would be a disaster for international security thus a legacy we cannot leave for our children. NATO members should do more to help new US President Barack Obama tackle the growing threats of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and failed states. NATO must engage with Iran to secure regional support for the escalating war in neighbouring Afghanistan.'*

*'We need to stop looking at Afghanistan as if it were an island, as Afghanistan's problems cannot be solved by or within Afghanistan alone. There is a regional network of extremists which respects borders no more than they respect human rights or the rule of law.'*

### **SHIFT IN US POLICY:**

There prevailed a common myth amongst Pakistani Generals in this respect that Karzai's government was virtually limited to the outskirts of Kabul whereas most of Afghanistan, especially the South and East, were in the hands of Taliban. Then what to Pakistan; it might be true at times, but till you wait for accomplishment of that wishful thinking again, Pakistan would be ruined to pebbles. Pakistan lost its security system of Tribal areas which was running successfully since 58 years based on mutual trust; now impossible to be re-constructed again.

If Pakistan's civil and military leadership would have taken stock of the situation at an appropriate hour, peace and prosperity all around could be seen and Pakistan would have surfaced again with the same old glamour, reverence, and respect on the globe. In the past, some local tribal groups had resisted Taliban but were mostly besieged till they were massacred because the Taliban were armed with much more sophisticated weapons than the tribesmen.

It is on record that once the Afghan government had announced their next general elections for **20<sup>th</sup> August 2009** hoping that security situation would be improved there due to increase in US troops. Mr Obama had already directed his military commanders to withdraw US troops from Iraq within 16 months. 30,000 men were to be additionally deployed in Afghanistan making a total presence of US military as 66,000 which were 36,000 troops previously.

Mr Obama's wish and decision was immediately implemented and the strength of American troops was raised to 68,000 in March 2009 and 98,000 in March 2010 (*At that moment Afghanistan had 70,000 foreign troops; 36,000 Americans, 8000 British and the remaining from other NATO member states*). Pakistan should have raised their voice against such huge deployment near its borders.

Hamid Karzai contested for his re-election saying that he had **'a job to complete'**, but his popularity was contaminated and tainted both among Afghans and his Western masters due to alleged rampant corruption and weak governing outside Afghan capital. The fact remains that, due to shift in US policy interpreting Obama's new vision, Afghanistan was going to get more financial aid as per new formula of 'significant non-military component' meaning thereby more development aid.

However, Taliban insurgency had gone stronger in the ethnic *Pashtun* concentrated areas of the South and East of Afghanistan and they had also encroached into areas in the outskirts of the capital, the Kabul City.

*[It may be remembered that Hamid Karzai himself is an ethnic Pashtun from the southern part of Afghanistan. Since 2001, he is head of the state when US-led and Afghan forces had toppled the Taliban's government in the backdrop of 9 / 11 attacks on world towers. He was first saddled there as a head of interim administrative setup and then he got himself settled after winning an election held in 2004.*

*Mr Obama held an opinion for Karzai before elections that: **'Karzai has not gotten out of the bunker and helped to organize Afghanistan, and the government, the judiciary, police forces in ways that would give people confidence'**.]*

History tells us that military actions in any country never lasted longer; the set-up in Afghanistan was also bound to change. An opinion, cited in the **'Daily Times' dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009**, under head: **'Thinking afresh on Afghanistan'** said that:

*'Perhaps Gates [US Secretary Defence then], and thinkers like him at the Pentagon and the White House, have realised that neither a military solution, nor leaving Afghanistan in the lurch is possible, as they did on attaining mean objectives after defeating the Soviet Union. The region and the world cannot afford to withstand another such blunder.*

*Thus, rather than pursuing a mindless policy of staying in Afghanistan or dragging on with unattainable military objectives, it's time for Washington to usher in an era of peace and political stability in the war-ravaged country, and plan an exit strategy at the earliest. Gates, fortunately enough, will have the added impetus of a similar thinking from Generals in the battlefield and Pentagon, such as Gen Petraeus who advocated the option of talking it out with the Taliban.*

*It is another promising sign that the new administration is working on a strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan by drawing lessons from experiences and reality on the ground. This is what makes President Obama's agenda of change achievable and realistic to the core.'*

Since 2009 to 2012, the said objective had been followed by the White House though not so vigorously while trying to shift the whole emphasis on the weak shoulders of Pakistan through repeated slogans of '**do more**'. It was also a reality that, in such changing scenario, blaming ISI and asking Pakistan's army to 'do more' was an uphill task.

