CHAPTER-IV

Responses and Impact in Global Perspective.
Responses and Impact in Global Perspective

Afghanistan enroute to its present status had to negotiate with hostilities both from within and outside to create a permanent niche among the nations of the world. It never lost its position as a corridor to the regions of more opportunities, abundance and influence. It was because of this strategic location that Afghanistan became the foremost destination of various races, politically motivated groups and fortune seekers, most of these groups established or tried to establish their politico-economic basis in this region. Not to speak of Scythians, Parthians, Moryan, Greeks and Kushans only, even in the most recent centuries, British and Russian, too, burnt their hands in the Afghan furnace.212

There were, in fact, very brief period of peace and stability; Afghanistan otherwise emerges among the nations of the world as “the perpetual conflict situation” may be its terrain, ethnic composition and availability of limited natural resources too, has a significant contribution towards its continued fluid politico-economic status.

No body apparently seems to derive any prolonged and sustained advantage out of it. The present situation, in fact, jeopardize the major interest of its immediate and little remote neighbors. Its border sharing status despite their own internal dissentious and pressures are virtually trying to help the present regime, achieve a workable and political stability in Afghanistan as that is, the only way open to them to enact mutually beneficial treaties and reap the benefits of the

"opportunities" which the neighbors and other interested groups hold for each other\textsuperscript{213}.

It were these very politico-interests which forced Pakistan to understand the then Afghanistan's politics in a framework which was parochial and leads subsequently to a situation which saw the rise and fall of Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan looked at a possible, stable, friendly Afghanistan:-

a. as viable, feasible and easy access approach to the natural resource, reservoirs of Central Asia.

b. as a much needed, "depth" providing region against any military opportunism from its east.

c. a corridor to the traditional goods markets in Central Asia.

d. as a safeguard against any other adventure from worth.

But, unfortunately Pakistan was not the only party to put its interests in Afghanistan and use its borders and ethnic connection to create a region which would serve its purpose well. There were Iran, India, Russian and more remotely placed America too interested in keeping the region under their own sphere of interest.

It will be pertinent to mention here that the various groups which joined hands to fight Soviet occupation of their land came from various ethnic entities who kept their identities intact and at times, even on a small provocation not hesitated to act in contradiction to the basic principles of their unity. These ethnic groups were in turn patronized by various political regimes in the neighborhood of Afghanistan. Once the Soviet were put to run, the semblance of unity among the Mujahidins came apart and in order to share the political power new alliances took shape which pushed old friends and Mujahidin in mutually opposing camps. Subsequently, there emerged the war lords who claimed the sovereignty

\textsuperscript{213} Shaul Shay, \textit{The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden}, p 94.
over their pieces of land. Turmoil ridden, disjointed and faction ridden Afghanistan gave many sleepless nights to its neighbors who saw the growing situation against their politico-economic interests.

Pakistan which got impatient with the hostile attitude of the pre-Taliban regime, towards it overtly and covertly helped the creation of Taliban who eventually, with the active support of Pak army a participation which was then denied by the Pak regime but subsequently proved by the events heading to the fall of Taliban, brought nearly whole of Afghanistan under their control.

Rise and fall of Taliban was phenomenal, the period through which they ruled Afghanistan saw the enactment of measures which are, as then, still interpreted from various points of view which are at times mutually contradictory in nature. In order to understand and analyze the response and impact of Taliban in global perspective it is necessary to evaluate the role of the counties involved in Afghan imbroglio and these could be categorized into two groups one, which though remotely placed from it, find Afghanistan very important for various strategic reasons, 2nd, those neighboring countries which see Afghanistan as a key for the stability of the region as a whole and an important destination for economic progress.

Afghanistan on the eve of the twentieth century has acquired a renewed importance both on the regional and world stage. A linchpin country which connects Central Asia with South Asia and West Asia. In the new geo-politics of the 1990s, Afghanistan remain once again the “cross roads of Asia”. Despite its devastated infrastructure and economy and its limited natural resources, Afghanistan’s geographical location and cross border ethnic ties played a critical role in trade between South Asia, South West Asia and Central Asia. This was a novel situation for Afghanistan from its existence and continues to be in the
modern era, when it has more often served as a buffer state between empires as it has most recently, fought to avoid absorption into an encroaching superpower. The answer lies in the geographical location of Afghanistan. In the north lie the Central Asia Republics, Xingjian province of China in the North-East touching the narrow strip of the Wakhan corridor to the East-South, South west lies Pakistan and in the west Iran.

The other major observation is that it is central to the critical and unstable regions of West Asia (Persian Gulf) and South Asia (Indo-Pak Borders). Being a land locked country; Afghanistan serves as a valued corridor for the rich gas and oil resources in the Central Asia republics to the Arabian sea. Conversely it gives access to markets in central Asia and therefore a country of great interests for regional and world powers. With these intentions, both neighboring and some world countries remains traditional patron of Afghan ethnic groups and so as to Mujahidin factions including those of Taliban. By supporting these elements, they prevent attainment of a resolution or compromise in the Afghan turmoil. In fact the geographical location of Afghanistan is such that nations in its vicinity and away from it evince a lot of interests in this country. Exercising their influence leading to conflicting situations, these nations as such have exploited the diversity and consequent disunity in the Afghan society and used them as pawn in the power game to install a regime which could serve them better.

---

214 Larry. P. Goodson, Afghanistan Endless War: State failure, Regional politics and the rise of the Taliban, p 133.
215 Shaul Shay, The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 94.
217 Shaul Shay, The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 94.
In order to understand and analyze the response and impact of Taliban in global perspective, it is necessarily to come across the countries involved in the Afghan turmoil. These possibly will be categorized into two distinctive groups. The first group consists of foreign countries which have strategic and other economic interests in the country, whilst the second constitutes evidently those of neighboring countries.

a. Western Response

United States of America.
After backing Afghan Mujahidins for ten long years in their struggle to evict the Soviet Union from their country, the US withdrew from the scene, leaving the Afghan factions to fight among themselves. The US administration pulled out from the Afghan quagmire with no mores about the fratricidal situation it left behind. Although they spent billions of dollars to achieve their goal they did not lost even life of a single soldier in this battle\(^{219}\). Afghan's on the contrary became the worst sufferers. The situation worsened further, when no more military aid and no economic assistance came from Washington; however, USA continued to monitor events in Afghanistan, particularly because of the presence of Russians troops in the Central Asian republics bordering Afghanistan.\(^{220}\) But USA hence after confined itself to the issuance of the occasional statements and some interest monitory aid, appealing to the warring parties in Afghanistan to settle their differences through negotiations. This non covalent attitude and paradigm shift in their interests resulted in the devastation of whole Afghanistan and the consequently emergence of Taliban.

\(^{219}\) The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, p 61.
\(^{220}\) Kamal Matinudin, The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, 1994-97, p 160, adding fuel to injury an official of the State Department, USA said " after the job was over, we are not going to allow Afghanistan to become our problem".
Despite the American interests in the region, they never favoured the establishment of extremist Islamic states or expansion of extremist Islamic influence anywhere in the world and more particularly in the Muslim Republics of Central Asia. However, in 1996, it did not see the Taliban as a tangible threat to American interests in the region. Notwithstanding persistent rumors and charges that United States supported Taliban in order to build oil pipelines and safeguard and isolate Iran, there is no evidence that Washington ever gave any material support to the Taliban regime. The United State's attack on Taliban should finally put these rumors to rest. Under the first Clinton administration, US expressed some such views about the Taliban which were interpreted as supportive and favorable to the regime. At that time, it hinted about its consideration to reopen the United State's embassy if security improved in Kabul following a Taliban victory and it further advocated engagement rather than isolation of the Taliban in the United Nation forums. With these intentions, the USA sought to use Taliban which was hostile to Iran and worked against their interests to apply pressure on Iran. The USA even hoped that a stable regime in Afghanistan would facilitate early signing of furtive agreements. In fact there are several distinct phases of US policy towards the Taliban which were driven by domestic requirements, the kind of policy called by scholars quick fix solution rather than time lasting solution. Between 1994 and 1996 the USA supported the Taliban politically through its allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia essentially because Washington viewed Taliban as an anti Iranian, anti Shia and pro Western force. The USA conveniently ignored the Taliban's own Islamic fundamentalist agenda between 1995 & 1997. US support became more meaningful because of Taliban backing for the Unocal project. Even though at that time USA had no strategic plan towards Central Asian energy resources and believed that the

221 Shaul Shay, Shaul Shay, The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 95.
222 Barnett. R. Rubin, Afghanistan Under the Taliban-1999, p 88
223 Shaul Shay, Shaul Shay, The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 95.
proposed pipelines could be built without resolving regional civil wars. As Barnett Rubin stated that the Taliban's most important function was to provide security for routes and proposed oil and gas pipelines that would link the states of Central Asia to the international markets through Pakistan rather than through Iran.

