Afghanistan & Pakistan:
The Unwinnable War

The current Western strategy for Afghanistan & Pakistan and an alternative path for the region

A report from **Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain**

Hizb ut-Tahrir (meaning The Party of Liberation) is a global Islamic political party established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, who was a scholar, political thinker and judge in the Court of Appeals in al-Quds (Jerusalem). The current global leader is Ata' Abu Rashta.

Hizb ut-Tahrir works at all levels of society to restore Islam as a way of life by re-establishing the *Khilafah* (Caliphate) in the Muslim world, adopting the method employed by the Prophet Muhammad

صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم worked to establish the first Islamic State in Madinah, using exclusively political and intellectual means, without using violence. This means winning public opinion in favour of Islam and trying to win the support of the political and intellectual elites of the time.

The party propagates Islamic thoughts in Muslim societies challenging the status quo, presenting Islam as a comprehensive way of life that is capable of managing the affairs of state and society; and expresses views on political events, analysing them from an Islamic perspective. It does all this through discussion, debate, study circles, lectures, seminars, leaflet distribution, publishing books and magazines, and via the internet. It actively encourages people to attend marches, rallies and pickets it organises.

In the West, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* works to cultivate a Muslim community that lives by Islam in thought and deed, adhering to the rules of Islam and preserving a strong Islamic identity. The party works to project a true image of Islam to Western society, often engaging in dialogue with Western thinkers, policymakers and academics.

In recent years Western governments have tried to malign the Islamic ideology as an alternative to Western liberal capitalism in the Muslim world, under the banner of the "War on Terror". Hizb ut-Tahrir counters this propaganda, explaining Islam as a belief, ideology and political alternative for the Muslim world.

This report on the US led strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan was produced in this context. When the 'war on terror' was launched in 2001, Capitalism and Liberal democracy were portrayed as the 'end of history' – i.e. the pinnacle of civilisation on earth. But attempts to impose this model upon the Muslim world by force of arms have failed miserably, as have the attempts to win hearts and minds. Whilst that experiment appears to have been set aside for the time being, Western governments and media still continue to present Islam as something violent and backward.

This report seeks to expose some of the fallacies in the current Western strategy over Afghanistan and Pakistan and presents the only hope to bring stability, security and justice to region – that is the Islamic model of governance under the *Khilafah* (Caliphate).

Contents

Page

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Executive Summary and Recommendations

A major sign of incompetence is a person who does the same thing over and over again while each time expecting different results. President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Gordon Brown seem to be trapped in such an illusion. In 2001, when Western leaders ordered the invasion of Afghanistan, they set out their objectives for its occupation. They talked of bringing peace to the region, establishing a government which is accountable, promoting economic and industrial development, ending opium trade and securing the rights of the Afghan people.

At the end of the decade, the West has been unable to deliver in Afghanistan. Instead, the people of Afghanistan have been subjected to a brutal occupation, thousands of civilians have been killed and many Afghans have witnessed firsthand the West's empty promises of 'freedom' and 'human rights' when detained and tortured in Bagram and Kandahar. The Karzai regime, thoroughly discredited by ineptitude, corruption and dealings with brutal warlords, continues to be propped up by both London and Washington. The opium trade is booming and politicians with close ties to the West are alleged to be wrapped up in it. There is no economic or industrial development and despite pledges of billions of dollars in aid, there is little evidence of the rebuilding of Afghanistan that was promised.

After eight years the West has lost any form of moral authority to continue its occupation and its support of the widely discredited Karzai regime. There is no cogent reason to believe that they would even begin to make progress given another eight years. The neo-colonial mission in Afghanistan has failed. The West and its client regime in Kabul have no legitimacy or credibility in the eyes of the Afghan people or wider Muslim world. This eight year long folly must now come to an end.

Although it was their warmongering predecessors who launched the Afghan war, both Obama and Brown have decided to double down and have devoted more resources in a vain attempt to "finish the job." But with no coherent strategy, an excess use of violent tactics coupled with gross incompetence, NATO rule has led to Afghanistan being controlled by drug barons and corrupt officials. Far from being able to defeat Al-Qaeda or the Taliban in Afghanistan, the war will cause more resentment and hatred especially in the Muslim world where the West's reputation is already in tatters perpetuating instability and chaos.

Yet after the defeat in Iraq, the continued failure in Afghanistan and being fully exposed under the war on terror, Obama and Brown are now engaged in an "undeclared" war in Pakistan to destabilise yet another country in the Muslim world.

Though the overt neo-conservative agenda may have ended with the previous US administration, its spirit lives on with active wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and now undeclared wars in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. There is little doubt that the latest strategy articulated by the president of the United States in his West Point speech of 1st December 2009, like all the previous strategies conducted since October 2001, will fail and that Afghanistan will continue to suffer as a nation and as a people

This is because these strategies were not just hopelessly executed, but hopelessly conceived. The analysis of Western war strategists is that the Afghan war has been under resourced due to the war in Iraq and this explains the resurgence of the Taliban. The proponents of the new strategy believe that the lack of troops has led to the people of Afghanistan to lose confidence in NATO's ability to provide greater security, a

pre-requisite for effective governance. Lacking economic opportunities, ordinary Afghanis in particular the Pashtuns, effectively channelled their frustrations through joining the Taliban as the latter provided both salaries and status. Due to the perception that the central Afghan government was corrupt, these people turned to violence against NATO, seeing them as defenders of a corrupt status quo, to drain the swamp of radicalism the supporters of the new strategy believe that the US should increase troops in the short term and peel off those who are not hard core ideologues in the insurgency. By regaining momentum, the West believes they can then build up Afghanistan's indigenous security forces to take over from NATO at some undefined future date. However, to ensure this strategy works effectively Pakistan must also be fixed through a mix of getting the Pakistanis to do more and escalating covert US military action.

This narrative ignores some key factors:

Firstly – this war is unwinnable (see Chapter 1), as America learned so painfully in Vietnam and has discovered to its cost since 9/11. Historically, nations such as the Soviet Union have tried and failed to win in Afghanistan and could not placate the Pashtun tribes. It is not without basis that Afghanistan is known as a "graveyard for empires". Furthermore, if the promise is that this war will provide extra security, it will fail to achieve this. British forces in Northern Ireland, India's occupation of Kashmir, Israel's annexation of Palestine have never provided an iota of extra security for citizens of the occupying country. Occupation naturally breeds resentment and hatred which leads to retaliation, continuing the cycle of violence and counter violence we see in the world today.

Secondly – Western occupation since October 2001 has an atrocious track record when it comes to governance (see Chapter 2). Afghanistan today is more corrupt than it was in 2001, it produces more drugs than in did in 2001, and it has less security than it did in 2001. It has a President who rigged a sham election and whose family is notoriously implicated in the opium trade. After eight years, where much of the Afghan aid has been wasted in the pockets of private consultants and government officials, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. With this kind of lamentable record, NATO should not be allowed to run a small market stall, let alone a country with 28 million people.

Thirdly – You do not need 140,000 NATO troops and 190,000 Afghan troops to defeat 100 Al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan (see Chapter 3). If the mission is to defeat the Taliban (a group that evidently had no role in 9/11 and who are not responsible for any of the serious plots facing Western capitals), then NATO should say so upfront and then prepare its domestic population for decades of conflict in the dusty Afghan countryside, which will cost their tax payers dearly. The fact is that the Taliban are an indigenous Pashtun community and have seen off foreign invaders for centuries. As NATO increases their troop numbers, they will also increase theirs. The Pashtun Muslims comprise 50 million on both sides of the Durand line with strong tribal and ethnic linkages between people on both sides of the border. Hence, it must be understood that if NATO goes to war with the Taliban then they are effectively going to war with the whole of the Pashtun community.

Fourthly – The exit strategy (Chapter 3) assumes that even if they ever achieve operational readiness, the Afghan security forces will do NATO's bidding and are ready to fight the insurgency. It is clear from the increasing number of cases of Afghan security personnel turning their fire on NATO soldiers that they are neither aligned nor bought in and trust is already breaking down. Yet, if NATO has no viable exit strategy then it will preside over a permanent occupation which will increase fatalities as well as incurring

hundreds of billions in additional costs. Furthermore, if the war escalates as it is likely to do, British and American forces will take a disproportionate amount of the losses. Total losses in Afghanistan in 2009 were 504, with the US and the UK responsible for 80% of the fatalities. Ignoring the US, the UK lost more soldiers in 2009 than the remaining 41 members of the coalition combined. The 43 nation coalition exists in name only, with 34 nations providing less than 1,000 troops and 10 (almost a quarter of the coalition) providing less than ten troops. If countries other than the US and UK such as France, Germany, Italy or Spain are only providing token forces now with significant restrictions on what they can and cannot do, they are unlikely to support any further escalation.

Fifthly – If Al-Qaeda is indeed the target of the West, then according to most experts they are largely out of Afghanistan, with operatives now in Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Somalia amongst other countries. NATO and Western governments should therefore come clean with their own public on their mission, that Afghanistan is actually a base to project the war both into Pakistan and to spread it to the Arabian Peninsula and the horn of Africa. However, this kind of war requires significant resources – human and financial – a long term commitment and an agenda for perpetual war in the Muslim world for decades.