This time the people of Pakistan also comprehended fully the alarming situation on Pak – Afghan borders created by the presence of American & NATO troops and retaliations launched by Taliban. Inside Pakistan, Swat was nearly lost. A particular faction in ISI was blamed for doing it deliberately because they were ideologically against the PPP theme.

In such lurking dark, Gen Kayani was taken in confidence and he stood by the PPP. This move was carefully designed and accomplished by Mr Zardari otherwise the PPP might have lost the game on two counts:

**Firstly**, giving next Army Generals to plan another take over by spreading news through their stooge media men that PPP had failed to deliver good governance; consequently PPP would have lost respect and power both. OR

**Secondly**, Swat might be lost or could be the whole Khyber PK province dismembered; God helped Pakistan. Had this event occurred, Benazir Bhutto's whole family and Z A Bhutto's name would have been negatively remembered in the history like Gen Yahya Khan who had lost the then East Pakistan.

### **BRITONS vs AMERICANS IN WOT:**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of September 2006, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair had paid flying visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The agreement announced on 19<sup>th</sup> September in Pakistan was a case in point. Mr Blair announced doubling of aid, to £480m, in part to help fund the reform of Islamic schools or *madrassas*. Some of these schools, attended often by the children of poor families, were blamed for the spread of extremist thinking.

The former US president Bill Clinton's speech at the Labour Party conference in UK during the last week of September 2006 had also carried his genuine regrets that:

*'While he was in office, he should have focused on eradicating school fees [in Pakistan]. That would have stopped poorer parents sending their children to free religious madrassas for their education, where many are radicalized.*

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

Through this exercise, indirectly the *madrassas* in tribal areas of Pakistan were blamed for radicalizing a section of Muslim youth in Britain. The much trumpeted Pakistan connection, however, was overplayed because this was not where Islamic militancy in Britain originated. Those extremists who visited *madrassas* in Pakistan were already committed to their path.

But Tony Blair's philosophy could not be given shape by world powers; years passed by.

A report had appeared in ***the 'Daily Mail' [UK] of 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008***, titled as '**Journey inside the Taliban**: Briton's dangerous secret meeting with the warlords who will never surrender' written by ***James Fergusson*** told that the higher command of Taliban, attack planners and die hard commanders were called 'Tier 1 of Taliban's - warriors driven by ideology, the fanatical ones who would probably never surrender.

They hardly ever met together at one place for fear of a laser-guided bomb through the roof, wiping out the entire command. Even separately, they rarely slept in the same room for two consecutive nights. They were differentiated from Tier 2 - embittered poppy farmers and opium dealers dispossessed by the NATO presence - and the adventurers, impoverished peas-

ants and other hired guns who made up Tier 3. Of course they held no match for the professionals of the British Army or NATO soldiers whatsoever but they were mission-full.

Major Dan Rex, the Gurkha's commander posted in Afghanistan had given a vivid account of just how tough and resourceful Taliban they were up against:

*'They used cover well and they moved about very fast. They had sections of eight or 12 men, and a pyramid command structure just like ours. They don't wear badges of rank on their shoulders but that doesn't mean they aren't a proper army.'*

*Once his garrison came under small-arms fire at night; his men shot back. With hindsight, obviously they were testing us out. They were examining our arcs of fire, our fire-times, how soon before air support would arrive. It was professionally done.'*

The commander then explained how the Taliban launched an attack on his contingent and the fight continued for the whole night. The periodic attacks were initiated with most modern weapons from the nearby village where they had used living homes as bunkers. The Taliban's bravery had astonished the British Commander as he conceded openly afterwards during an interview. They only went back when our forces put them on targets of air attack.