The effective campaign of American feminists against the Taliban compelled the USA to make a turn around on their Taliban policy from 1997. The American feminist perhaps amongst the first to raise objections against American Taliban policies, besides other human rights violations. They were especially perturbed by their so called anti-feminist policies concomitant atrocities on the women under the garb of Islamisation. In 1998 and 1999 the Taliban's support for Usama Bin Laden, and subsequently their refusal to endorse the Unocal projects or compromise with their opponents provided additional reason for the USA to get tough with the Taliban. In 1999 getting Bin Laden bagged down was Washington's primary policy object. V.D. Chopra further elaborates on the American policy, while quoting the statement of one of the American spokesman who publicly disclosed that USA had been carefully quoting Taliban for last two years for countering Iran and Russia and that it had been regularly holding meetings with them. During all these years of consolidation of power by groups unfriendly to the US and Pakistan, Washington kept funding a small amount of humanitarian assistance to Kabul, but carefully resorted to reduce the amount of aid to that country. Several important factors appeared to have induced the US

---

224 Ahmad Rashid, *Islam Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p 176.
226 As always with the Clinton agenda, domestic politic concerns outweighed foreign policy making and the wishes of allies. Clinton only woke up to the Afghanistan's problem when American movement knocked on his door because of the fact President and Mrs. Clinton had relied heavily on the American female vote in the 1996 elections and on a female support, especially during the Monica Lewinsky Saga. They could not afford to annoy liberal American women. Moreover, once Holly Wood got involved --- its liberal stars were key finaces and supporters of the Clinton campaign. Vice President Albert Gore was anxious to retain their support for his own elections bid- there was no way the US could be seen as soft on Taliban.
policy makers to review their attitude towards Afghanistan and support Taliban and out of them oil was the major one. As the US oil production had began to decline and the American oil companies started to plan for replenishing reserves by investing in friendly countries; the Central Asian Republics looked very lucrative as an area where the US could explore the possibility of investing the region's energy sector". In fact in 1995 when Unocal began to negotiate the Turkmenistan-Pakistan pipeline through Afghanistan, both USA and Pakistan governments supported the Taliban with hopes of a favorable deal. Sections of the Taliban leadership were even invited to Houston in 1997 to give momentum to this prospect. The Taliban were also promised 50 to 100 million $ a year as a transit fee. That is why the USA was the supportive of the Taliban as the security was to be provided by them. As such the oil factor made it easy for the US to implement its policy of 'dual containment' in the Persian Gulf in addition to Afghanistan. Iran and Iraq have been the targets of this post cold war American containment policy. The European, Japanese, Russian and even the Chinese attitude towards Iran, however, had made it difficult for Washington to provide enough teeth to the policy of containment. Under such circumstances, it was logical to belief that Washington supported the establishment of Taliban in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the terrorist attacks in 1997 on the US citizens in Africa and the US missile attacks in August, 1998 on the terrorist basis in Afghan changed the equation. Because of the fact that US policy towards the Afghanistan in general and Taliban in particular, was stymied by the lack of strategic framework, as the USA dealt with issues as they came-up in a haphazard, piecemeal male fashion rather than applying a coherent, strategic vision to its policies regarding the region. Moreover, the US policy very quickly underwent a change, soon they realized that the Taliban was emerging
as a strong power favoring fundamentalism and wedging the prime objective of US by their refusal to endorse the Unocal projects. They therefore used the issues like Taliban's gender policy, poppy-cultivation and presence of Bin Laden besides other human rights violations to eliminate Taliban from the scene. The Americans at that time were in search of opportunity to strike an effective blow to the Taliban which materialized after the attack on twin towers of World Trade Centre in New York and Pentagon in Washington on 9/11, 2001 which was at once attributed to the Bin Laden (Al-Qaeda) and Afghanistan (Taliban) further more, the direct impact of these acts on events in Afghanistan showed how global the world had become since the time when Afghanistan was an ill defined outpost. The United States initiated two allegations against Taliban one pertaining to the issues of Narcotics as a legitimate trade used by Taliban and other about Osama's sanctuary in Afghanistan. The America equipped with the world support soon launched an offensive on Afghanistan to destroy the terrorist basis therein and out Taliban who were thought to harbour and promote the enemies of peace and prosperity of the world. It is important to understand by the subsequent events how America could rally around itself nearly whole by mere money power and political maneuvering. A friendly and Pro-USA administration was installed with the hope that it will safeguard the oil pipeline, the Americans may construct in pursuit of their economic interests. Besides oil trade the American also aims at destruction of the flourishing Narcotics business which tends its way to USA and other countries. In backdrop of these developments, the impact of the Taliban movement on US may be concluded with the concern of US about regrouping of Islamic organizations at international level. On top of it the 'War on Terror' by America has been understood by some

233 America first felt the jerk when veteran powerful leader of Northern Alliance Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated which they believed as a signal for Usama Bin Laden's war against the United States. Victoria Schofield, Afghanistan Frontier, Feuding and Fighting in Central Asia, Taurus Parke Paper Backs, London, 2003, p 346.

234 Hafeez Malik, Taliban Rule and National reconstruction in Afghanistan Pakistan's Opium, p 81

235 Major General Summay Ram, The New Afghanistan Pawn of America, p 34
(Honsten and others) as an extension of age old crusades or a bottle farming a 
segment of war of civilization (as some Americans called it) W.G. Bush found 
any neutral stance of the nations an overt support to the enemies of the peaceful, 
civilized world here understood as America and its allies. He declared in no 
uncertain terms that “if you are not with us you are with them”. These two 
statements generated quite a furore in the world community, on the one side it 
was the US, the most powerful nation in the world that was demanding support 
almost through coercion and on the other the war was seen as a war against 
Islam. For the Muslim nations therefore, it was Hobson’s choice.

United States of America has several reasons to show its deep concern over 
developments in Afghanistan, first in wake of thirst to emerge as a lone world 
power or in other terms the world policeman, second to pursue its strategic and 
economic interests in the Afghanistan. In both the ways, the main implication is a 
re-mapping of the world in line with American policy and American interests. 
The principal effect of this may certainly be for the USA is to control large parts 
of the world resources. After advocating this policy now openly, to run the 
world” the global strategic environment has changed dramatically since 1990. 
The events followed by the collapse of Soviet Union (the part of the US policy) 
had given a new shape to the world order. The USA emerged as a sole power 
and cold war came to an end. The unique nature of international conflict scenario 
emerged which certainly has roots in the cold war politics. Afghan uncertainty 
and later the “Taliban Phenomenon” constitutes the part of this world game 
plan and in other terms a competitions ground. Therefore, since 1950, the USA’s 
primary concern and emphasis was on containment of the Soviet Union. 
Accordingly, the American’s tried to exert their influence in Afghanistan and

236 The New Afghanistan Pawn of America, p 69
October, 01, 2004
238 Dr. Umaro Singh, Turmoil in Afghanistan: Implications for India’s security, central Asian Digest, 
Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University, Srinagar-2004, p 2.
partly succeeded. However, the Afghans were always very cautious in their relations with the outside actors' right from its existence and so is to Americans relied more on Soviets. Therefore, the equation changed when the Afghans declared Jihad against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The US did not miss the opportunity and Mujahidin were provided with massive military and economic aid, who successfully evicted the Soviets after a protracted resistance movement of over two decades.

Russia
Russia's involvement in Afghanistan was never a hidden fact right from the emergence of Russia as a Euro Asian imperial power. Russia with a population of 17 million Muslims has long cherished dreams of seeking and reaching the warm waters of the Arabian Sea. It is in this context that Russia after its systematic annexations of Central Asia continued to seek close alliance with Afghanistan. In December, 1979, the Russians took the opportunity of realizing their dreams and managed their entry into Afghanistan to occupy it till they were forced to pullout in 1989 after a protracted resistance movement by the Afghan Mujahidin, subsequently; due to the breakup of the Soviet Union it lost its grip on Afghanistan.

During the one decade long occupation, directly or indirectly, Soviets took such measures as were found necessary to pave the way for a socialist structure and emergence of values which were considered by the Islamist control to the religious values of the Afghan society.