Sixthly – Growing and influential voices are now questioning the cost to Pakistan of supporting America's war. America is carrying out an undeclared war in Pakistan because it is not in a position to wage a conventional campaign, due to both political and military limitations. In order to counter America's aggression, Pakistan must obviate what is apparent to many, that the US has transgressed Pakistan's sovereignty as an independent state, and is pursuing actions that have resulted in economic hardship, political chaos, severe social distension and violent opposition around the country. This unparalleled meddling in the affairs of a sovereign state constitutes a clear and present threat that must be reversed by all possible means. These include the termination of US diplomatic, political and assistance access to Pakistani society, the immediate removal from Pakistan of all personnel affiliated with the military and intelligence organs of the US including Blackwater (Xe) affiliates, and the termination of all agreements relating to the Pakistani military carrying out actions against anyone at the behest of the US, whether explicitly or implicitly. Furthermore, any conventions granting foreign powers access to Pakistani air-space, territory or waters must be nullified. Only through taking these comprehensive steps can Pakistan stop the US from expanding its campaign of steadily expanding instability and violence to where it consumes the state rendering it paralysed. (see Chapter 4)

Finally – There is no need for the West to occupy Afghanistan or Iraq today. By withdrawing their forces, Western states would not be undermining their civilisation nor would they be increasing their insecurity. Guantanamo Bay, the human rights abuses in Afghanistan and at Abu Ghraib and the rounding up of thousands under draconian anti-terror legislation has damaged the reputation of the US and her allies in far greater ways. Nor does occupying Muslim land provide greater security for Western citizens; as the number of attacks since 9/11 evidently testify to. It is only the Caliphate with its tried and trusted political system that can end the cycle of violence and provide the much needed stability that the region deserves. Those who believe an Islamic system would be a backwards step to a Taliban era can no longer credibly make such claims. This is because it is becoming increasingly apparent that the only system which takes account of all the core ingredients required to bring prosperity to the Muslim world – a stable economy, an accountable and representative executive, a system consistent with peoples' values, independence from foreign control, and which prioritises people's basic needs over the gains of a

few or of private enterprise – can only be secured by an Islamic system. Furthermore, images of television hanging, denial of women's education, random justice and religious zealotry are the hallmarks of a local tradition, not the Islamic state. The Caliphate has a history of embracing and propelling learning and scientific innovation, granting rights to women and a leadership held to account by an independent judiciary with considerable powers. (see Chapter 5)

Recommendations

What we have presented in this report is a reasoned perspective. Millions of people share our discontent with the war on Afghanistan and still hope at least, to achieve some good from this terrible episode. Nevertheless, we conclude that there are root causes of the problem in Afghanistan that have not been fully debated and that there are solutions to the conflict if only those who have goodwill and courage to act on them. The evidence for this is presented in the chapters that follow.

Our conclusion is not a message of doom but a message of hope, because the politics of hope are not the sole preserve of the West – in fact, Western style democracy in Afghanistan has only brought corruption and despair. Islam has an alternative system of government – the Caliphate (*Khilafah*) – worthy of consideration which stands for a rule of law, political authority resting with the citizens and accountability. Surface similarities notwithstanding, it is distinct from secular liberalism and so we present its main features in some detail in the final chapter.

We recommend a genuine end to the occupation of Afghanistan in order to allow the people of Afghanistan to realise the successful system of government that lasted for thirteen hundred years in the Muslim world and thus call for the implementation of the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Afghanistan and Pakistan should stop supporting the West's war and Western forces should be asked to leave immediately by their host countries

This can be broken down into seven more specific recommendations:

1. The leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan should seek the removal of all foreign military forces in their respective countries.
2. The Government of Pakistan should prevent its airfields from being used for US drone attacks and should cease providing intelligence to support such efforts.
3. The Government of Pakistan should stop its brutal attacks in FATA and realise that such attacks against its own indigenous Pashtun tribes will only result in further destabilisation in the whole country.
4. The Government of Pakistan should stop providing logistical support to NATO's Afghan war effort by precluding the use of the Karachi port and logistical routes in the NWFP and Baluchistan.
5. The Government of Pakistan should revoke all visas for all foreign contractors such as Blackwater (Xe) and DynCorp in Pakistan.
6. Pakistan should also revoke their support of the Kerry-Lugar Bill – legislation which completely strips any remaining sovereignty that Pakistan currently enjoys.
7. Western forces should also be withdrawn from the region, including those stationed in Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the horn of Africa.

Recommendation 2

Western governments must stop material support of dictatorial leaders in the region

Instead of endlessly praising and propping up corrupt leaders in the region, who are utterly despised by their populations, the likes of President Hamid Karzai and President Asif Ali Zardari, the US, the UK and the EU should understand very clearly that failure to end their continued political and military support for such leaders will inevitably have consequences for Western-Muslim relations. The Muslim world has seen a resurgence of Islam amongst all sections of society and a re-emergence of a strong religious identity in recent years. Arguing that the West does not discriminate against the Muslim world will be much harder if Western governments continue to support corrupt leaders who consume their country's wealth while tens of millions are denied access to shelter, electricity and education.

Recommendation 3

The Muslim world should be left to decide its own political destiny without interference

The US and UK governments need to stop imposing by force a secular Western value system in the Muslim world. The idea that there are universal values is a myth which cannot be justified in the face of both contemporary societies and historical achievements. Though there may be surface similarities in shared aspirations, the idea that secular liberal values are the only means by which societies can progress equates to cultural imperialism. This 'Henry Ford' approach to civilisation in the Muslim world, i.e. 'you can have any political system you want as long as it is Western', fails to acknowledge that many in the West are themselves questioning the vitality, sustainability and probity of their own democratic systems. After wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the brutality of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, many in the Muslim world are also challenging the West's claim to being a moral authority. The Muslim world has shown throughout its fourteen century history an alternative basis for a rich and open civilisation based on its own value construct and emanating from a different ideological source. Contemporary societies as diverse as China, Russia and large parts of Latin America currently have distinct social, economic and political models to those practiced in Western capitals The Muslim world should therefore be allowed to develop its own political destiny free of interference and if this be one based on Islamic principles, then so be it.

As history has demonstrated in this troubled region, there are no easy options and no guarantees of success. We believe the above steps are a viable blueprint in breaking the deadlock and bringing new hope to the region and stability and security to the rest of the world. However, what is abundantly clear in the Muslim world is that "staying the course" or trying again what has failed in the past, is not an acceptable strategy. Unless the scourge of foreign occupation ends the region will continue to remain in the dysfunctional state it currently is. Once foreign occupation is ended, the region can then independently tackle the innumerable other challenges it faces head on, whether they be unbridled poverty and education or rampant corruption.

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Chapter 1 Afghanistan: An Unwinnable War

Whatever were they thinking? The world's only superpower with uncounted resources, the largest military arsenal coupled with NATO, the world's dominant military alliance, invades and occupies in October 2001, one of the most impoverished countries of the world with a population of 28 million, two thirds of which live on less than two dollars a day. Yet eight years on is almost universally accepted as having failed to subdue the country and is losing the war.

On September 16, 2001, the then US President George W. Bush set the tone when he said: "This crusade, this war on terrorism, is gonna take awhile." The legal argument used by Washington and NATO to invade Afghanistan was that the September 11 attacks constituted an undeclared "armed attack" from abroad by an unnamed foreign power, and that consequently as a "nation under attack" could strike back with impunity in the name of "self-defence". Taking control was a formality, making it stick eight years later – far less convincing. As US and NATO troop casualties mount and Western public opinion moves decidedly against the occupation, more searching questions are being asked about this war. And despite overwhelming military and resource superiority – it remains an unwinnable war.

The Soviet Occupation – troop numbers were not the solution

In December 1979, Soviet troops streamed into Afghanistan, ten years later not only had they been defeated, but the whole edifice of the Socialist Soviet state was in disarray. The Berlin wall collapsed and the Soviet state fragmented and ended thereafter.

In retrospect, the Soviets had many advantages over the recent invaders. They held a direct border to Afghanistan through what is now Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They used far greater military force numbers – 250,000 at its peak. Being strong regional players they also had vast pool of language skills (Uzbek, Pushto and Tajik) which has been the Achilles heel for the Americans and NATO, who are now relying on essential Afghan professionals including doctors and teachers to act as translators for them.

The Soviets did not find it difficult to control the major population centres, but despite a compliant imposed central government could not control the rural areas. Literally thousands of towns and villages remained outside of their remit. As the Americans have recently discovered, it is not difficult to take towns but the holding, the leadership, the provision of basic necessities to an impoverished people, the convincing of one's intentions is where the difficulties lie.

Marshal Akhromeyev mentioned in 1986, "We control Kabul and the provincial centres, but…we have lost the battle for the Afghan people." [1]

The Russian forces also demonstrated an obvious lack of agility constraining themselves to conventional military doctrines and utilisation of mechanised/heavy forces – tactics and strategies which were wholly

unsuitable for counterinsurgencies in rugged mountain and urban terrain. The Mujahedeen forces were much more agile and could easily mount guerrilla style attacks which proved devastating on poorly motivated and ill prepared troops (the Russians previous major war was WWII). Thirty years on and the Americans seem to have learnt little from the Soviets conventional – clear, hold, and build tactics, poorly motivated troops (why are we here?) and a sheer lack of success in winning 'hearts and minds'.

President Obama in his 1st December, 2009 speech promised to halt or slow down the downward spiral towards defeat in Afghanistan. Yet his speech was notable for not bringing forward anything new from the failed strategy of the past eight years. Essentially Obama promised "more men, more money, and we must try harder". In fact, not dissimilar to Mikhail Gorbachev's infamous "bloody wound" speech that led to a similar-sized, temporary Soviet troop surge in Afghanistan in 1986.

Vietnam repeated?

With attacks on American and NATO forces steadily increasing since 2003, little headway in curbing corruption or legitimising the Karzai regime and a sharply rising opposition throughout 2009, it is easy to bring a parallel with the deeply flawed Vietnam War. Afghanistan is landlocked so requires logistical support via neighbouring countries, the populations of which are antagonistic to the US. Afghanistan is also four times the size of Vietnam, yet troop numbers even post the December 2009 announced surge will never reach the stalemate achieved in Vietnam with 535,000 troops. The US/NATO troop concentrations in Afghanistan are 1/32 that of Vietnam. Yet despite these obvious inconsistencies many refuse to cede defeat.