Taliban's case was placed before *James Fergusson*, who was once treated as the British distinguished guest media man, emphasizing that **they were fighting because it was their religious duty to resist the infidel invaders - just as they had fought the Russians, and as their fathers and grandfathers in earlier times had fought against the British.** At that particular post there were 700 armed men, all in a state of constant readiness to attack a police station or an American convoy, or take over the entire province if ordered. They sleep during the day and did everything, including live-firing exercises, by night. ***'Night-time is Taliban time there'***, the media representative had observed. They only need missiles to shoot the air strikers down without which they go helpless sometimes.

In Helmand at one time, the [Afghan] Taliban had 10,000 fighters and a further 2,000 suicide bombers standing by. They once hoped to 'break the back' of the British. Taliban knew that the British were not bad soldiers. They knew that:

*'They are not cowards. They do not cry, or shout "Oh my God" in the front line as the Americans do. But still, they don't stand and fight like us. The British were defeated at Musa Qala, everyone knows this. We were going to slaughter them or capture them, but we [the Taliban] let them [the English soldiers] go out of respect for the elders.'*

In their eyes, defeating the English Army in 2006 was merely a revenge of history because the British had beaten them before, back in the 1840s. Taliban still believe that ***'fighting the British feels like unfinished business for many of us.'***

The above lines confirmed the notion that: *'sending Army to win hearts and minds in Afghanistan, where the past was still so very alive, was a bad mistake.'* but in fact the Taliban hate Americans more than the British - and even more than the Russians who had brutalised their country 20 years earlier. The Russians fought man to man, but when one American soldier got hit, a whole village was razed by bombs in response.

It was easier to respect the Russians, the Taliban believed. Taliban's attitude to war was seen as out-dated or traditional because still they keep faith in mythical past when battles were won through courage and faith and not superior weaponry; but they won again & again.

Even now; fighting Americans is a holy duty for Taliban and they are winning. The Americans never hoped for victory but they had to resist because they knew the ground realities; and that the war would leave nothing for them except widows and destruction.

For Taliban war and jihad are two different things. **It is their moral obligation to resist foreigners on their land. One year, a hundred years, a million years, - it is not im-**

**portant but they will never stop fighting.** Most of them consider that on Judgment Day, Allah would ask them: "**Did you fight for your religion?**"

The normal Taliban members are astonished on the theme that:

***'Why the Britons allow themselves to be the puppets of America. The British are clever people, it makes no sense. You were beaten here before, and you will lose this time, too. Why do you think it is any different now?'***

Might be the Americans in Kabul and the British in south of Afghanistan (and other NATO forces there) believe in the superiority of their technology but Taliban, equipped with Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades only, still aim to beat them all. The Taliban believe this known Islamic phrase that a Muslim does not get bitten from the same hole twice. The British commanders there tried to make them realize that this time the hole was different but Taliban were not convinced.

The allied forces told the Taliban that they had not come to occupy Afghanistan but to help them to secure economic development; but very simple question the Taliban made: ***'Then why do you come here with guns and bombs?'***

Taliban believe that had the Americans and British come here un-armed they would have been Afghan people's guests. To a common question that why Taliban or Osama Bin Laden had caused 9/11 episode killing thousands of people, the Taliban reply that:

*'..... Osama was a good Muslim, an honourable man and 9/11 was not an honourable event. There is no evidence that 9/11 was planned in Afghanistan. Those martyrs didn't learn to fly here. They were not Afghan nationals, they had no connections with Afghanistan; and they have never been here.'*

A very common perception about the Taliban's denial of education to women; they maintain with force that it is not true. There are girls schools set up under the Taliban's regime in the past. Some girls schools had been burnt down ***'but only those with Western curricula, where girls were being taught .....***'