The land was socialized, industries were confiscated, green flag was replaced by the red communist flag, men and women were forced to mobilize for joint

---

239 Major General Samay Ram, *The New Afghanistan, Pawn of America*, p. 33
240 Major General Samay Ram, *The New Afghanistan Pawn of America*, p. 32
indoctrination sessions where century old traditions were ruthlessly challenged and thousands of young men and women were sent to the Soviet Union for indoctrination and education on communist lines. Besides the break-up of the then existing social fabric, the process of Russification initiated a mass exodus from Afghanistan thus creating demographic upheavals. It is rightly said of Afghans that they are never united when left to their own but when attacked from outside they are one and fight with a single purpose of ousting or routing the enemy. British earlier (1941-42) had a taste of it and Russian, without learning from history tasted it during the decade of their “rule” on Afghanistan.

Defeat in Afghanistan (1989) shattered the myth of Soviet military invincibility in the most humiliating manner. The red army equipped with most recent technologically sound arsenal found itself in the quagmire, the like of which was only experienced by the Americans way back in Vietnam. Triumph of Taliban and their extreme ideology encouraged the certain groups of Islamists in the neighboring states particularly Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Emergence of these groups in the countries concerned put the political processes and very fragile peace efforts of their rulers in jeopardy. The sporadic uprisings in different parts of the states culminated into full-fledged rebellion demanding not “the concessions” or reforms in the system but overthrow of the present institutions. Tajikistan was worst hit. Here Islamists had a complete sway over the majority factions of the society and government of time was forced to share the political power with them. Taliban presence became a menace for Tajikistan which under the grab of certain treaties with Russia requested for the development of Russian forces on its border with Afghanistan & safeguard its interests. Russia saw the Mujahidin and the subsequent Taliban regime as tangible threats to the Muslim Republics in the CIS and to Russian interests in the region. Russian fears were reinforced when evidence emerged of involvement of Afghan fighters in the

241 Hafeez Malik, *Taliban Rule and National Reconstruction in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s Option* p 76
fight between peripheral pro-Russian regimes and Islamic movements Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and also in the ongoing rebellion in Chechnya. Russia also saw Pakistan’s ambitions in Afghanistan and Central Asia as a threat to its security sphere. It found common interests with Iran there, as in the Caucasus where Turkey and the United States are the main external powers. Russia therefore provided some support to the Rabbani-Masood government as well as to General Rashid Dostum with a view to resist more fundamentalist Hikmatyar (and latter Taliban as well). Taking into consideration these developments President Yeltsin’s own security advisor at the time General Lebed, urged Russia to intervene decisively in support of the ousted regime of President Rabbani and to help all the organized military forces in Afghanistan opposed to the Taliban movement. In an urgent even apocalyptic speech, Lebed expressed the alarm or panic felt widely in Moscow and played up the bogey of Islamic fanaticisms and went on to assert a simplistic domino theory of imminent state collapse throughout the Central Asian region, unless Russia acts with decisive force to stem the Islamic tide. Moreover, the Russian mass media gave generous coverage to bleak and sometimes alarming assessments of extremist activities in their immediate neighborhood. Thus the influential Moscow Newspaper Rossiiskaia gazetteer warned that the long term impact of the Taliban’s rise to power might well mean the forced withdrawal of the Russian army from Central Asia.

At the top of it all the impact of Taliban state on the Russia may be ascertained and gauged by the Russia’s relations and military cooperation with its arch enemy America in order to get the Taliban anguished. It is note worthy to mention that last time this level of military cooperation between Washington and

---

243 Barnett R. Rubin, Afghanistan Under The Taliban, p 87
244 William Malay, Fundamentalism Reborn in Afghanistan, p 107
Moscow occurred, was only in 1945 when the two powers joined together to fight out the Germans and their allies. Russia equipped Uzbek and Tajik Special Forces joined the Northern Alliance (Afghanistan) and were successful in their clashes with the Taliban. In short Russian’s military, material and advisors turned the tide in the war against the Taliban militia. What was done by Russia is itself an evidence of impact of short ruled Taliban on the country. Though apparently, the Taliban disappeared from the scene but they have succeeded in sowing the seeds of radicalism in the Central Asian republics which in turn will may, in the future create its own problems in the region.

European Countries (Britain, France, Germany etc,) and United Nations
As far as the response of European countries to the rule of Taliban is concerned, they were mute spectators and kept confined to the statements only. In general, they wanted and sought an end to “go alone” policy of the USA on foreign affairs, ranging from global warming to missile defence. However, it was the western mass media which raised the issues concerning Taliban and their domestic policy. Taliban in this media appeared as monsters preparing to eat at the vitals of the western civilization. Afghanistan became the breeding and training ground for all the countries which always wanted USA to go down as an economic & political power. Taliban started to give more offensive statements against west and issued decrees which were abhorring to western aesthetics and training. They played upon the themes like the immediate ban on female education, their employment, closure of cultural house and entertainment centers and also the difficulties faced by humanitarian agencies As a result, the UN was forced to issue a statement decrying the Taliban hostilities. Together with the European Parliament, it brought the UN human rights conventions into debate condemning the gender policies of the Taliban as human rights violations.

246 The Russians provided dozens of T-55 tanks, sometimes with Russian crews and armoured personal carries as well as munitions.
247 Martin McCauley, Afghanistan and Central Asia, p 154.
On October, 03, 1996, the European Union's Commissioner for humanitarian affairs, Emma Bonino said in an interview that the rights of women must be respected in Afghanistan before there could be any international recognition of the new Taliban government in Kabul. On the following day the UN human rights commissioner Jose Ayala Lasso, said in an prepared statement that he had urged his representatives in Kabul to convey urgently to the Taliban his strong concern for the situation of human rights in Afghanistan. He appealed to Taliban to ensure respect right of women to work and the right of girls to education. While endorsed these views UN Secretary General issued a statement on October, 08 where he said that all UN assistance had to be guided by the UN charter which affirmed equal rights for men and women. The same day, the USA warned the Taliban administration that it would not secure international recognition or aid unless it respected the rights of women. This statement followed by another statement issued by Corel Bellamy Executive Director of UNICEF on October, 9th, 1996, announcing that UNICEF was suspending its assistance to educational programmes in Kabul, adding further that these programmes would only be reinitiated when the Taliban accept that girls right to attend the schools. This suspension was an extension of one issued in response to the ban imposed on the female education, when Taliban had taken Herat (province in Afghanistan) in September, 1995. The pace of hatred continued against the Taliban and on October 17th, the UN Security Council issued a resolution in which it expressed concern over the discrimination against the women and urged strict adherence to the norms of international humanitarian law. It also called for an immediate cease-fire in Afghanistan and urged all Afghan parties to begin a dialogue in cooperation with United Nations. It further appealed for an end to outside interference in Afghanistan and asked the neighboring states to prevent the flow of new arms into the country. Supplementary to this the European Parliament adopted another resolution in which it called on all states to oppose the Taliban administration in Kabul.
because of what it called systematic discrimination against Afghan women, the numerous violations of human rights and the forcible indoctrination of the people. However, the Taliban, whether they had any acquaintance with the UN charter on human rights or not, interpreted these sanctions and warnings of UNO as an unethical nexus of enemies of Islam and peoples of Asia in general. They refused to leave their position rooted in their own interpretation of Quran and Shuria which they explained as the most relevant principles to govern their society. Western interpretations of their acts was called and rejected as morbid, motivated and moribund view point. The Taliban therefore drew a very fast distinction between two value systems in contradiction with each other, one they called the Western Value System and the other as Islamic Value System. This could be substantiated by one of the statements given by Taliban themselves in response to the international concerns of human rights violation. When the West raised their objections about women not been able to work, the Taliban expressed surprise that greatest attention is being given to something that, in their eyes, is of little significance and concern. Only a relatively small number of women who worked in offices, on the other hand, felt upset that the West had not recognized what they regarded as a major achievement i.e. establishment of peace and law and order in Afghanistan. They found it strange that west is opposing the imposition of very same moral codes which have helped rectify many of the anti people acts practiced in past and have brought the Afghan society on the path of righteousness.