There are many other uncanny resemblances between the two conflicts that foreign policy advisors would do well to heed:

a. History of European/Imperial aggression

France in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan were the most recent in a long line of aggressors. Both conflicts share a history of expelling the aggressors who had bigger and stronger armed forces. It is this history which has helped form and shape formidable resistance fighting forces in both conflicts.

b. Asian based: thousands of miles from the US
In both cases there was limited experience of fighting in these conditions and with difficult logistical problems to face. In Afghanistan there is the added problem of no coast line, severely limiting the Navy's impact.

c. Rural based wars
In both conflicts there are greater than 80% rural populations in which the invaders were intensely unpopular.

d. Difficult terrain and a lack of roads
Difficult terrain forced the aggressors in both Afghanistan and Vietnam to rely on air support, and making conventional tanks and similar vehicles obsolete.

e. Ethnic ties and sanctuary
In both cases insurgent forces enjoyed sanctuary behind long, closed and inhospitable borders. US forces struggle to contain and have little or no legitimacy.

f. Infiltration
In both wars interpreters often informed local militias of the invading forces every move.

g. Cultural insensitivity
In both wars the aggressors used heavy handed tactics including indiscriminate bombing and a complete lack of understanding of the local beliefs and customs making it easy to recruit for domestic opposition forces. In both wars the infamous US "body count" of enemy killed was popular although recently General Stanley McChrystal has suspended it in Afghanistan.

Barack Obama's December 1, 2009 speech announcing his troop surge for Afghanistan was redolent with President Lyndon B. Johnson's fatal decision in 1965 to acquiesce to the request from US commanders to enlarge the Vietnam War by sending scores of additional US soldiers. Obama lost the opportunity to reverse the disaster of Bush's war in Afghanistan and even imitated Bush's practice of announcing policies surrounded by more than 4,000 army cadets at the West Point Military Academy.

The Mythic Coalition

Obama in his December 2009 speech put forward reasons why the two wars are different. Chief amongst those was that in Afghanistan there is a much stronger coalition, as if strength in numbers would add legitimacy to a war against one of the poorest of nations.

However, a closer examination of the "coalition" reveals that only nine of the 43 countries in Afghanistan have more than 1,000 troops there, most of the other countries have sent tiny numbers including only a handful in the case of ten countries. Many others restrict their forces to non-combat roles – unwilling to annoy the superpower – but prepared to provide a token presence. Actual numbers of combat troops were higher from other nations in Vietnam and those nations have learnt the lesson of the futility of such American adventures.

Other Problems

Eric Bergerud, a respected Vietnam War historian highlighted that:

"The Government of Vietnam (GVN) lacked legitimacy with the rural peasantry, the largest segment of the population...The peasantry perceived the GVN to be aloof, corrupt, and inefficient... South Vietnam's urban elite possessed the outward manifestations of a foreign culture... more importantly, this small group held most of the wealth and power in a poor nation, and the attitude of the ruling elite toward the rural population was, at best, paternalistic and, at worst, predatory." [2]

Echoing the same situation in Afghanistan the Karzai government has little legitimacy either globally or most importantly in Afghanistan. Anthony Cordesman highlighted this fact when setting out the key chronic failings of the US policy in Afghanistan.

"the need to structure other police and security elements in ways that suit the constraints imposed by a lack of government capacity, corruption, differing cultural values; and the need to create a "rule of law" or civil order based on host country standards rather than US or Western values." [3]

Not only is the Karzai government corrupt and incompetent, it shows little inclination to offer any leadership based upon Afghani values which are predominantly Islamic. It would also mark an extreme about face for the Americans to endorse Islamic based leadership structures and civil society in a country it controls.

The 'Dominoes' return

Perhaps the most contentious of justifications for Vietnam was the infamous domino theory foreseeing a rapid and uncontrolled spread of Communism country by country should South Vietnam fall. A theory that was thoroughly discredited by the facts post the withdrawal of the US and the failure of Communism to gain a foothold in any significant manner to this day. Equally contentious is the assertion that without direct control of the homeland of terrorism – as Afghanistan is accused of in this case – the US will continue to face the threat of terrorism domestically. While the Taliban have always argued that they have no issue with the American people per se and have no ambitions to wage a war in the US, it is also clear that the key source of antagonism within the Muslim world is the continued occupation of Muslim lands. Unfortunately, it has taken too long for this view to gain the acceptance it deserves.

Contrary to the claims that the US military will stabilise the region and reduce the threat of terrorism, a 2008 study by the RAND Corporation found that US policies emphasising the use of force tend to create, rather than dampen opposition. In "How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al-Qaeda," Seth Jones & Martin Libicki argue that the US military "should generally resist being drawn into combat operations in Muslim societies, since [a U.S. military] presence is likely to increase terrorist attacks". [4]

Islam in Afghanistan

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وَقَاتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلاَ تَعْتَدُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

</div>

"And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors."

[Translation of the Meaning of the Qur'an 2:190]

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وَقَاتِلُواْ الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَآفَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَآفَّةً وَاعْلَمُواْ أَنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

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"Fight against the Mushrikeen collectively as they fight against you collectively. But know that Allah is with those who are Al-Muttaqun"

[Translation of the Meaning of the Qur'an 9:36]

There are many verses of the Qur'an imploring Muslims to fight to defend their lands. As with all sovereign nations there is no shyness amongst Muslims to ensure the integrity of their land. For Muslims this is a vital (life and death) issue and means the believers are exhorted to strive in Jihad with their wealth, their tongues and their lives to repel an invader. No cost or effort is spared – with either victory or martyrdom the outcome.

The Qur'an also requires that the authority over Muslim lands remains with Muslims and Islamic law (Shari'ah).

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وَلَن يَجْعَلَ اللّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلاً

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"And never will Allah accept that disbelievers have a way (authority) over the believers"

[Translation of the Meaning of the Quran 4:141]

Taliban literally means students, or seekers of knowledge in Pushto language. The knowledge referred to is Islamic knowledge – the seeking of which is also obligatory upon all Muslims. Military occupation, imposition of a puppet government (Karzai) and removal of traditional Islamic regional and village *Jirga* (councils) was

never going to be accepted by the Taliban and Afghans in general. Extending central government control throughout Afghanistan rather than being a solution to the insurgency has been one of the causes. It was never difficult to motivate the Jihad from the rural areas.

It was also never feasible to imagine that the US could conveniently turn on the "tap" of Jihad, motivating and covertly funding the Mujahedeen in their just cause of repelling the Soviet aggressor. But then just as easily turn off that tap when the aggressor happened to be a former friend. Similarly, the indiscriminate killing of civilians belittles the oft quoted mantra of winning hearts and minds; instead it has only diminished the West's credibility and integrity, appalled the nations of the world and more significantly emboldened the Afghan resistance.

The Taliban are not foreign fighters

"As for the Taliban, whatever else they may be, they are native to Afghanistan. This cannot be said of Al-Qaeda, but it cannot be said, either, of the soldiers, trainers, advisers, and contractors sent by the United States." [5]

Central to the US strategy for Afghanistan is to develop the Afghan National Army, in readiness to take on the resistance when the US eventually falls back. This policy is failing. Recruitment and training has been slow and is plagued with desertion and a chronic failure of recruits to re-enlist. Re-enlistment is less than 50%, and despite 40% unemployment levels in the country, recruitment is far below targets and too heavily skewed by Tajiks in ethnic origin. In an exercise in building a credible and loyal army for the regime as a counterweight to the Taliban, it simply has no chance of success. The past eight years has provided ample evidence of this.

"The Afghan National Army (ANA) – slotted to take over the conflict when the coalition pulls out – will not even be able to feed itself in five years, much less turn back the mounting Taliban tide." [6]

Any form of association with the Americans is tainted. Rather than spreading a blotter like range of peace and security throughout the region and rural areas in particular, the Americans have left a stained footprint that horrifies the indigenous peoples. The policy of assassinations is only one example of the mistrust engendered by the occupation. In a recent New Yorker article Jane Mayer spoke of the impact of the target-ing (by unmanned drones) of Baitullah Mehsud: "16 strikes were necessary, over 14 months, killing a total of as many as 538 persons, of whom 200-300 were bystanders. What comes of the reputation of policemen in a crime-ridden neighbourhood when they conduct themselves like that? And what makes anyone suppose the reaction will be less extreme when the policeman comes from another country?" [7]

David Kilcullen, a former senior counterinsurgency advisor to David Petraeus, wrote, "Every one of these dead non-combatants represents an alienated family, a new revenge feud, and more recruits for a militant movement."

Afghanistan, the Graveyard of Empires

"From its invasion by Genghis Khan and his two-million strong Mongol hordes to the superpower proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union, Afghanistan's trade routes and land-locked position in the middle of the region have for centuries rendered it vulnerable to invasion by external powers. Although Afghanistan has endured successive waves of Persian, Greek, Arab, Turk, Mongol, British, and Soviet invaders, no occupying power has ever successfully conquered it. There's a reason why it has been de-scribed as the "graveyard of empires" [8]

An entrenched new political leadership, even an imposed one, requires legitimacy and the support of the populace. The former Deputy Head of the UN mission in Afghanistan described the August 2009 elections as a "train wreck". With little sign of legitimacy either before or after these elections, Karzai enjoys perhaps at best a 30% approval rating. The key for quelling an insurgency is support for the ruling authority of 85 to 90% [9]. Karzai's regime was recently described as "an utterly illegitimate, incompetent kleptocracy." [10].

With an imposed government and imposed systems of rule (democracy) should there be an expectation of success with no history of such in the region?

Much is made of domestic opinion polls pointing to support for the introduction of democracy and opposing the insurgency/Taliban. But can any form of poll in a country under occupation be taken seriously?

"Afghans are famously polite; Western opinion polls show only what Afghans think the questioner wants to hear, as their culture demands, not what they actually think." [11]

Why should anyone answer otherwise when asked at the end of the barrel of a Western television camera, with the Western occupier military force close by?

The US has grossly underestimated the degree of opposition it has generated from this tiny and impoverished nation – a nation that has taken great pride in expelling successive invading forces over several centuries. Dick Cheney did speak of the axiom of "endless war", a notion that has hardly taken hold in the materialist US – whereas the Afghan people live it, not of choice but through necessity in defence of their land and as their beliefs command of them. They are battle hardened in the harsh rural conditions, and generation after generation knows little else.

Despite clear military superiority in weaponry the US/NATO forces have followed the classic traps of controlling major population centres and have made little headway amongst the predominantly rural population. It is only a matter of time before they too join Alexander the Great, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union in being forced to abandon this unwinnable war.

Chapter 2 NATO's Incompetent Rule Since 2001

Introduction

In 2001, when Western leaders ordered the invasion of Afghanistan, they set out their objectives for its occupation. They talked of bringing peace to the region, establishing a government which is accountable, promoting economic and industrial development, ending opium trade and securing the rights of the Afghan people.