Taliban's this contention had been totally discarded by the western media in the light of available facts on record which speak that more than 1,100 girls schools were attacked or burnt where they prevailed power; thus lost thousands of their admirers. However, **James Fergusson**, (cited above) had to conclude that:

*'Most of all, it is hard to imagine that they can ever be defeated; something genuinely moving about their fervour, however naive or wrong-headed it might be.'*

The western social setups cannot reconcile with Taliban's way of life. For Taliban, faith comes even before love of family and children. They deliberately do not give enough time and fatherly love to their babies due to obvious reasons. When Taliban are questioned that how they feel they would be killed; very simple logic is forwarded by them that:

*'Our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers all died by the bullet. We all will die in the same way, and no doubt my sons, too. It is not so sad. It is glorious to be martyred. To die in the service of jihad is the ambition of all of us here.'*

Hell of distance between the two cultures. For the western people, love of family is their most cherished value, the hall-mark of their civilisation. Contrarily the Taliban say that ***'Allah gives us children, so it is our duty to give to Allah before we give to our family.'***

The Taliban often tell the coalition forces: ***'You may have the watches, but we have the time.'*** That is what they believe and that is what they deliver. This is the main theme of a book named: **A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan** by **James Fergusson**, published by Bantam Press UK in 2008.

These words should have emphatically apprised the Americans about Taliban's behaviour and thinking about on-going fights on their Afghan lands. What can you expect from the people

who are always ready to give their lives as martyrs taking it as a noble cause and then feel proud of their deaths. No regrets; no accusations on companions for a possible mistake; no obligation for the families left alone and no future plans like us, like western people.

The US pentagon, CIA and the western rulers keep a complete knowledge of the fighting factions in Afghanistan. They fully know who the Taliban are. They know that who are chasing and killing their troops in the rough mountains of Afghanistan. Thus it is evident that the western allied and NATO forces cannot win war in Afghanistan. It is history in making.

The Americans had thought and planned wrongly to bring Afghanistan under their thumb. Though the Britain and the US are allies in this war but from inside the Americans wanted to show their supremacy over the Britons also by occupying Afghanistan.

The US agencies wished to knock down the British intelligence and military planning divisions by proving that the dream of colonizing Afghanistan is fulfilled by the Americans while the British Crown could not occupy it during their 90 years of English Rule over India.

### **WAR ON TERROR FIZZLES OUT:**

Up till now the Americans have learnt enough lessons during their militarised stay in Afghanistan. They have now believed the reasons that why the Britain could not occupy even a single inch of the Afghan lands during their rule on Indo-Pak territory from 1857 till 1947. This was the reason that most of the British intelligentsia had opposed the very idea of sending the English Army to Afghanistan by the then PM Tony Blair in 2001 though this time using another trap: War on Terror (WOT).

Pakistan landed in problems when Gen Musharraf opted to become a party in WOT game after American episode of 9 / 11. The General wanted dollars on which no audit or check from any corner would be applicable. After 3 / 4 years the Americans started feeling that they were not getting through their plans and, on the other hand, the allied countries were also showing reluctance in sending their troops to Afghanistan.

*[Referring to the **press conference of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013** at Karachi, Gen Musharraf was asked to explain that why he had opted to say yes to the American call in the aftermath of 9/11 2001 without consulting even his own commanders what to speak of the general populace of Pakistan.*

*Gen Musharraf confidently replied that '**at that time it was in the best interest of Pakistan to say so**'; a typical two edged political answer it was. Subsequent times proved it blatantly wrong.]*

Throughout the whole journey of attacks & lies, it remained difficult for the US to admit their failure openly because it would have tarnished their image of number one super power on the globe. Till July 2008 Gen Musharraf had taken a handsome amount of about eight billion (out of total settled & negotiated deal of 10.67 billion) dollars from them.