248 The Western Value system puts a high value on democracy and on individual freedom. Individual freedom understood to be a freedom to seek ones own fulfillment and determine ones own views and perspectives. In short, to give expression to ones own uniqueness. It is contrasted with totalitarian system in which the state seeks to impose a particular ideology and to control how the individual lives his or own life. In the Islamic value system there is not the same emphasis on the individual freedom the individual is seen as absorbed within, and subject to society. He or she will identify with the family tribe, ethnic group, religious group or political party and will generally value conformity with the norms of these groups (especially with the norms laid down in Quran and Sunnah) over personal fulfillment. Energy is more likely to be put into group efforts to improve society than into individual effort to pursue an individual course. There are of course exceptions but in so for as one is generalizing, there is a greater emphasis on society within Islam than there is in the West. The Taliban and the International Community. p 117

249 The Taliban and the International Community. p 117.
Israel

Israel, a country yet to be recognized by most of the Muslim countries, was not, quite unexpectedly, critical of Taliban regime in Afghanistan in its initial period. Nevertheless, in line with the US State Department, Israel, saw the Taliban as an anti-Iranian force which could be used to undermine Iranian influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Furthermore, the UNACOL pipeline across Afghanistan, they thought, would forestall any Iranian move to develop its own plans for the Central Asian oil. It is believed that Israel’s intelligence agency MOSSAD initiated a dialogue with the Taliban through Taliban liaison office in the USA and with the oil companies interested in Central Asia. Pakistan’s intelligence agency, ISI, supported this dialogue, even though Pakistan did not recognize Israel. But as US policy towards the Taliban shifted so did Israel’s. they soon found Taliban, highly recalcitrant to their moves and covert suggestions. Israel realized that the Taliban were a security threat to the region and could export Islamic fundamentalism. Afterward MOSSAD opened contacts with the anti-Taliban alliance that they considered their patrons USA & Britain, as a lesser evil. By and large, the response of Israel to the Islamic Taliban movement was evident and expected in view of the Zionist and fear psychosis about Islamic world.

China

The theological aspect of the Taliban movement worried the rulers of China. Their chief concern stemmed from the Taliban’s potential for becoming a catalyst for an Islamic revolution in the Xingjiang province whereby this province would become another independent Islamic state in the region reportedly in view of the contacts and military training among the Taliban groups and separatists of

---

250 Ahmad Rashid. *Afghanistan, Islam, Oil, and the new great game in Central Asia*. p 154
Xingjiang province. China is, given its past experience with Muslims of Xingjiang province who have, invariably always supported the rebellions movements against China in the region, very apprehensive of any radical uprisings in the vicinity pf the region concerned (i.e. Xingjiang). Since the end of 1990s, there has been a spurt of extremist activities and it is believed that almost 1600 members of the party who carried out these activities were not only trained in Afghanistan but were funded through the sale of drugs (heroin) from there. China, except for the support extended to the Afghan militants during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, has generally been against any fundamentalist regime there. It was therefore no surprise that the Chinese voted for sanctions against the Taliban in 1997. China, as is known to all China watchers, is very sensitive about its borders. It saw the rise, dominance and then the proclamations about their enforcement of Shariah in Afghanistan as a growing menace but was held back from any visible expression by its friendly relations with Pakistan. As expressed by the then Afghan information Minister Amir Khan Mutaiqi says, "Our prestige is spreading across the region because we have truly implemented Islam and this make the Americans and some neighbours including China very nervous." However, Taliban officials have assured China that they are not harboring fugitive Uighurs. But once Taliban hands started prinking its sensitivities it became alarmed. Presently, though China is relieved of Taliban it finds itself more endangered and disturbed because of American presence in Afghanistan & Uzbekistan.

252 Major General Samay Ram, The New Afghanistan, Pawn of America , Pp 29-30
253 Ahmad Rashid, Taliban Exporting Terrorism, Foreign Affairs, Vol-78, No-6, p 31
254 Ahmad Rashid, Taliban Exporting Terrorism, Foreign Affairs, p 31.
255 Ahmad Rashid, Taliban Exporting Terrorism, Foreign Affairs, p 30.
256 They rightly consider that along with US military presence in Japan and South Korea these newly acquired bases will lead to an encirclement of China. Chinese are however, particularly concerned about their western autonomous region of Xing yang. Where since the 1970 segment of Uighin population are struggling for secession. This area contains three major oil basins-the Turpan, Junear and Tarun. The people's liberation army of China maintains numerous bases and there are nuclear weapons testing grounds.
b. Role of Iran and Pakistan

Iran

Iran's interest in Afghanistan is rooted in its historical ties with its eastern neighbor. The present boundary between Iran and Afghanistan was delineated by the British in the 18th century. It cuts through a territory inhabited by people with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds—the Persian influence in Herat in many ways remained very visible. Furthermore, Afghanistan and Iran having a long land border, share a common history going all the way back to antiquity. Religion, language and ethnicity are supplementary to common factors binding the two countries together. However, Iran's relations with Afghanistan have been influenced more by external factors than the bilateral issues. Therefore Iran's reaction to the Taliban's success in Afghanistan was one of anger, as for years Iran had provided strong moral and material support to the precedent Rabbani government. They were locked in a conflict of interests with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States with regard to Central Asia. Iran viewed the Taliban victory as part of a plot by anti-Shia forces and the United States to isolate it. Iran was naturally vociferous in its criticism of the Taliban, more on diplomatic than the religious grounds. Since Taliban seemed to be virulently and violently anti-Shiite, on October, 07, 1996. Ayatollah Ali

in the region. US military presence in the region, right next to this critical point, adds to the suspicion in the Chinese mind that Americans will use this against the main land. (see also)

The area east of the Dasht-e-Lut in Iran known as Khorasan once included the cities of Meshed, Herat, Balkh (Mazar-e-Sharif) and Merv (Turkmenistan). The whole of this territory was part of the till it was conquered by the Gilzai Pashtun in the early 17th century. In 1717 Nadir Shah of Iran overran Afghanistan and aligned it with his country once again. After his death Ahmad Shah Abdali took control of the area around Kandhar and gradually spread out towards Kabul and beyond. At that time the boundary between the kingdom of Bukhara and Afghanistan was the Hindukush. It was the British and Russians who decided to have the river Oxus as the dividing line during the great game being played between the two rivals on the political chessboard of Central Asia. Kamal Matinudin. The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, 1994-97, p 148. 254 Kamal Matinudin, The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, 1994-97, p 148


Ali A. Jalali, A Historical perspective on Iran-Afghan relations in Ah Mohammad and Atoushivan Ehteshami (Ed.), Iran and Eurasia, Garnett Reading -2000, p 139

Ralph. H. Magnus, Afghanistan, Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, p 190.
Khamani in a Friday Sermon, said, "in the neighborhood of Iran, something is taking place in the name of Islam and a group whose knowledge of Islam is unknown has embarked on actions having nothing to do with Islam." He went on to add that the socio-political measures undertaken by these forces of ignorance and retrogression are nothing but the expression of their misunderstanding of basic tenets of Islam so naturally counter to all human rights sanctions. The Ayatollah also accused the Taliban of receiving support from the USA, stating, "The world witnessed how highly the USA spoke of the group, not that Washington condemned it but on the contrary it has been supporting the Taliban in its suppression of rivals." Consequently, Iran decided to cooperate with the anti-Taliban factions in opposing the Taliban. Despite the earlier successes which Taliban registered in its favour the Iran took a public stand against them and provided financial and military support to their opponents. Thus Iran got actively involved in the Afghanistan imbroglio and inadvertently helped further schism in the region. Thus helped the Judeo-Christian cause to achieve their goal without much labour to disunite the Muslim world. It was very precarious and queer situation for Iran. It wanted to safeguard its national interests and those of its community but at the same time was apprehensive of any moves which would bring any of the European or American powers to its borders.