At the end of the decade, the West has been unable to deliver in Afghanistan. Instead, the people of Afghanistan have been subjected to a brutal occupation, thousands of civilians have been killed and many Afghans have witnessed firsthand the West's empty promises of 'freedom' and 'human rights' when detained and tortured in Bagram and Kandahar. The Karzai regime, thoroughly discredited by ineptitude, corruption and dealings with brutal warlords, continues to be propped up by both London and Washington. The opium trade is booming and politicians with close ties to the West are alleged to be wrapped up in it. There is no economic or industrial development and despite pledges of billions of dollars in aid, there is little evidence of the rebuilding of Afghanistan that was promised.

Despite this, in a 2009 speech, US President Obama cautioned about the consequences of the West leaving Afghanistan; "For the Afghan people, a return to Taliban rule would condemn their country to brutal governance, international isolation, a paralysed economy, and the denial of basic human rights to the Afghan people – especially women and girls."

In this chapter we review what eight years of foreign intervention have brought to Afghanistan and unravel the story behind the West's incompetence and complete loss of credibility.

Brutal Occupation

Since the Western occupation of Afghanistan, thousands of civilians have lost their lives. According to the UN, over 2,100 civilians were killed in 2008 alone, an increase of about 40% from 2007. For the first half of 2009, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded 1,013 Afghan civilian deaths for the six months from January 1st to June 30 [1]. This represents an increase of 24% over the same period in 2008, when 818 civilians were killed. In 2007, 684 civilians were killed in the same period.

In other words, as the Nobel Peace Prize winning President Obama has escalated the war and sent thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan, the number of civilian deaths has soared by 24%.

While Western governments would claim that some of these civilians were killed in attacks by "militants", it is clearly the Western occupation that has caused turmoil in Afghanistan leading to the deaths of thousands of civilians.

The West lost further moral legitimacy through its policies of secret prisons, extra-judicial detention, brutal torture and extraordinary rendition. What happened at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay was no aberration. In relation to the American detention facility at Bagram in Afghanistan, The New York Times reported that, "the Bagram file includes ample testimony that harsh treatment by some interrogators was routine and that guards could strike shackled detainees with virtual impunity. Prisoners considered important or troublesome were also handcuffed and chained to the ceilings and doors of their cells, sometimes for long periods, an action Army prosecutors recently classified as criminal assault". An editorial in the New York Times stated that "the investigative file on Bagram, obtained by The Times, showed that the mistreatment of prisoners was routine: shackling them to the ceilings of their cells, depriving them of sleep, kicking and hitting them, sexually humiliating them and threatening them with guard dogs – the very same behaviour later repeated in Iraq." [2]

Other prisoners were tortured at the US prison at Kandahar airport in Afghanistan. One of the detainees was Shaker Aamer who was subjected to weeks of torture including sleep deprivation over nine days, cold water torture which led to frostbite, 'hog tying' and regular beatings along with threats that he would be sent to be tortured in Egypt, Jordan, or Israel. A British MI5 officer was present during his interrogation and torture.

More recently, it was revealed by a senior Canadian diplomat, Richard Colvin, that Canadian troops routinely handed over Afghans swept up in security sweeps to the torturers in Afghan intelligence. Colvin said that the Canadians "detained, and handed over for severe torture, a lot of innocent people". He went on to say that the "detainee practices (were) un-Canadian, counterproductive and probably illegal." [3]

The Corruption of the Western-backed Kabul regime

Over the last eight years, the West has made repeated claims that it will work to eradicate brutal governance and corruption from Afghanistan. They have also claimed that they will remove the influence of warlords across the country. However, the central issue is that the corruption in Afghanistan is not merely occurring on the periphery of politics but is closely associated with the main political players, who have been nurtured and supported by the West.

After Karzai won his second term in office following sham elections, President Obama publicly urged him to tackle the issue of corruption. Ironically, the election result accepted by the West revealed that the election was plagued by so much corruption that one in three ballots cast for Karzai was deemed to be fraudulent by the UN.

In its 2009 report, Transparency International rated Afghanistan as the second-most corrupt nation in the world, with public sector corruption worsening for the second consecutive year. Only war-torn Somalia rates worse on the Berlin-based organisation's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 180 nations [4]. The group said of Afghanistan: "Examples of corruption range from public posts for sale and justice for a price to daily bribing for basic services…This, along with the exploding opium trade - which is also linked to corruption - contributes to the downward trend in the country's CPI score." In March 2009, a report by the U.S. Agency for

International Development reported that, "Pervasive, entrenched and systemic corruption is now at an unprecedented scope in the country's history." [5] A 2008 survey by Integrity Watch Afghanistan found that a typical household pays about $100 a year in bribes in a country where more than half the population survives on less than $1 a day.

In response to these widespread concerns, Karzai set up a new anti-corruption unit, with the help of US and British law enforcement agencies. It is the third structure set up by the Karzai regime to tackle the problem; the first structure was disbanded when it emerged that its head had been convicted and imprisoned in the US on drug charges.

While London and Washington spout rhetoric about good governance and human rights, their client regime in Kabul continues to forge relationships with warlords. Abdul Rashid Dostum, a notorious former warlord, endorsed Karzai's election campaign and recently returned to Afghanistan from Turkey. He is accused of overseeing the deaths of up to 2,000 Taliban prisoners during the 2001 invasion. Karzai's two vice presidents, Mohammad Qasim Fahim and Karim Khalili, are also former warlords accused of rights abuses.

The Karzai regime has struggled to establish any authority beyond Kabul. Western governments have lost any confidence that his regime will be able to control the country. While publicly criticising the continued strength of warlords, in private the NATO allies are relying on them. A September 2009 report released by New York University's Centre on International Cooperation said that Western states are fuelling the problem by relying on militias loyal to local commanders – some involved in rights abuses and drug trafficking - in an effort to bolster security [6]. In December 2009, the US Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, said that the US military may hand security responsibility in parts of Afghanistan to local leaders and their security men and police rather than President Hamid Karzai's US-trained national army.

The West remains confident in Hamid Karzai's ability to govern Afghanistan and root out corruption. However cronyism, graft and the flourishing drug trade have destroyed any public confidence in the Western backed Afghan regime.

Western Intervention = Burgeoning Opium Trade

In October 2001, a few days before the start of the Afghanistan war, Tony Blair told the Labour Party conference that "the biggest drugs hoard in the world is in Afghanistan, controlled by the Taliban". He said then that 90% of the heroin on London streets was from Afghanistan: "The arms the Taliban are buying today are paid for with the lives of young British people, buying their drugs on British streets." The Prime Minister repeated this claim a week later in the Commons, when he announced that the military campaign had begun, telling MPs that the Taliban "is largely funded by the drugs trade".

In an interview in December 2005 Blair again argued that an important part of the Western mission in Afghanistan was to tackle the drugs trade; "… in the case of Afghanistan it is obviously important because we need to tackle also the drugs trade that is still there and that was built up over the Taliban years" [7]

Blair's view that the drug trade in Afghanistan had been built up over the Taliban years is clearly an erroneous one. In January 2004, the Loughborough University criminologist Professor Graham Farrell authored a

report which described the Taliban's fight against opium production as the "most effective" of modern times [8]. Professor Farrell's study found that the Taliban crackdown on drugs led to global heroin production falling by two-thirds in 2001. He also noted that poppy cultivation increased sharply following the fall of the Taliban.

Despite eight years of occupation, the West has been unable to stem the flow of drugs from Afghanistan. In 2008, the Afghan government succeeded in destroying only 3.5% of Afghanistan's 157,000 hectares of poppy because eradication teams were either attacked or bought off by local drug lords. In December 2009, Viktor Ivanov, the head of Russian's anti-narcotics federal agency accused British troops in Helmand Province of not doing enough to stem production of heroin. He said that, "Sixty percent of all opiates in the world are produced in the area that the British forces are responsible for…There were 25 hectares of opium in 2004. Now there are 90,000. This shows you how effective they are." [9]

Although some recent UN reports have shown very small reductions in the area under poppy cultivation, the stockpile of illegal opium is now more than twice the world demand or more than 10,000 tonnes. While overall production has fallen slightly, more efficient production methods mean yields per farm are higher. The misery and disease of drug addiction are growing problems. The destruction of crops has failed and criminal cartels are spreading through Iran, Russia and Central Asia.

There is widespread evidence that the Western backed rulers of Afghanistan are involved in the illicit drug trade. In October 2009, the New York Times reported that the brother of Hamid Karzai, Ahmed Wali Karzai, was being paid by the CIA and was a suspected player in Afghanistan's booming opium trade. A senior American military officer was quoted as saying, "Hundreds of millions of dollars in drug money are flowing through the southern region, and nothing happens in southern Afghanistan without the regional leadership knowing about it". "If it looks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck," the American officer said of Mr. Karzai. "Our assumption is that he's benefiting from the drug trade." [10]

The armed forces of Western countries have also been affected by the sharp rise in the availability of illicit drugs. Addiction rates to heroin amongst US forces have doubled in the space of four years. It has also been revealed that hundreds of Australian soldiers have tested positive to a string of illegal drugs since troops were sent to Afghanistan [11].

The Elusive "Rebuilding" of Afghanistan

The "rebuilding" of Afghanistan is more fraud than failure. Half of Kabul lies in ruins, many people still live in tents, thousands cannot find jobs, children go hungry, schools are overcrowded and hospitals dirty, women beg in the streets and turn to prostitution, and children are kidnapped and sold into slavery or murdered for their organs.

Since 2001, the US Congress has appropriated more than $39 billion in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan, according to a report by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. European nations send about 1 billion Euros ($1.49 billion) a year, a total of 9 billion Euros since 2002.

According to 2008 data, US military spending is $100 million a day, while $7 million goes to development, and 40% of that $7 million is lost to administrative costs. So, only around $4 million goes to the community. Of that $4 million, less than 5% goes to agricultural development, yet 80% of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihood [12].