As a face saving Mr Bush, with the help of his cronies in Pentagon, CIA, and Senate worked out a policy to shift the burden of their failure on Pakistan propagating that:

- there is Al Qaeda in Pakistani borders areas;
- bomb making factories are there on Pakistani border-regional belt;
- Pakistan is deliberately avoiding to help the US;
- Taliban are being controlled by the ISI of Pakistan;
- some Islamic minded Generals in Pak Army are helping Taliban;
- Gen Musharraf has not spent dollar-money on projects specified for;

- Pakistan is using his atomic deterrence to shelter Taliban.

Many more allegations could be added to this list. Then Mr Bush started sending his team members and policy framers like Richard Boucher, Mike Mullin and K L Rice to Pakistan frequently to meet Gen Musharraf. Immediately before change of the regime in Washington (in 2008), the White House held meetings with Mr Zardari and Gen Kayani just to give deceitful and erroneous impressions to the Americans and to the rulers of Allied countries. Mr Bush wanted to convince their people that:

*'His policies in Afghanistan are correct (were the same correct in Iraq?) but Pakistan does not allow to register any progress on WOT. Pakistan's army is helping Taliban otherwise he would have conquered Afghanistan much earlier.'*

All lies. Mr Bush and his friends were fully aware that it was a war of Taliban with US sponsored ruler Hamid Karzai on the soils of Afghanistan. ***The Taliban wanted that no foreign power, including Pakistan, should interfere in their internal battles.***

Pakistan had also suffered a lot and is still suffering at the hands of Taliban because they consider Pakistan as a cogent ally to the US. On one hand Pakistan army is being targeted by the Taliban because of compromises with the US, whereas, the innocent tribes are also being attacked by the American drones on the charge that Taliban roam about in Pakistani border areas.

Neither Taliban understand Pakistan's viewpoint (rather they do not want to comprehend due to their die-hard thinking over the point that US & Pak-Army are allies) nor was the US giving way to Pakistan because Gen Musharraf had taken price of implementing US's plans in Toto in the region; all without people's will.

New Pakistani regime of the PPP also expected America's financial aid & loans, but could only get peanuts in the shape of humiliating Kerry Lugar Aid. The US till recently continued to frighten Pakistan because they had no other choice for face saving in an arena of their sustained defeats in Afghanistan at the hands of Taliban.

Both the governments of America and Pakistan avoided an open dialogue with Taliban, till at least mid 2012, not considering them a political party at par. Astonishingly, ***Hamid Karzai then started accusing the US government with known popular Afghani demand that 'the US and their allies should leave our soils now'.***

Lt Gen Asad Durrani, former DG ISI, had once said:

*'Post 9/11 terrorism has become an instrument of state policy. Any of the Chechens, Uyghur, Hamas, Hezbollah, Kashmiris, and indeed the Taliban of all hues straddling the Durand Line - once labelled [as terrorist] is fair game. With Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Vietnam; and recently Fallujah in Iraq and Operation Balussa in Afghanistan, America leads the pack of states. The UK with its carpet-bombing of Dresden is not far behind.'*

*No wonder, seeking a fatwa to exorcise suicide bombing does not work. It has nothing to do with religion, only with achieving a war aim. Though a myth of the 65 War; when it went around that some of our soldiers tied to explosives would jump in front of the Indian tanks, we did not invoke any religious injunction.'*

*However today, the state is forced to compromise and thus the terrorists of yesterday become patriots of today and leaders of tomorrow. For that reason alone, it was prudent to keep a window open for some of those whom we had lumped under the Taliban.'*

Let us wait for better days when the Americans and the Britons would comprehend facts on the ground.



### **WOT GIMMICKS IN PAKISTAN:**

**On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011**, a suicide bomber rammed his vehicle into the residence of one Chaudhry Aslam, a senior police official [*heading the anti-extremist cell of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and then leading a special campaign against the miscreants*] in DHA area of Karachi. Karachi had been considered the biggest source of funding through all viable means; Taliban immediately claimed the responsibility because the said police officer had picked up some of their activists in a campaign then going on.

The government named the *Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan* [TTP] for that rampage whereas the media had held those [about] 4000 Americans responsible who had managed to intrude in Pakistan through Hussain Haqqani & Rehman Malik's special visas in 2010.