Apart from these developments and conflicts between Iran and Afghanistan, the impact of Taliban could be concluded with the statement of Foreign Ministry of Iran, while admitting, in view of growing influence of Taliban as an ‘Islamic Movement’, that “Taliban have some social base, however, main cause of

---

262 Peter Marsden, *The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Picture*, p 130
265 Al-Quran, Chapter-II Verse-
annoyance is Iran’s regional interests”. Furthermore, Iran also condemned US attack on Afghanistan and termed it as a war against Islam and demanded US president to be put on trial for ordering the bombings in Afghanistan.266

Pakistan

Ethnically, territorially and on top of it religiously, Pakistan’s polity is inextricably linked to Afghanistan.267 As such Pakistan’s involvement in Afghan affairs is obvious and least questionable regarding its cultivation of relations with the next door neighbor. As Pakistan’s strategic calculus viz.-a-viz. Afghanistan is to have a friendly regime in its neighborhood, and to have some kind of influence over its government to ensure that it does not play to the tunes of any other neighboring power. Moreover, it is geographically so located that it serves the best base for operations in Afghanistan and a conduit for all the logistic support and aid that flows into that country. Afghanistan is for Pakistan as important conduct to the benefits of Central Asia. In the late 1980s, an additional factor -the concept of ‘strategic depth’ gained much currency in Pakistan’s defense calculation.268 Since Pakistan has been the most active neighbor of Afghanistan, it has been playing a vital role in influencing the developments there.269 That is why, during the war between the Mujahidin and the Soviets, Pakistan provided a base for the transfer of supplies, equipment, arms and money to the movements and the priority destination of some millions of refugees who fled there. 270 Pakistan’s involvement, in many ways, in the Afghan jihad had the most serious repercussions for its own people271, as

269 Major General Sammy Ram, *the New Afghanistan, Pawn of America*., p 311
270 Shaul Shay, *The Endless jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden*, p 97
271 Victoria Schofield, *Afghanistan Frontier, Fending and Fighting in Central Asia*, p 350
refugees came with both guns and drugs. During the war, Pakistan nurtured a number of Mujahidin movements in the hope that at the end of the struggle with the Soviets, they would establish a friendly regime in Kabul that would serve Pakistan’s regional interests. After the Soviets were expelled from Afghanistan and Kabul passed into the hands of Mujahidin, Pakistan supported the founding of a government where-in all Mujahidin factions would be represented with Hikmatyar’s movement and a number of other (pro-Pakistani) Mujahidin movements. But, unfortunately, for it neither the Pakistan brokered Peshawar Accord nor the Islamabad declaration proved effective. The members of the former Afghan Interim Government (AIG) fought with each other, and quarreled on the allocation of Ministries. The ongoing civil war which soon ensued there prevented the return of some 4 million Afghan refugees from Pakistan who were an economic burden on Pakistan & were a conduit for extremist political influence. As the ongoing civil war hampered the interests of the Pakistan and left no option to them to introduce sane Taliban as an alternative regime in Afghanistan, though it is not the only, but one of the major causes of emergence of Taliban. The Taliban have largely drawn their forces from the Madrasas based in Pakistan, and Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Taliban regime after it captured Kabul in September, 1996. Pakistan’s objectives vis-a-vis the new Taliban regime were clear and inclined settling the Pushtumistan issue, attaining strategic depth, building an oil pipe line for Central Asian oil through Afghanistan and creating a safe heaven in Afghanistan to train and motivate Kashmir insurgents to fight the Indian troops (forces). However when India

222 Imitiyaz Gul, The Unholy Nexus-Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban, p 81
223 Shaul Shay, The Endless Jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 97
225 Shaul Shay, The Endless Jihad, The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 97-98
226 Dilip Hiro, Taliban Tightened their Grip, Middle East International, No. 581, 21, August 1998, p 13
227 Increasingly, the Kashmir issue became the prime mover behind Pakistan Afghanistan policy and its support to Taliban, the Taliban exploited this adroitly, refusing to accept other Pakistan demands knowing that Islamabad could deny them nothing, as long as they provided bases for Kashmiri and Pakistan militants. S. M. Ravi, S. Patwaik, Pakistan and the New Regime in Afghanistan, Relationship and Crossroad, In Sridhar (Ed.), Afghanistan in Transition, p 74.
raised its objection and protested against the Afghan involvement in Kashmir struggle Mullah Omar, while rejecting the Indian allegation said, "we support the jihad in Kashmir, it is true that some Afghans are fighting against the Indian occupation forces in Kashmir but these Afghans have gone on their own". Notwithstanding these facts, the Taliban's links to Pakistan did not end (and did not begin) with the formation of government there. As already noted, the Taliban derive much of their religious inspiration from the Deobandi movement in Pakistan. Virtually all the Taliban leaders had been refugees in Pakistan for several years and studied in Madrasas. There links remained important and provided new recruits to the Taliban. The Taliban also received support from traders based in Quetta, Peshawar and Karachi, who were engaged in the transit trade. The removal of checkpoints and the establishment of public order in southern and western Afghanistan were of great advantage to them, and they contributed to the coffers of Taliban. These traders now enjoyed coffers of their newfound social status through the contributions to the madrassa where Taliban were trained. The Taliban thus had a broad set of links to Pakistan's society and polity. By this way, Taliban were able to draw on particular Islamic movements within Pakistan's Borders to recruit young people from Madrasas throughout the country including the Afghan refugee camp's, where a number of radical Islamic and Islamist movements had established such centers of Islamic teaching. This recruitment process was augmented by appeals to tribal leaders in the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and to the refugee campus there, to send some of their young men to fight. These appeals often met with a positive response. So, Taliban Movement was able to rely on indigenous support as well as, that emanating from outside the country particularly Pakistan. While holding this view, Ahmad Rashid more vividly narrates the Pakistan-Taliban nexus and writes that, "The Taliban were born in Pakistan refugee camps, educated in

279 Peter Marsden, The Afghan Islamic Tradition, The Regional Picture. Pp 113-114
Pakistani Madrassa and learnt their fighting skills from Mujahidin parties based in Pakistan". He further adds that the Taliban's deep connections to Pakistani State institutions, political parties, Islamic groups, the madrassa network and the drug mafia and business, and transport groups came at a time when Pakistani's power structure was unraveling and fragmented. This suited the Taliban who were not beholden to any single Pakistani lobby such as the ISI where as in the 1980s Mujahidin leaders had exclusive relationships with the ISI and the Jamaat-e-Islami; they had no links with other political and economic lobbies. In contrast the Taliban had access to more influential lobbies & groups in Pakistan than most Pakistanis. It is only under these circumstances that Pakistan became the first country to grant international recognition to the Taliban Government and rooted its decision on the fact that latter was in effective control of most of the Afghanistan's territory including the capital. Pakistan also succeeded to convince Saudi Arabia and UAE among other countries recognize the Taliban government.

Despite these efforts to help and control the Taliban, the Taliban were no body's men or puppets and they resisted every attempt by Pakistan to hold their strings. It is an undisputed historical fact that throughout Afghan history no outsider has been able to manipulate their suzerainty over Afghans. While the Pakistani government remained a strong supporter of Taliban in Afghanistan, it has not been able to influence their political or religious agenda. The Taliban therefore became almost an elusive proportion for Pakistan. Pakistan could never run Taliban activities to their desire and interest. Though Taliban had deep rooted foundations in Pakistan, and had blessings as well as physical presence of Pak soldiers in its groups, it hardly thought it necessary to accept Pak ruler's

280 Ahmad Rashid, Taliban Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia. p 185
282 Taliban Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 185.
283 M. Ehsan Ahrari, China, Pakistan and the Taliban Syndrome, Asian Survey. No 40, 2000, p 665
suggestions. While the whole world considered Taliban a Pakistan created phenomenon (or menace) Pakistan itself was finding itself a looser both politically and economically in their relations with Taliban. Taliban syndrome began to creep into the already fragile political system of Pakistan. They never succeeded in erasing the world’s perception that it supported the Taliban military or to convince the world about its inability to alter their policy. Taliban stubbornly refused to heed Pakistan’s advice on the status of Bamiyan Buddhist statues or on the American demand for Bin Laden. Pakistan became the most suspicious nation of the world as an abode of terrorism. Loss of political credibility brought Pakistan nearly to its ruin. In this connection the New York based Human Rights Watch in its annual report, January-2002, produced a study on Pakistan’s official political and military support to the Taliban regime. But despite good information and valid observations about the involvement of the Pakistani religious parties in Afghanistan the report was typically harsh on Pakistan government.