Western leaders continue to convene conference after conference and promise billions in aid to Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan rightly ask "where has all of this aid gone?" While the official answer is "corruption", many reports have suggested that only part of the aid – may be 40% – is "real aid". The rest is "phantom aid" that never even shows up in the recipient country. Some countries count debt relief or the construction costs of new embassies as aid. Much of the money never leaves Western banks as it is paid directly to Western "experts". Much of the aid has strings attached, obliging the recipient to use the money to buy products from the donor country, even when the same products are available cheaper at home.

Much of the aid money goes to foreign companies who then subcontract as many as five times with each subcontractor in turn looking for between 10% and 20% or more profit before any work is done on the project. The biggest donor in Afghanistan is the US, whose overseas aid department USAID channels nearly half of its aid budget for Afghanistan to five large US contractors. One of USAID's proud accomplishments was the Kabul-Kandahar Highway which was constructed by the Louis Berger Group. Other international companies had been ready to rebuild the highway for $250,000 per kilometre, while the American company awarded the contract got the job at $700,000 per kilometre. The Americans subcontracted Turkish and Indian companies to build the narrow two-lane highway at a final cost of about $1 million per mile and there are reports that it is already falling apart. It was therefore no surprise when the Former Minister of Planning, Ramazan Bashardost, complained that when it came to building roads, the Taliban did a better job.

Across Afghanistan there are stories of half finished bridges, roads to nowhere and hospitals that threaten to collapse in the first heavy storm, mainly because of dishonest contractors who skimp on materials or work. Many of them are ex-warlords who have used their connections with the regime to receive lucrative contracts.

There is no economic or industrial development. Indeed there is almost no economic activity in the country, aside from international aid and the production of illegal narcotics.

Afghanistan's experience of receiving foreign aid is not dissimilar to that of many other nations. Since World War II the United States alone has provided $1 trillion in foreign aid to countries around the world. However, according to the United Nations, 70 of the countries that received aid were poorer in 1997 than they were in 1980, and an incredible 43 were worse off than in 1970 [13].

Despite billions in aid and eight years of occupation, the Western backed regime has failed to even start to rebuild Afghanistan. According to the UN, Afghanistan currently ranks 174th out of 178 countries on the Human Development Index – a ranking that mixes per capita income with public health statistics, crime rates and other indicators. Out of every 1,000 babies born in Afghanistan, 142 die before reaching their first birthday. A woman dies in pregnancy every 30 minutes. Overall life expectancy is estimated at just under 42.5 years. Afghans scrape by on about $1,000 per year. That's an average. More than half of the population earns less than $2 a day. According to the National Human Development Report of 2007, literacy levels have fallen from 28.7% in 2003 to 23.5% in 2007.

The Failure of the Neo-Colonial Mission

In August 2002, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld was already arrogantly proclaiming the new Afghanistan "a breathtaking accomplishment" and "a successful model of what could happen to Iraq". However, after eight years of occupation the West has lost any form of moral authority to continue its occupation and support of the widely discredited Karzai regime. Even the former British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Christopher Meyer, was recently forced to admit that the war in Afghanistan is "madcap" and "futile" and serves "no conceivable national interest".

In a recent leaked cable, the British ambassador in Kabul advised the British Foreign Office that "In the short term we should dissuade the American presidential candidates from getting more bogged down in Afghanistan…The American strategy is doomed to fail". He went on to suggest that the best hope was to install an acceptable dictator in Kabul [14].

Eight years on, the last ditch plan put forward by Western policymakers is that they want to stem the opium trade, end corruption, establish human rights, nurture economic and industrial development and establish a legitimate and accountable regime in Kabul. However, this is not a plan but rather a description of what they have been unable to achieve over the last eight years. There is no cogent reason to believe that they would even begin to make progress given another eight years.

Despite their abject failure in Afghanistan on all fronts, Brown and Obama present a utopian vision which is implausibly optimistic. They want to hide the undeniable truth that Western intervention in Afghanistan is intimately associated with political corruption, brutal governance, torture and brutality, burgeoning drug production, and a lack of economic and industrial development. After eight years of refinement, the West's policy remains characterised by illusions, shrouded in ambiguous language and encrusted with moral claims.

The neo-colonial mission in Afghanistan has failed. The West and its client regime in Kabul have no legitimacy or credibility in the eyes of the Afghan people or wider Muslim world. This eight year long folly must now come to an end.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لاَ تُفْسِدُواْ فِي الأَرْضِ قَالُواْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

أَلا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَـكِن لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

"And when it is said to them: 'Make not mischief on the earth' they say 'We are only peacemakers'. Verily! They are the ones who make mischief, but they perceive not."

[Translation of the Meaning of the Quran 2: 11-12]

Chapter 3 Myths Surrounding the Afghanistan War

Introduction

In the nineteenth century Lord Palmerston talked about a British national interest best served by the strength of permanent interests. In the eighteenth century in the New World, George Washington led an armed force to remove a brutal occupation presided over by a colonial Western power. Yet today, the successors to Palmerston and Washington preside over a brutal occupation in Afghanistan arguing that the war in Afghanistan is one of necessity and not of choice. However, this chapter will demonstrate that the arguments advocated for the war in Afghanistan do not stand up to scrutiny with no credible strategic goal nor are the tactics congruent with the strategy. For Palmerston's successors Afghanistan, like Iraq before it, is nothing more than a chess board to be used for wider geo-strategic considerations.

The following myths exist about the current Afghan war:

1. That fighting the war in Afghanistan makes the streets of Western capitals safer.
2. That training the Afghan security forces is a viable exit strategy.
3. That there is an international coalition fighting in Afghanistan.
4. That there is no political solution within the region.
5. That Pakistan is the source of the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Myth 1: That fighting the war in Afghanistan makes the streets of Western capitals safer

It is stated that the war in Afghanistan is a war of necessity not a war of choice; that the war in Afghanistan will make the streets in the West safer; that by fighting over there, they won't fight over here. Yet many experts argue that Al-Qaeda operates in a number of countries all across the globe and only a small number now reside in Afghanistan. Indeed much of the detailed operational planning of 9/11 is alleged to have taken place in Bonn in Germany. Hence, it cannot even be argued that defeating Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan – or in Pakistan –would make a decisive defeat. Even if we ignore the imperial mindset that treats the Afghan people and their country as mere appendages in the West's latest war, the very premise of the security argument is flawed.

Occupation of Kashmir by 500,000 Indian troops has not prevented attacks in Indian cities. Israeli occupation of Palestine has not made Israeli citizens safe from attack. The presence of 27,000 British troops in Northern Ireland for 38 years did not prevent the IRA from attacking the UK mainland. Nor has the invasion of Afghanistan stopped worldwide attacks. As has been confirmed by extensive commentary, it is Western foreign policy, such as that of support of Israel's brutal occupation, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the propping up of Muslim dictators across the Islamic world that is causing a significant backlash. The increase of troops in the war in Afghanistan therefore will not end the current cycle of violence and will only cause more hatred and resentment in the Muslim world.

The purported mission in Afghanistan is plagued with contradictions:

Firstly, the number of Al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan is less than 100. In an interview with CNN in October 2009 [1], Whitehouse National Security Adviser James Jones stated the following "The good news is that the Al Qaeda presence is very diminished," Jones said. "I don't foresee the return of the Taliban. And I want to be very clear: Afghanistan is not in danger – is not in imminent danger – of falling… It would be unwise to rush to a final judgment here." If this is the case, why will 140,000 Western troops be required in Afghanistan, if Al-Qaeda is less than 100 strong then why can't the Afghan security forces, currently at 190,000, not able to cope with such a small number of Al-Qaeda operatives?

Secondly, even if it is argued that Al-Qaeda exists in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan (according to Prime Minister Gordon Brown three quarters of the most serious plots facing the UK have links to Pakistan) [2], then what are NATO troops doing in Kabul or Herat or in Mazhar-e-Sharif. If Al-Qaeda is on the Pakistani side then presumably the responsibility to deal with them lays with the Pakistani security services. Even then according to Prime Minister Brown the numbers of foreign fighters based in the FATA area of Pakistan, learning bomb making and weapons skills only rank several hundred [2].

Thirdly, if their argument is that the size of this force is necessary to degrade the Taliban, then this is also flawed. The Taliban were not responsible for 9/11 and certainly are not responsible for the three quarters of the most serious plots facing the UK. What NATO today is doing is intervening in a civil war by supporting the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in the south and east of the country. Contrary to some commentary, the Taliban are indigenous Afghans hailing from the same Pashtun tribal groupings that many in the Afghan government hail from and who have roots on both sides of the Afghan Pakistani border. Their ancestors before them saw off the invader whether it be British or Soviet and today the members that make up the resistance view it as their obligation to see off NATO.

Fourthly, Al-Qaeda as a construct operates in multiple countries and is largely a decentralised structure. Even if, theoretically, NATO was able to defeat every Al-Qaeda member in Afghanistan and Pakistan this would not achieve the strategic goal of defeating the group. Even the Pentagon admits many foreign fighters have now migrated to other countries like Somalia and Yemen [3].

Fifthly, the British Government's own statistics and a recent US think tank report completely contradicts the idea that most terrorists emanate from the shores of Pakistan or Afghanistan. According to the UK's own Statistics [4] between 11 September 2001 and 31 March 2008 of the 142 terrorist/

extremist prisoners in England and Wales at 31 March 2008 only 3 had Pakistani nationality and none had Afghan nationality. Therefore, according to the British Government's own statistics most of the people in prison are UK nationals. Even if you argue that most of the UK nationals somehow had family backgrounds that were Pakistani and this somehow justifies the Pakistani link even this is spurious. Firstly, statistically most Muslims in Britain do hail from South Asia, so it would be unusual if the prison population did not reflect this. Secondly, according to a Heritage Foundation Report on Islamist attacks in the UK [5] only 19 of 81 (<20%) of those people who have pleaded guilty/been convicted/extradited/deported had a conclusive Pakistani family background. In addition the Heritage report also looked at where individuals regardless of citizenship may have received overseas training, another charge made in this debate. The report concluded that only 27 of 87 convicted people either trained or sought training in Pakistan or Afghanistan.