Karachi was not used to intake such suicide bombings as other major cities, but it remained the home to thousands of the militants, criminals and foreign saboteurs. Taliban had also used the overgrown metropolis to avoid army operations in the tribal areas; no new phenomenon as it happens all over the world.

The first vehicle-borne suicide bombing in Pakistan was carried out in Karachi on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2002, when a suicide bomber had driven his car into a bus outside the Sheraton Hotel, killing 14 people including 11 French naval technicians. [*Subsequently that episode was linked to the Zardari's Agosta Submarine Deal with France and Admiral Mansoorul Haq's NAB case*]

This attack had come less than two weeks after another similar attack on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2002 in which a suicide bomber had rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into the residence of the DIG Baluchistan Frontier Corps of Quetta, killing his wife and 24 others in a high-security zone of the city.

The said DIG was involved in an operation capturing Younis al-Mauritani and his two aides named Abdul Ghaffar Al-Shami and Messara al-Shami [allegedly belonging to al-Qaeda]. The three operatives were arrested in a suburb of Quetta during a joint operation between the Baluchistan Frontier Corps and the ISI allegedly on American stance.

Coming back; it was on record that SSP Ch Aslam was once targeted earlier by a suicide bomber who had pushed his vehicle, loaded with explosives, into the CID HQ building in Karachi on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Ch Aslam had escaped unhurt but it took lives of about 20 people injuring over 100 others. No clue could be found for its source.

The CID building was attacked a day after six activists from the Pak-Afghan border areas were arrested by the CID police Karachi. The officer and his team had allegedly arrested three successive *ameers* of the Karachi Taliban named Akhtar Zaman Mehsud, Bahadur Khan Momand and Maulvi Saeed Anwer; thus that event of 19<sup>th</sup> September was expected any time.

A leaflet was widely distributed in various outskirts of Karachi in the first week of July, carrying a "hit list" of *anti-jihadi* personalities and saying that '*previously, the word criminal was used for robbers and dacoits, but after 9/11 the Americans used this term for those who are sincere with Islam and want to wage jihad against the forces of the infidel; so be aware.*'

Those declared 'liable to be killed' in that pamphlet, along with the CID's Aslam Khan, included: DIG Saud Mirza; CID's SP Fayyaz Khan; Unit Chiefs Farooq Awan & Raja Omar Khattab; Sunni Deobandi scholar Mufti Naeem, Shia scholar Mirza Yousuf Baig; and MQM's Haider Abbas Rizvi; however, all personalities are alive till today.

Referring to 'The Assassination of bin Laden: Its Use and Abuse' written by *James Petras in Axis of Logic on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011*, one can understand that Pakistani Taliban [TTP] has nothing to do with Afghan Taliban, no connection or no information sharing of any kind. In Afghanistan, the major forces resisting America and NATO are the Taliban and various other independent nationalist movements.

The Swati Taliban were totally independent of Al Qaeda in its origin, structure, leadership, tactics, strategy and social composition; whereas the Afghani Taliban is a mass organization

with roots and sympathizers throughout Afghanistan. The later has thousands of trained Afghan fighters deeply penetrated in the Afghani government and military and once [on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011] they had even planned a major 'spring offensive' against NATO forces.

Referring to '**the Friday Times' of 30<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011 - 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012** issue:

*'Daily Jang quoted Taliban Commander Dadullah as saying that the Taliban will not talk peace with Pakistan Army before the enforcement of Taliban's Sharia in Pakistan. He said Maulvi Faqir of Bajaur - vice chief of the Taliban movement - was talking to the Pak army in his private capacity but Dadullah as commander of Taliban was not in favour of talking before the imposition of Sharia in Pakistan.'*

*'Maulvi Faqir of Bajaur was removed from the Deputy-Amir's slot of Taliban Faction of Pakistan in the last week of February 2012. One commander said in media that during peace talks the Army had released 154 Taliban members. He said he was very happy that Pakistan had quarrelled with America.'*

In short; the **Afghani Taliban are overwhelmingly Afghan 'nationals'** in its composition, leadership and ideology; while Al Qaeda is 'international' (mostly Arab) in its membership and leadership. The Taliban might have tactically collaborated with Al Qaeda at some occasions but never had orders from Osama's leadership. The devastating majority of US and NATO casualties in Afghanistan were inflicted by Afghani Taliban. Limited operation and support in Pakistan could be linked to Afghani Taliban but not to the Al Qaeda's leadership; not to the Pakistani Taliban even.