"In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre (WTC) on 11, September, 2001 Pakistan emerged as a frontline state in the US-led war against terrorism targeting the Taliban regime in Afghanistan". Since the Americans declared the war on Afghanistan, and called it a war between civilizations, George W. Bush went further and declared, “if you are not with us, you are with them”. These statements generated quite a ripple in the world community. On one side it was the USA, the most powerful nation in the world that was demanding support almost through coercion, on the other, the war was seen by most of the Muslims world as a war against Islam. For the Muslim nations, especially Pakistan, therefore it was a Hobson’s choice. “Because of close

---

284 China, Pakistan and the Taliban Syndrome, Asian Survey, No. 40, 2000, p 670
285 Imtiyaz Gul, The Unholy Nexus-Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban, Pp 17-38
286 Sreedhar, Afghanistan in Transition, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, p 78
relations between the Pakistan government and the Taliban regime, the US realized that without Pakistan's cooperation and active participation, the war against Taliban & Al-Qaeda would fizzle out". More importantly if Pakistan had refused to support the US, this would have threatened the survival of the Pakistan itself. In this instance, Pakistan would have been targeted by the US lead international coalition for its support of the Taliban and its links with the terrorist world over. Besides, Pakistan also had limited options, Pakistan wanted to come out of its international political isolation after the coup, economic un-stability and also desired to establish its credential as a state that is opposed to terrorism. In addition, Pakistan wished to prevent India from gaining any 'strategic advantage' in the current turmoil and also to retain strategic leverage in the future political structure in the Afghanistan. As general Musharaf, explaining his country's compulsions, said, "Pakistan is facing an extremely delicate situation, and in my opinion it is the most delicate phase since 1971. At this moment our decisions may have far reaching and wide consequences. The expanse and span of these decisions are very wide....The worst results, God forbid, may endanger our territorial integrity and survival, he concluded with the remarks that, Pakistan come first, everything else is secondary. With plea that the future of 140 million Pakistanis can not be jeopardized, he also defended his 'policy reversal' by giving it a religious connotation, that even Shariah provides that if we are faced with two difficulties and a has to be made, it is always better to choose lesser one." Expectedly Pakistan encountered domestic fallout. The religious parties were vociferously critical of the government change of stance. There were rallies and protests, marches galore, with public denunciation of America and Musharaf. The protests and rallies in support of Taliban and against US aggression, throughout

---

288 Sreediwar, Afghanistan in Transition, p 78.
289 Pakistan and Uzbekistan, the frontline states.......
290 Cited from, Sreediwar, Afghanistan in Transition, Pp 78-79.
291 Dawn, TNSM Shoora to Decide Sending Jihadis to Afghanistan, October, 16. 2001
the Islamic world, including that of Pakistan itself, speak about the impact of Taliban. However the impact of Taliban on Pakistan had many repercussions. From synoptic view, first the Taliban had a profound effect on the historically strong ties between Iran and Pakistan. Their relations had never plummeted so low as during the Taliban movement. Second, the peace and security became a major causality particular in border areas of Pakistan with the shift in its stance against Taliban. Pakistan administrators had no alternative but to support Bush administration. Whole political spectrum of Pakistan territory would have been collapsed in case they would not have supported US policy, while they were planning to launch an attack on Taliban and Bin-Ladin followers. Pakistan had to bow down before US, because entire socio-economic setup and foreign policy affairs were being supported and run by US Administration. So at the time General Musharraf had to be a yes man before President George Bush.

It is important to mark out the imprints which Taliban have left behind on the psyche of average Pakistani and on the general credibility of its political institutions. It is generally believed, though erroneously, that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and to enforce its true principles and tenets in the country which are yet to be implemented. But in Afghanistan, the Taliban movement somehow managed to implement the Islamic Shariah and succeeded in formation of Islamic Shariah there. This certainly influenced the religiously oriented parties there which later resulted in their success in the last elections, before which they never had forced well in the elections in Pakistan. The depth of influence on Pakistan can also be gauged by what the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief in November 1998 had to say while calling for the introduction of Taliban style rapid Islamic justice in Pakistan, according to reports, Sharief said, “today in Afghanistan, crimes have virtually come to naught I have heard that one can safely drive a vehicle full of gold at midnight without fear”, “I want this kind of system in Pakistan. Justice will end oppression and bring prosperity”.

118
what is clear is that the Pakistani premier was very pleased with the Taliban ways of executing justice. He admired them for their achievements, though with some domestic implications they largely encouraged the Mullahs in Pakistan to galvanize public opinion in favour of the imposition of Shariah in its purist form in Pakistan as well. But now, contrary to all this and to the dismay of mullahs in Pakistan the President of Pakistan left no stone unturned to curb the Talibanization in Pakistan. But the question still remains a begging about the general expectations of the masses who have been fed on slogans which have become a noose around the Pakistan rulers.

c. Response of the Muslim World

Central Asian Republics

Central Asia was cradle of Islamic civilization for almost thousand years. A large number of Sufis moved out of this region to Afghanistan and to the far corners of South Asia to spread the message of Islam. In fact Tsarist and British empires in the 18th century tried to decline the Islamic civilization. Besides, in the great game that followed, the Khanates weakened by interline conflicts, fell by the wayside and finally come under the control of godless regime of Communists. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism, the Central Asian states became independent Republics. Their strategic importance increased when several nations started to show an interest in benefiting from their mineral wealth, being surrounded by Russia, China and Iran in close proximity to several international flashpoints put them significantly

---

293 Khawja Qutub-ud-Din Kaki (1205-1235), Maulana Jalal-ud-Rumi (1207-1273) and Sheikh Ullman bin Hassan Marandi, commonly known as Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, were amongst the luminaries from Central Asia and are still revered in all Muslim lands. Imam Bukhari, R A from Uzbekistan and Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Trimidhi, (R.A) were authorities of Hadith, Tafsir and Iqra, their works are the in-depthed contribution to the Islamic theology. Kamal Matinudin, The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, p 169
294 Rulers of Central Asia (17th Century-18th Century).

119
on the world stage. Since their independence, the Central Asian Republics while claiming their dominant Muslim past glorification maintained their seven decade old secular stance and refused to fall prey to Islamic fundamentalism. With their porous borders, weak security apparatus, and crises torn economy, the five Central Asian Republics Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - have every reason to fear a turmoil uprising with its roots in Afghanistan because of their common religion (Islam) and emotional bonds with Afghanistan. They, therefore, despite being Muslims dominant moved towards secularism. Moreover, the Central Asian leaders, who have not changed since the Soviet era, are growing increasingly authoritarian. Their rigid mostly manipulated elections and restrictions on political parties have undermined democratic alternatives leaving underground Islamist movements as the only political opposition. Therefore, at the ground level, the widespread poverty and unemployment and on top of it the religious zeal provides a fertile recruiting base for young Muslims. During Taliban days their threat was more imminent though in terms of foreign relations, the Taliban have consistently look the line that their version of Islam is for internal consumptions only and that they had no intention of trying to export it. However, few have been convinced and more suspicious and over smart westerners interpret the self assumed title of Mohammad Omar's, Amur-ul-Muminin, as an having global connotations. Subsequently, the Taliban's run of successes has aroused concern and even alarm within Russia and the Central Asian Republics. As soon as Kabul fell in the hands of Taliban in the autumn of 1996, representatives of Russia and Central Asian republics, excluding

300 Ahmad Rashid, The Taliban Exporting Terrorism, Pp 28-29.
301 Martin Evans, Afghanistan A History of its People and Politics, p 195
Turkmenistan, held an emergency meeting to review the situation and concluded that it represented a direct threat to their national interests and security. Further more Afghanistan had become in the words of Talbakh Nazarov, the Tajikistan Foreign Minister, "a dangerous source of military, political, criminal and economic turbulence". Later, with the capture of Mazn-i-Shirfie and the extension of Taliban control in Northern Afghanistan more concerns was aroused and further meetings were held and resolutions adopted to take 'necessary measures', should the borders of any of the common wealth of independent states (CIS) be violated. It would be noteworthy to mention here, that messages from Mullah Mohammad Rabbani reached some of the participating governments to reassure them that the military offensives in Afghanistan did not constitute any threat to the Central Asian States. Radio Shariat (Formally Radio Kabul) broadcast details of the messages on 29th May, 1996 "The Islamic Republics of Afghanistan wants an establishment of friendly relations with all countries in the world, especially the neighborly and regional countries, on the basis of accepted international principles, Peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the national affairs of other countries". However, the quantum of impact of Taliban has been rightly understood by the Kamal Matinudin, in following words, since the Muslims of Central Asia lived under a non-religious regime for seven decades. They have, therefore, become accustomed to a more (so called) liberal interpretation of Islam. All of them (particularly ruling class) were concerned at the possibility of Afghanistan being ruled by a group of religious extremists. For that reason, the presence of an ultra-orthodox regime in the neighborhood seemed to them a cause of worry and virtual threat to their authoritative regimes. By and large all six new Muslim republics were apprehensive about the rise of Taliban, the three directly affected republics were Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as they all

302 Martin Evans, Afghanistan: A History of its People and Politics, p 195
303 BBC summary of World Broadcast FE/2933TA, 5, 31, May, 1997 see also William Malin, P 113-114
share common borders with Afghanistan. As far as Tajikistan is concerned, Islam plays comparatively an important role in this country. The network of Mullahs and mosques has become the centre of social life substituting for other civil society institutions. The mullahs have placed themselves at the helm of government opposition by founding the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) and made the interference of religion in political life evident in Tajikistan. For Tajikistan, the Taliban represented as Islamic fundamentalism at odds with moderate, Sufi spiritualism of Central Asia while Taliban’s Pashtun expansionism was at direct odds with Tajik aspirations. However Tajikistan has failed to save the influence of Talibanization in wake of the growing power of the secretive organization Hizb-ut-Tahrir and as well as other Islamic organization operating in Tajikistan. All these groups which have some sort of links with Afghanistan clearly indicate the impact of Taliban. Though Taliban apparently disappeared from the scene giving a the major setback to these organizations, but their roots are very deep in the fertile psyche of the people concerned as such continue to pose threat to the statehood and sovereignty of these countries.

Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan Islam has played and continues to play very important role. The origin and activity of political movements under Islamic force and their collision with opposition parties became an integral part of the developments in the post-Soviet period. In Uzbekistan Islamic militancy partly fueled by Afghanistan,

---

308 In the process of establishing an Uzbek national identity, the orthodox Muslim religion (of Sum of the Hanafite School) has been of major importance. The Sufi confraternities are less important in Uzbekistan than elsewhere. Nevertheless, one should not forget Sufism popularity in Samarqand spread by the great mystic Ubaydallah Khoga Akhrar. In larger urban centers in the central and eastern parts of the republic where merchants and craftsmen traditionally live, Islam is an integral part of the urban sub-culture. The higher level of education in urban centers creates conditions which encourage a moderate form of Islam. Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarqand which are centers for Islamic culture for Muslims of various countries
was the most serious challenge to Islam Karimov's (president of Uzbekistan) Government as the most significant opposition came from underground radical Islamic groups, entrenched in the Farghana valley. Many of those Uzbek militants studied secretly in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and were trained in Afghanistan Mujahidin camps in 1980's and subsequently developed links with the Taliban. In fact well before Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan, Moscow and Tashkent cultivating Afghan-Uzbek enclave to create a secular Uzbek controlled "Cordon Sanitary" in Northern Afghanistan that would resist any Mujahidin takeover. For nearly a decade this policy was successful with military aid from Moscow and Tashkent, and helped to restrict the Mujahidin and put impediments in the Taliban triumphant and march forward. In the year 1994, Islam Karimov attempted to forge an anti-Taliban alliance amongst Central Asian Republics and Russia. However with the fall of Mazart-Sharef in 1998 Karimov's policy collapsed and Taliban became Uzbekistan's immediate neighbors. Since then Uzbekistan's influence in Afghanistan has vained considerably. It is noteworthy to mention that Karimov runs and led authoritarian police state and looks at the ongoing civil strife in Afghanistan and Tajikistan as justification for repression at home to tackle with the Islamic resurgence in Uzbekistan inspired by triumph of Taliban. In future the region is likely to provide a base for various radical Islamist groups operating in Central Asian Republics despite of tight grip of Government on various Islamist groups. It is to be seen how far the influence of erstwhile Taliban yields a threat to secular authoritative regime of Islam Karimov in wake of the growing resurgence of Islam in the region.

Turkmenistan

have moderate Islamic norms and there is very little chance of the spread of radical Islamic ideas. In fact it is the Fergana valley, which has been and continues be Uzbekistan's most religious region, where radical Islamic elements are on increase and have transformed radical Islam into a strong hold for a Islamic group. Meena Singh Roy, Terrorism in Central Asia, An Over View, Pp 258-259.

Ahmad Rashid, Islam, Oil and New Great Game in Central Asia, Pp 148-149.
During the Taliban regime, Turkmenistan declared itself a neutral state and did not face problem of religious extremism like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan had friendly relations with regime and used to sell petrol, diesel and other such items to it. By staying neutral they brought peace to their country. Since, Due to the strict government control very little is known about this country. Even if there is any problem it is not shared by the authorities here, in the history and associated developments in the state but radical groups are conspicuous by their absence here though less alarmist and even cooperative reactions also emerged. Turkmen president Saparmurat Niyazov did not attend the CIS conference (held in view of Taliban threat to the republics) but he did send his foreign minister as a diplomatic move to ensure his neutral approach and non-seriousness upon the issue. The Turkmen experience with the Taliban as their neighbors in the Herat area for more than a year without any incident, may have contributed to Niyazov’s more measured approach. Two weeks after the CIS conference held at Almati where Karimov expressed his concerns with military operations close to Uzbekistan’s southern borders and endorsed the views expressed by General Alexandra Lebed, the former Russian Security Advisor, warned that the Taliban planned to incorporate part of Uzbekistan, including Bukhara, into the Afghan states to join with the Tajik Islamic opposition Movement (IRP), a statement vehemently rejected by Turkmen president, instead he wondered how Lebed could have made such a statement. It indicates the convergence of views on Afghanistan with his host and said further that the securing of a durable peace in Afghanistan requires the creation of a government that includes all the ethnic, religious and other groups that are currently fighting in Afghanistan. More or less this statement clearly gives the impression of partial recognition of Taliban by the Turkmenistan. In fact the Turkmen’s friendly approach and response to the Taliban seems simply

economic based, particularly in view of the establishment of a new transportation corridor for the conduit of gas and oil pipelines from the Uzbek-Afghan border at Termez through Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat to Karachi (Pakistan) and beyond.  

Kyrgyzstan

In case of Kyrgyzstan Islam came slowly. The true expansion of Islam occurred only in the 18th century. A majority of people of Kyrgyzstan believe that the role of Islam in public life should increase, as 80 percent of population of the country is follower of traditional Islam. The population is firmly Sunni (of the Hanafite School). A number of non orthodox Islamic missionaries who belong to organizations and sects from various Arab countries, Turkey and Pakistan are active in Kyrgyzstan. In south of Kyrgyzstan, Jihad in its radical form is being exported from Afghanistan. The impact of Taliban can be seen with the developments in Batken region which were serious and were then seen as an indicator of renewed conflict. In western terms, this part of the country cannot be ruled out in future as radical elements are gearing up silently in Kyrgyzstan. Religion officially remains separated from the state in Kyrgyzstan yet due to poor economic conditions Islamists forces would continue to challenge the existing secular communist system of the country.

Kazakhstan

Almost in all Central Asian Republics, Islam is considered as part of a cultural heritage. Return to the old Islamic tradition is very evident in these newly independent countries. Islam has been a real political force and deeply rooted in

---

312 Ralph. H Magnus and Eden Naby, Afghanistan Mullah, Marx and Mujahid, p 194

125
the societies of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, this is not in the case of Kazakhstan. Muslim radicalism has till now never gained ground in Kazakhstan, however, Islam in Kazakhstan is considered as a basic element of national culture, contributing to the affirmation of Kazakh identity. In view of the developments in Afghanistan after the emergence of Taliban, present religious politics is at the centre of a great cultural battle in which three protagonists fight for supremacy; the official religious hierarchy, a paralleled one, and some nationalist movements. As such the parallel popular version of Islam has developed predominantly in the south of the country. The wave of the Taliban has been taken a serious note of by the high officials of the Kazakhstan who stated that, there is an active penetration of undesirable Islamic elements in Kazakhstan and the systematic inculcation of various radical theological doctrines was being carried on.\textsuperscript{314}

**Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia maintained a very high profile in Afghanistan during 1980 to 1988. Since the 2nd World War, Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy has had three major objectives viz. promotion of Islam; guaranteeing the security of the country and the royal family; and general stability.\textsuperscript{315} Riyadh felt that its security was threatened by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They believed that the Soviets had aggressive intentions in the Persian Gulf and that their invasion of Afghanistan was first step in their desire to control Persian Gulf oil.\textsuperscript{316} Even if the Soviets did not intend any direct military action in the gulf, the Saudis believed that the rise of communism in Afghanistan would promote political instability in the region and hence jeopardize the security of the royal family. Saudi Arabia’s distaste for the invasion was fueled further by the fact that it was

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
against a Muslim country, and that it installed a communist regime in Kabul whose domestic policies were directed against Islam.\(^{317}\) Thus for Saudi Arabia, opposition to the Soviet invasion was rational because Soviet behavior contradict all the major objectives of Saudi foreign policy. Saudi Arabia’s support for the Afghan resistance was also influenced by the Islamic revolution of Iran. In fact Islam always has had a special importance in Saudi foreign policy, on basis of which they claimed the leadership of Islamic world since 1950s.\(^ {318}\) However, the Islamic revolution in Iran has challenged Saudi Arabia’s pre-eminence. Indeed, Tehran argued that monarchy was incompatible with Islam and the Saudi Arabia’s close relations with United States were against the interest of the Muslims. In 1980s, Saudi leadership believed that Iran posed a great threat to its legitimacy than did Naseer’s Arab Nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s.\(^ {319}\) The Afghan conflict allowed the Saudi leadership to strengthen its Islamic credentials at home and to assert Saudi Arabia’s leadership in the Islamic world against the challenge from Iran. It was, therefore, understandable from the Saudis to continue to take an interest in the developments in that country.\(^ {320}\) As such, Saudi Arabia viewed the Taliban as an important asset to their dwindling influence in Afghanistan, after Soviet withdrawal and subsequent civil war in the country. As Saudis felt some affinity to the Taliban’s interpretation of Islam; their support for the Taliban was consistent with its rivalry with Iran and long term co-operation with Pakistan. Moreover some Saudi companies and individuals