Sixthly, the British experience in Northern Ireland provides yet further evidence. There, the use of military occupation, internment, torture, killings of civilians (all of which we have witnessed in Afghanistan in abundance), did not provide the people in Britain any additional security. British troops arrived in 1969 apparently to act as a referee between Catholics and Protestants, but actually exacerbated the conflict between the two communities, with Catholic groups targeted and Protestant loyalist groups given a pass. After a period of internment which backfired massively and in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, attacks on the British mainland become regular and bloody. Whether it is the attacks in Birmingham, Canary Wharf, Warrington or Bishopsgate – having troops in Northern Ireland was no guarantee against IRA attacks. Indeed, having at its peak 27,000 troops did not stop the PIRA from attacking the Conservative Party conference in Brighton, narrowly missing the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Seventhly, an independent report by Sarah Ladbury on 'Why do men join the Taliban and Hizb-i Islami' [6] also shines some light into the debate. The report tested a number of hypothesis as to the reasons why people join groups such as Hizb-i Islami and the Taliban and concluded that there was evidence that the perceived global attack on Islam such as witnessed in Palestine and Iraq was a factor, as was the perception that the Afghan government was corrupt and partisan, the behaviour of foreign occupying forces was another factor with the failure of the Afghan government to provide justice and security also being viewed as key.

Lastly, contrary to what Western politician's say [1] Al-Qaeda has not been degraded by the war in Afghanistan nor has it ended the cycle of violence. This is an extract from a 2008 report by the RAND Corporation. [7]

> *"The evidence by 2008 suggested that the US strategy was not successful in undermining Al-Qaeda's capabilities. Our assessment concludes that al Qaida remained a strong and competent organisation.....Al-Qaeda has been involved in more terrorist attacks since September 11, 2001, than it was during its prior history. These attacks spanned Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa."*

The RAND report also concludes that the presence of the US military conducting combat operations in Muslim societies is likely to increase terrorist recruitment. Indeed, according to a recent US intelligence assessment, Taliban numbers have almost quadrupled from 7,000 in 2006 to 25,000 now [8]. The announcement of an additional 40,000 Western troops in Afghanistan will only cause the Taliban to increase

their own numbers in kind.

Myth 2: That training the Afghan security forces is a viable exit strategy

It is stated that the way to exit the war in Afghanistan will be to train up the Afghan security forces. That as the Afghans stand up, NATO will stand down. Today's Afghan security forces already numerically outnumber the Taliban and Al-Qaeda by a factor of over 7 to 1. However, a lack of support for NATO's war and tactics, core capability and political factors undermine the exit strategy. The changing goalposts by NATO on targets, coupled with their unsuitability in training up armies in Muslim societies is a clear illustration that the exit plan after eight years of occupation is a pipe dream.

According to NATO, the numbers in the Afghan National Army (ANA) at the end of September 2009 are 94,000 [9], and combined with the police force, Afghan forces total some 190,000 strong [10]. In August 2009 U.S. and NATO commander General Stanley McChrystal recommended more than doubling the Afghan forces to total 400,000, with 240,000 soldiers and 160,000 police [10]. However, many question the current state of the Afghan Army. John Kerry in a speech at the Council for Foreign Relations said the following "Despite the 92,000 number, I will tell you that most of the assessments I got told me that we're really considerably lower – that today, at 50,000, maybe even less range of those who can actually work in the way that we desire."[11]

According to US capability measures, 78% of the Afghan Police are incapable of carrying out their duties [12]. With almost 1000 police killed in the last year alone and salaries low, it isn't a surprise that morale is so poor. According to congressional testimony by the International Crisis Group (ICG), on any given day, about 20% of the supposed police force are absent from duty – another 17% are listed on the rolls but are actually the names of dead or wounded police, but remain there so their families will receive a pay check.[13]

To achieve numbers of 400,000 would require substantially more progress in the next few years than has been achieved in the last eight years, even if you believe that the current numbers are credible. According to an article in Military Review [14], ANA recruitment quality is poor, virtually all are illiterate, readiness is low even by the lenient standards imposed by pressure to show progress, and drug use is a large and growing problem. Re-enlistment is below 50 percent, so with five-year contracts, another 12 percent of the force quits every year. With casualties, sickness, etc., 25% of the ANA evaporates annually. The Army knows the ANA cannot ever grow larger than 100,000 men, double its present size, because before then annual accession will equal annual losses. Projections of a 134,000-man force by 2010 or a 240,000-man ANA in the future are absurd. Even NATO commanders [15], who approved a plan to accelerate the training programme, said that the Afghan army is plagued by defections and drug addiction. Of the 94,000 Afghan soldiers trained so far, 10,000 have gone missing, said General Egon Ramms, the German commander of the operational head-quarters in charge of the NATO-led International Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) and around 15 per cent are drug addicts, he said.

Even if we put the capability point on one side, does anyone really believe that the US would leave Afghanistan completely after the building up of Afghan forces? If the threat is really that existential, the US would always want to keep a strong presence in the region as it has in South Korea and Germany, decades after previous hostilities have ended. It would never outsource this to the Afghans.

However, even if one ignores the capability and threat point, Western forces are completely the wrong people to train soldiers in Muslim societies. After Guantanamo Bay, the night shift at Abu Ghraib, "extraordinary rendition" and what happened in Basra, British and American forces should be the last people on earth trying to train armies in Muslim societies. This is why there is now growing instances of Afghan security forces killing NATO soldiers. Putting the religious and cultural differences aside, Western soldiers often exhibit an arrogant superiority complex when it comes to those in the developing world. In the British Independent newspaper [16], an unnamed senior serving British soldier demonstrated his views of the Afghan police in a candid interview, citing them as "A band of idiots" "That mentoring amounted to changing nappies" "That they had the attention span of gnats" "That most of them are corrupt and would take drugs, go to sleep, leave their post and have sex with each other".

With this kind of arrogant attitude and the capability challenges discussed previously it is clear that building up an Afghan capability is more of a PR strategy than an exit one. The so called exit strategy is obviously an attempt to placate growing opposition in Western capitals who are getting tired of the eight year old occupation and the escalating losses of their young soldiers.

Myth 3: That there is an international coalition fighting in Afghanistan

It is stated that the war in Afghanistan has the support of the international community; that 43 nations have a stake and have invested precious troops and treasure in this vital enterprise. However the problem with this is, that only two nations have more than 5,000 troops and one the United States will have 70% of the troops once the current surge has been finalised. 34 nations have 1,000 troops or lower and ten countries have 10 or less troops. Add this to the fact that most countries have put strict caveats such that their troops are more likely to get a tan than see any real fighting, the whole premise of an international community who think the war in Afghanistan is an existential one is just not the case. This is also creating disproportionate losses; the U.K. has lost more men than all other NATO-EU members combined.

The cheerleaders for the war in Afghanistan often cite that there is a 43 nation international coalition operating in Afghanistan to justify the criticality of the mission. On the surface a coalition of 43 nations sounds impressive and is assumed to suggest a depth of international legitimacy the Iraq war didn't have. However in Iraq, the infamous "coalition of the willing" was often espoused by George W. Bush and Tony Blair to cover up their illegal war in Iraq. But a closer examination of the actual numbers [9] deployed by different nations in Afghanistan exposes the so called 'coalition'.

Britain's contribution exceeds the combined total of France, Germany and Spain. If major Western powers such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain are not contributing large numbers of troops to the war in Afghanistan, then either of two conclusions can be derived. Firstly, they are genuinely unable to provide more troops either due to capability reasons (which we can rule out as they all have large armies) or domestic political reasons prevent a larger deployment. Or secondly and this is more likely, they do not buy the notion that Afghanistan is a existential war for the West.

Even if we ignore the numbers of troops each nation is providing, a more revealing factor is the number of restrictions or caveats each nation puts on how their troops can be used. According to a recent Heritage

update [17], European members of NATO are the worst offenders in terms of national caveats. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee in June 2009, current Supreme Allied Commander for Europe Admiral James Stavridis stated that there are 69 national caveats in Afghanistan. Notable caveats include the following:

- German troops are restricted to conducting operations in Northern Afghanistan before nigh time and never more than two hours away from a well-equipped hospital;
- Turkish troops are restricted to Kabul;
- Southern European troops are barred from fighting in snow;
- Troops of one unidentified member country are required to consult their national government before deploying within one kilometre of the Pakistani border; and
- One unidentified member country prohibits troops from other nations from flying in its aircraft

After the surge, the United States will comprise at least 70% of the forces in Afghanistan with other nations contributing very little in either numbers or finance. Though support for the war in Western capitals is dwindling, major Western countries if they really thought this was an existential conflict would devote more resources (military, economic, political) to the Afghan war. The fact that they don't and impose extensive caveats on what their troops can do speaks volumes about their real support for the Afghan war!
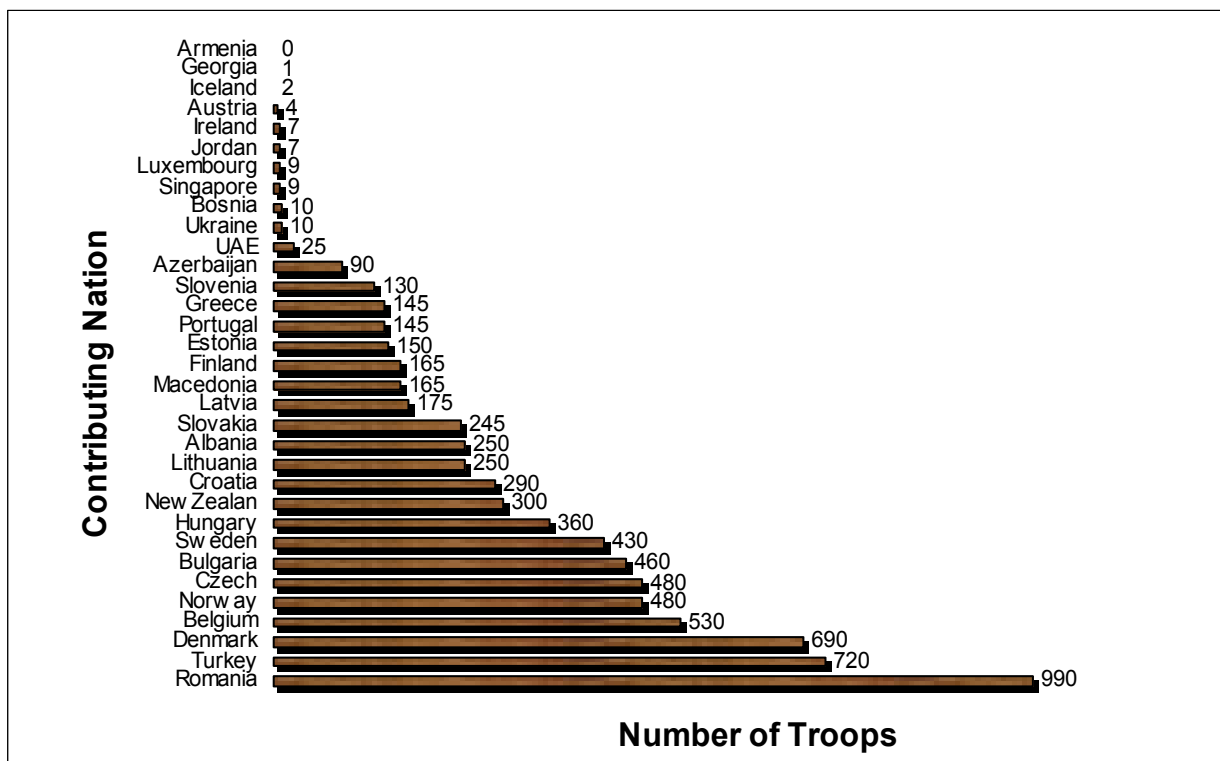