The subsequent events proved that the Osama drama of Obama dated 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 had zero impact on Taliban activities in Afghanistan; it inflicted zero impact on the capacity of the Taliban to carry-out its prolonged war against the US occupation and the casualties of US lead forces kept on rising each week.

Contrarily, there are very strong beliefs and evidences that the Taliban in both the countries, Pakistan & Afghanistan, are one and the same; or at least there command level is interlinked; if at all Al Qaeda still exists.

Once CIA Centre at Khost in Afghanistan was stormed by a suicide bomber in which at least six CIA officers were killed. The suicide bomber was later identified as one Abu Dijana of Jordan who was trained, instructed, and sent by Hakimullah Mahsood. [Referring to **daily 'Jang' of 20th October 2012**, Saleem Saafi, the veteran columnist himself claimed to have seen the related video in person.]

This school of thought also quote that:

- Nek Mohammad was once the Incharge Kargha Camp in Afghanistan when the country used to be under Mulla Umar's Taliban government.
- Baitullah Mahsood, before being head of the Pakistani Taliban, was the 2nd in Command with Mulla Dadullah, the known Afghan Taliban leader.
- Abdulla Mahsood, another Pakistani Taliban leader, was actually arrested in Afghanistan while fighting Americans there and was taken to Guantanamo Bay from where he was released after years to be welcome by Pakistani Taliban as their *Amir*.
- Most of the Taliban in Swat, who were later handled by the Pak-Army in 2007-08, were the same persons who had accompanied Maulana Soofi Mohammad to Afghanistan after Nine-Eleven episodes.
- Still Molvi Fazalullah of Swat [son in law of Maulana Soofi Mohammad] is in Afghanistan with his comrades.

The above spills indicate that the Taliban on both sides of Pak-Afghan border are inter-related; their targets are chosen by one command and their activities are controlled by one centralised body whether the operations are launched in Afghanistan or Pakistan. In Afghanistan, the US and NATO forces are attacked because they are considered as foreign intruders and in Pakistan the security personnel are targeted because the Pakistani government is considered America's ally.

However, so many reports have surfaced in the American media that most of the stuff like videos are 'manufactured' in the under ground laboratories of CIA and Pentagon; videos of Osama BL's speeches made public in 2001-02 & of '**Weapons of Mass Destruction**' [WMD] made on Iraq and released in early days of 2003 are especially referred to.

In between the two philosophies, the poor people of both the countries are being crushed; human blood is so cheap here.

The whole debate is being summed up with a script from an essay of Gen Asad Durrani, former Chief of the ISI, who once wrote that:

*'..... John Esposito (Professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University) associate it [the Islamic Fundamentalism] with political activism, extremism, fanaticism, terrorism, and anti-Americanism. Any Islamic movement that makes them [the Western Powers] uncomfortable can thus be conveniently re-viled as "fundamentalist".*

*Jihad was a concept that expressed fortitude to fight ills in society - ignorance, illiteracy, bigotry, and all the rest. The use of arms indeed had its place - especially & exclusively - in self defence; no more. The mere mention of the word can now send chill up our spines.*

*The UN may sanction armed resistance against foreign occupation, but if waged in the name of jihad it must be condemned, and a jihadi prosecuted as a "terrorist". There were times one could sensibly discuss this phenomenon; but now - no longer. Post 9/11, terrorism has become an instrument of state policy.'*

Thus, repeating again that the terrorists of yesterday may become patriots of today and at times leaders of tomorrow; so keep a window open for them.