\(^{319}\) When Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Naseer’s Arab Nationalism posed a threat to the Saudi Rulers in 1950s onwards, they counter his ideological offensive and offered Pan-Islamism as an ideological alternative to Arab Nationalism. In this connection, Saudi Arabia established the organization of the Islamic Conference to coordinate the foreign policy of Muslim countries and the Muslim League to institutionalize Saudi’s influence in Muslim cultural and religious activities throughout the world. The defeat of the Naseer in 1967 Arab-Israel war and the rise of Saudi Arabia as a major financial power in the 1970s established its position as the leader of the Islamic world. Jacob Goldberg, *Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Revolution*, in David Menashri (ed), *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, Boulder, West View Press, 1990, Pp 155-56.

also have interests in the various pipeline proposals under consideration. In this connection, the first Saudi contacts with the Taliban were established, when Saudi Intelligence chief Prince Turki began to visit Kandahar in July, 1996, the Saudis provided funds, vehicles and fuel to the Taliban, in fact it was the Wahabi Ulama in the kingdom who played the most influential role in urging the royal family to back the Taliban. They have consistently supported the export of Wahabisim throughout the Muslim world and the royal family remains extremely sensitive to Ulema opinion.\textsuperscript{321} In April 1997, Taliban leader Mullah Rabbani met with King Fahd in Riyadh and praised the Saudis effusively. Since Saudi Arabia is the centre of the Muslim world we would like to have Saudi assistance. King Fahd expressed happiness at the good measures taken by the Taliban and over the imposition of Shariah in our country, Rabbani said.\textsuperscript{322} Riyadh's support for the Taliban made them extremely reluctant to exert any pressure on the Taliban to deport Usama Bin Laden, even though the USA was urging them to do so. Though, Saudi Arabia became one of the three countries that recognized the Taliban's government, it was only when prince Turkej was personally insulted by Mullah Omar did the Saudis curtail diplomatic ties with the Taliban.\textsuperscript{323} Significantly, it was a personal insult that guided Saudi decision-making rather than an over all change in foreign policy.\textsuperscript{324} Subsequently in September, 22, 2000 the Saudi's expelled their diplomatic representative for the Taliban's continued harboring of bin Laden to please United States of America.

India

India has traditionally maintained very close relations with Afghanistan and large number of Indians (Hindu/Sikhs) had settled down over the years.\textsuperscript{125} India had been interacting with Afghanistan even before the creation of Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{Ahmad Rashid, Afghanistan, Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia, p 201}
\textsuperscript{AFP, Taliban claim Saudi Support, 21 April 1997.}
\textsuperscript{Ahmad Rashid, Afghanistan Road to Disaster, Herald Magazine, Nov-1996.}
\textsuperscript{Barnett R. Rubin, Afghanistan under the Taliban, p 79.}
\textsuperscript{Major General Samay Ram, The New Afghanistan, p 34.}
Contacts between India and Afghanistan continued after the partition of the subcontinent, but with a different motive. India's interest in Afghanistan was now geared to preventing the two Muslim neighbors, Pakistan and Afghanistan from having cordial relations with each other. In this connection New Delhi continued to keep the issue of Pakhtunistan alive, as a result of which the two countries on either side of the Durand Line were unable to establish normal relations. \(^{326}\) However, India's tactic support to the Soviet intervention in December 1979 saw the soaring relations. With the pullout of the Soviets and the Mujahidin assuming power, India was gradually losing its grip over Afghanistan,\(^{327}\). In wake of the continuous support to Najibullah's Marxist regime during the civil war in Afghanistan therefore since its fall; India has maintained a holding pattern, observing events in Afghanistan without taking a stance. Its main interest was in preventing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism of the Afghan variety to the Kashmir region,\(^{328}\) further widened to the extent to prevent Pakistan from creating a solid block of Muslim countries, which would give Islamabad the strategic depth it needs in confrontation with the Indian interests.\(^{329}\) Since Indian government had throughout supported the Communist regime in Afghanistan, the Mujahidin had no love for the Indians. However when Rabbani felt threatened by the Taliban militia, he turned for help to India, thus provided an opportunity for India to get back the Afghan stage. India quickly responded and provided all possible assistance to the Rabbani's government, to with stand the pressure from Taliban. \(^{330}\) Later on, the upheaval that occurred in the internal Afghan arena with the fall of Rabbani regime and the rise of the Taliban resulted in the change in relations between India and the


\(^{327}\) Major General Samay Ram, *The New Afghanistan*, p 34, in matters of foreign policy Delhi has traditionally supported Russian interests in the region because of its dependence on Moscow for the supply of arms and spare parts, and the transfer of technology. Indian leaders have therefore coordinated their policies on the developments in Afghanistan with those of Russia

\(^{328}\) Shaul Shlay, *The Endless Jihad The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Ladeen*, p 96

\(^{329}\) Economic Times, New Delhi, January 09, 1994.

\(^{330}\) *The Taliban Phenomenon, Afghanistan, 1994-97* p 179.
Afghan regime.\textsuperscript{331} Therefore, India was pushed back not to play a zero sum game in Kabul and restricted to maintain only diplomatic mission despite all the anarchy there.\textsuperscript{332} The Taliban’s allegiance to Pakistan dissuaded India from a contact with them. Because for India the triumph of the Taliban meant a triumph for Pakistan.\textsuperscript{333} India also feared that if the Taliban succeeded to consolidate their position in Afghanistan they would, because of their religious zeal, sent fighters to take part in the ongoing insurgency in Indian held Kashmir.\textsuperscript{334} As the result most of the Indians migrated from there and the Indian embassy was closed.\textsuperscript{335} Notwithstanding this set back, the Indian government in order to frustrate Pakistan’s ambition toward penetration of Central Asia, therefore supported the Northern Alliance especially the Tajik forces of Ahmad Shah Masood and the Hazara forces of Khalali.\textsuperscript{336} By this way, India continues to follow the dictum that your enemy’s enemy should be your friend. India as such, decided to lend its shoulder to Pakistan’s adversary in the Afghan imbroglio.

On top of it, the India contradicts to its own foreign policy by strengthening bilateral relations with the Israel, to be considered as the worst enemy of Islam to counter Taliban’s sway of fundamentalism. At domestic level, India banned some Islamic organizations including that of SIMI (Student of Islamic Movement of India) in wake of the fear of influence of Taliban immediately after 9/11. However, in both the cases, put a question mark to the India’s entity in Muslim world and inside India itself.

Algeria

\textsuperscript{331} Shaul Shay, \textit{The Endless Jihad The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden}, p 96.
\textsuperscript{333} P. Slobdan, \textit{India and the Taliban and the Taliban}, p 1861.
\textsuperscript{335} Major General Samay Ram, \textit{The New Afghanistan}, p 34.
\textsuperscript{336} Lary. P. Goodson, \textit{Afghanistan’s Endless War}, p 81.
During the 1980's there was an influence of volunteers from Algeria to Afghanistan and between 700 and 3000 men fought alongside the Afghan Mujahidin. After the Mujahidin victory in Afghanistan, the volunteers began return to Algeria taking with them rich battle experience and Islamic revolutionary fervor with the Taliban victory in established Islamic Government in Afghanistan, Islamic opposition in Algeria has grown stronger.

Tunisia
Though security forces in Tunisia are managing to successfully thwart Islamic extremisms in their country but Islamic Movements including that of Taliban will no doubt has a far reaching impact on affairs in Tunisia.

Yemen
Yemen is reportedly an important centre for Afghan alumni activities and organizations because of the authorities "tolerant" attitude toward them. Yemen is a meeting place for activities and a relatively 'safe' hub for their movement around the world. Several attacks have been planned in Yemen against imperialist America as well as Britain in recent years.

---

338 Shaul Shay, The Endless Jihad The Mujahidin, the Taliban and Bin Laden, p 125.