Table A: Countries Providing Troops of less than 1000 in Afghanistan [Source: NATO ISAF]

Nation	Troops > 250	Nation	Troops 30-250	Nation	Troops < 30
Romania	990	Lithuania	250	UAE	25
Turkey	720	Albania	250	Ukraine	10
Denmark	690	Slovakia	245	Bosnia	10
Belgium	530	Latvia	175	Singapore	9
Norway	480	Macedonia	165	Luxembourg	9
Czech Republic	480	Finland	165	Jordan	7
Bulgaria	460	Estonia	150	Ireland	7
Sweden	430	Portugal	145	Austria	4
Hungary	360	Greece	145	Iceland	2
New Zealand	300	Slovenia	130	Georgia	1
Croatia	290	Azerbaijan	90	Armenia	0

Myth 4: That there is no political solution within the region

It is stated that the war in Afghanistan is part of a wider struggle that is taking place in the world against ideas that are extreme. That ideas of a pan national Caliphate and removal of the current governments in the Muslim world are considered not practical in nature and in the words of one think tank, have a zero chance of succeeding. In essence, the demands are non-negotiable.

However, far from being non-negotiable the demands from most Muslims in the Islamic world, as evidenced by extensive polling data, shows a genuine desire for a Caliphate and strong opposition to Western foreign policy. Therefore, Western policymakers have two choices either they accept the political reality that the Muslim world has rejected the Western secular model and wants Islam to play a central role in politics or they can continue to put their heads in the sand and fight wars for decades to come.

Despite some limited questioning of sacred cows [18], most mainstream Western commentators continue to espouse the myth that the demands for the replacement of dictators and despots in the Muslim world with a pan-national Caliphate (see Chapter 5 for more detail) or withdrawal of Western forces from the region are pie in the sky. According to the RAND Corporation [7], demands for a pan-national Caliphate are non-negotiable. Yet careful analysis of surveys undertaken in the Muslim world [19] coupled with electoral results and even speeches by the minority who do support a strategy of violence show that the political demands are in fact reasonable. The demand of seeking the removal of all foreign forces, their bases and the cessation of Western occupation and interference (centuries old) in the Muslim world is just a continuation of the anti-colonial struggles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The demand of stopping the unadulterated support of Israel, an entity that has been responsible for usurping Palestine in 1948, should be seen through the prism of mass injustice against the people of Palestine with many in the West now questioning the utility of this relationship. Finally, the demand to stop all support for the region's tyrannical dictators and to allow the Muslim world to define its own political destiny can only be controversial to those that have graduated from the school of hypocrisy and neo-conservatism.

Discussing Shari'ah law in the abstract is therefore difficult and yet when Muslims begin to call for its implementation in the Muslim world, we often hear dire warnings about the dangers of the re-emergence of such a state. Yet the Caliphate has been the norm in the Muslim world, for 93% of its history the Muslim world has had a Caliphate. It is one thing for the West to argue that they oppose Shari'ah law; it is another to say that the Muslim world cannot have it either. It therefore only suits those who seek perpetual war in Washington and London to constantly recite the mantra that there is no political solution to the current crisis. Referring to your opponents as violent fanatics, whilst being responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands in the Muslim world, is hardly credible. Political solutions are entirely possible for those who want to take their ideological blinkers off and challenge their own entrenched views.

Myth 5: That Pakistan is the source of the insurgency in Afghanistan

It is stated that the insurgency in Afghanistan could not take place without support from Pakistan. In effect without the oxygen provided by Pakistan, the insurgency would soon end. However, though there are strong links between the Pashtun tribes on both sides of the border, the main cause of the insurgency is the foreign occupation of Afghanistan. NATO's attempt to invert the truth blaming others for its own recklessness is breathtaking and masks a covert agenda to destabilise Pakistan. In fact Western experts believe the insurgency in Afghanistan is actually self sustaining and that Pakistani efforts are at best helpful but not decisive as to whether the insurgency succeeds or not.

Some see a more concerted crackdown by Pakistan on militants on its side of the border as key to turning the tide in Afghanistan (the so called hammer and anvil approach), yet U.S. intelligence agencies in a report by the Reuters news agency [8] see little correlation, citing the Afghan insurgency's autonomy and increasing home-grown sophistication. For instance, when U.S. intelligence analysts tested that assumption during Pakistan's recent crackdown in the Bajaur region near the Afghan border, they found no corresponding reduction in militant infiltrations and attacks on U.S. forces across the border. A defence official was quoted to say "It goes to the idea that Afghanistan is a very resilient and a very flexible insurgency. And by the very nature of insurgency, you do not need a lot of insurgents to inflict a lot of damage, because they are able to choose the time and the place to engage". A U.S. counterterrorism official said Pakistani crackdowns on militants were "helpful" but added: "The Taliban, unfortunately, have already strengthened their presence – in numbers and in organisation – inside Afghanistan, so what happens on the other side of the border isn't particularly relevant to many of their operations."

This is a devastating riposte to those who continue to pedal the myth that the epicentre of the insurgency in Afghanistan is in Pakistan. As we will see in the next chapter, the propagation of this myth has in effect dominated the debate within Pakistan, with Pakistan being sucked more and more into fighting the West's war at huge costs to itself.

Conclusion

The intent of this chapter is to refute in detail the myths surrounding the Afghan war. No Afghan prisoners and only three Pakistani prisoners are in UK jails on terrorism and related charges, yet we are told this is the central hub for organising attacks on Western streets. Very few al-Qaeda operatives exist in Afghanistan and

the numbers of Taliban forces have been increasing as Western forces have risen in number, yet we are told that this is a war against Al-Qaeda and not the Taliban. Nor is the purported exit strategy viable as Afghan forces are neither operationally ready or seem willing to fight NATO's war. Most Western nations are only providing a token presence as they realise this war is not an existential one. The attempt to blame Pakistan for NATO's failings is also not backed up by the facts on the ground. Political objectives far from being non-negotiable are no different when using historical precedents and genuine demands from the Muslim world have to be met if we are to end the cycle of violence and instability that has plagued the Muslim world for a century. The war in Afghanistan is therefore built on a set of flawed assumptions and premises, which in turn have been built on a tissue of lies and deceit. It is inconceivable that anyone armed with the true facts would support a war that is costing hundreds of billions of dollars, which will not defeat Al-Qaeda, that is causing further hatred for the West and which will cost thousands of lives on both sides.

Chapter 4 **Pakistan in the Line of Fire**

Introduction

Since its demarcation by the British in 1947, Pakistan has been in a virtual siege laid by enemies of the state both from within and external to it. It has never emerged fully from the persistent threat of dissolution arising from the geographically based ethnic divisions that underlie Pakistan. North West Frontier Province (NWFP) – including FATA – and Baluchistan have experienced violent insurgencies over recent decades aimed at provincial secession, with the latter precipitating a violent counter insurgency from the military dragging on for nearly three years in the 1970's, while the former is currently experiencing the throes of insurgency.

The fact that Pakistan continues to exist despite these challenges has led many to conclude that the nature of the threat of dissolution facing Pakistan is non-critical, and that dissolution is indeed wholly over-rated as a serious threat. This is despite the fact that the country has lost its eastern half, and is currently engaged in a protracted and expanding conflict, ostensibly being fought to re-establish the writ of the state over its North-Western border region.

Whether or not Pakistan will break-up further is indeed an immaterial question. For if it does, the dissolution of the state will only occur as a result of the currently creeping political, social and military developments that are breeding severe social unrest, inter-ethnic and sectarian violence, economic and developmental regression, and quite possibly in the near future inter-state war. Stopping and reversing these dangerous trends is the truly critical task at hand, not the preservation of all, or most of the map of Pakistan through policies of self-preservation. Self preservation has been the declared rationale for all of the decisions taken by Pakistan's military and civilian leaders since the autumn of 2001. Yet, nine years later, self preservation has never seemed as difficult or remote a prospect as it does currently, with mounting political, economic, military and social challenges that are being exacerbated by the absence of any effective leadership of the Pakistani state. Indeed, this chapter suggests that the afflictions that are currently plaguing Pakistan have been exacerbated and accelerated as a result of Pakistan's political and military policies since 2001, pursued under the pretext of self-preservation. Furthermore, we argue that the only solution for these mounting and critical challenges is a comprehensive strategic re-examination and reorientation of the Pakistani state along a completely different trajectory.

Pakistan's Sovereignty is surrendered to the US.

The "Viceroy" and the US Military Footprint in Pakistan

In the aftermath of 9/11, then Chief Executive Musharraf pledged 'unstinting support' to America's ill-conceived and short-sighted military thrust for what it believed was just vengeance. Seeking to produce an analysis to refute that decision nine years on would be an exercise in futility since it is oppressively clear that the 'unstinting support' provided by Pakistan is being rewarded by the US through expanding the conflict zone in Afghanistan into 'Af-Pak' which includes parts of FATA, NWFP and, more recently, virtually all of the major population centres of Pakistan. Unbelievably but perhaps expectedly, this expansion of the war into Pakistan comes despite repeated reassurances from the likes of Richard Holbrooke that Pakistan continues to play a pivotal role exceptionally well in supporting the US' objectives in 'Af-Pak'[1].

As the insurgency in Afghanistan draws in more US troops and less NATO ones, the political centre of gravity of the NATO force presence in Afghanistan is rupturing. The leadership of these troops is increasingly directing the reasons for America's failures in Afghanistan at Pakistan. Pakistan is now seen as the main obstacle to US success in Afghanistan. Specifically, Pakistan's unwillingness or inability to crush the insurgency in FATA is giving Afghan insurgents valuable strategic support as material and manpower continue to flow to insurgents in Afghanistan through FATA.

In order to counter this threat to the US force-presence in Afghanistan, the US president has directed the US military to continue and if necessary expand drone-launched missile strikes against targets across FATA and on occasion NWFP. Drone strikes, which have thus far killed over 600 people, have resulted in few deaths, if any at all can indeed be confirmed, of high value suspects. What these drone strikes do reveal is the fact that the US military is exercising complete authority over Pakistan's airspace and land as it continues to engage in strikes resulting in a disproportionately large number of civilian casualties.

CIA and Blackwater (Xe)

This de facto US authority, which is evident through the actions of the US military despite counter attestations by Pakistan's civilian and military leadership, is not limited to the skies over Pakistan. Currently, armed US security personnel are operating with impunity across Pakistan under the aegis of the security firm Blackwater of Iraqi ignominy, currently re-branded as Xe. This organisation, as has been demonstrated through a series of high profile interdictions of its operatives by Pakistani law enforcement personnel [2] operates in all of Pakistan's major cities using a variety of explosives and arms, ostensibly to hunt for and apprehend senior al-Qaeda suspects whom it is alleged have dispersed across Pakistan. Eyewitnesses report that private homes around Islamabad have been rented by groups of American males who are armed and have threatened enquirers to keep away. At least one of these safe houses has been the scene of a vicious fire-fight in recent weeks. Officials have also reported that Xe personnel have been involved in support actions at a CIA operating base in Shamsi, Baluchistan [3] from where drones targeting FATA are launched, as alluded to by Senator Dianne Feinstein in the beginning of 2009. Ironically, the Pakistani Ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, has written to the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan and the director of the ISI urging them to allow US personnel to enter and operate in Pakistan without harassment, as denying them visas or otherwise harassing them may hurt the country's image [4].

This follows incidents reported in the press that suggest the Pakistani government denied entry visas to a significant number of US personnel of various professional backgrounds affiliated with the US diplomatic mission in Islamabad [5]. Although this may appear to be a sign of autonomy from American diktat, it needs to be viewed in the larger context of the plane loads of Americans who enter Pakistan on chartered flights and are not subjected to any type of border control procedure, and neither is their equipment. Hence, at this point, no one has an accurate estimation for the actual number of Americans operating in Pakistan or the nature and scale of their activities.

Who is Bombing Pakistan?

This unchecked influx of American personnel and equipment has prompted at least one former director of the ISI, as well as a number of other defence related Pakistani commentators to allege that the US, through operatives such as those affiliated with Xe, is the culprit behind the wave of terrorism that has gripped Pakistan in the last few months [6]. This wave of bombings erupted following the Pakistani military's latest and most large scale foray into South Waziristan launched in October 2009. Pakistan's major cities have been gripped by random and devastating bombings that have resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths. Although those reported in the Western media tend to be the spectacular bombings in which dozens or, as in some cases, over a hundred at a time are killed, the fact remains that bombings on a smaller scale persist across the country on a daily basis.

Bombings have struck markets and busy streets in Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi and numerous smaller towns and even villages across Pakistan. After each incident, the government has promptly issued declarations linking the bombings to the Taliban, or the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), or an amalgamation of these and others, or just terrorists which demonstrates how speculative the government's operational information really is. This is despite a number of denials by the TTP of involvement in the worst of these atrocities [7]. The fact that the bombings have largely targeted Peshawar, and specifically large centres of population from FATA residing in Peshawar, have led many to question why Islamist militants from FATA, seeking to expand support for their stated ambition of establishing authority over FATA and NWFP en route to the rest of Pakistan, would randomly and repeatedly bomb the very people they seek support amongst. Such questions have led observers to speculate that in fact it is highly unlikely to be the case that the Mehsud tribe, which forms the bulk of the leadership cadre of the TTP, is waging a bombing campaign against Pakistani society.

The Mehsud are currently engaged in militancy against the Pakistan army, and have vacillitatingly been in a state of belligerence with the army and the Waziri and Daur tribes of South and North Waziristan for the better part of the last century. They do have the capacity to launch sophisticated tactical raids employing heavy weaponry including artillery and anti-aircraft weaponry. However, to suggest that the tribe, which is divided into a number of clans of which each has the potential to form a temporary alliance against the tribe's leadership, is waging a war against the population of Pakistan is a leap of faith that few if any serious observers of the situation are willing to make.

Many politicians in Pakistan blame the bombings upon Indian covert operations in Pakistan. They allege that evidence exists which implicates Indian operatives in Baluchistan and FATA in the ongoing bombings. They

allege that the government is trying to cover up these facts so that it can use the bombings as a reason to continue to push further through North and South Waziristan in operations undertaken through strategic subservience to America's regional ambitions.

Others allege that the bombings are orchestrated through the activities of individuals affiliated with Blackwater (Xe) or the CIA more directly. They speculate that these attacks are undertaken to generate support across Pakistan, particularly NWFP and Punjab, for the continuation of unpopular military operations by the Pakistani army in FATA. Some others suggest that the bombing are actually punitive strikes carried out at the behest of the US as a result of Pakistan's resistance of US demands to expand Pakistani military operations across FATA.

It has to be borne in mind that incidents of bombings have been numerous and widespread across Pakistan. It must also be borne in mind that Pakistan is afflicted with a number of insurgencies, and faces violent Shia-Sunni clashes each year around the month of Muharram. In addition to this, there are a number of foreign states who, to varying degrees, seek to destabilise Pakistan through civil unrest and violence.

More so than any other factor, it must be understood that the absence of effective leadership of the state and protection of society will invariably lead to destructive foreign intervention in the state's functioning and in society. Hence, the current wave of violence afflicting Pakistan, aside from the perpetrators who are mechanically responsible for the destruction, is ultimately the result of the absence of any effective overall leadership of the state, and the provision of any protection for society. The government has failed to demonstrate any initiative in any critical area facing the state, whether in the sphere of security and sovereignty, political stability, developmental and economic recovery, or social cohesion. It is evident that this failure is what has made it possible for an external entity to wage this bombing campaign.

The Cost of Providing 'Unstinting' Support.

One of the main justifications circulated amongst the officer class in Rawalpindi in 2001 for Pakistan's decision to provide 'unstinting support' to the US was that this approach would prove to be an economic windfall for Pakistan in the coming years; a rationale that has been repeated behind closed doors for most of the last decade. Reality points to the contrary fact that Pakistan has borne a huge economic burden in siding with America. As a direct result of America's evident strategic objective of expanding the conflict zone to include parts of Pakistan, Pakistan is currently trapped in a cycle of economic stagnation that is driven by the deteriorating security situation across the country. Unprecedented levels of capital flight from Pakistan are currently being witnessed originating from all sectors of the economy. Between mid-2008 and mid-2009, the country experienced a nearly 60 per cent reduction in FDI; a figure not seen even in the chaos that followed the autumn of 2001. The value of the Pakistani rupee vis-à-vis the US dollar showed a record breaking slide at the end of 2008 that has since reduced in rate of decline, but continues to fall. There has been a nearly 40 per cent reduction in the value of the rupee vis-à-vis the US dollar since Musharraf pledged his support to the US in 2001. This has been mirrored against all major currencies in the same time period.

In October 2008, Pakistan faced fiscal default for the first time since Musharraf's decision, with its reserves falling below $5 billion. Since then, Standard & Poor has reduced Pakistan's rating to CCC [8], the lowest

rating globally for a country of comparable size and potential as Pakistan.

Despite this economic crisis, Pakistani President Zardari manages to make the top ten lists of the world's richest statesmen [9]. This, while statistics fail to capture the actual level of poverty that is currently being experienced by those in Pakistan who do not have access to foreign currency incomes, particularly the rural and the internally displaced of which there are now over a million in Pakistan.

The illusory economic enticements of alliance with America, which have since evaporated, were allegedly backed up by the proverbial big stick in the person of then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. In September 2006, it became public that the Bush administration through Armitage had threatened Pakistan by 'bombing it back to the stone age' if it did not extend the required support to the US in its campaign in Afghanistan [10].

Whether or not this threat was actually made by Richard Armitage to Musharraf through the ISI Director General is of secondary importance. The fact remains that, after the threat was allegedly made, the US was unable to effectively occupy and administer Iraq, resulting in a now seven year long insurgency that continues to threaten the stability of the country and the safety of foreign troops. Further, the US is currently bogged down in a guerrilla war in Afghanistan that is spreading and growing in success and intensity each day. The US led NATO experience in Afghanistan has led military commanders there to suggest that, eight years in, the campaign has reached a critical stage which, if not dealt with appropriately with an increase in manpower and resources, would see the US and her allies fail in Afghanistan.

Hence, whether or not the US was in a position to attack Pakistan in 2001 is irrelevant for the course of action to be taken by Pakistan now. Now, the US is not in a position to attack Pakistan. The US is clearly suffering from having to sustain two campaigns concurrently and is unable to maintain its commitments indefinitely. As a result, the US cannot engage in a further campaign against a state with both conventional and nuclear capabilities. Further, the centre of gravity for the US led alliance is and always has been political in nature and not military. If the US is unable to maintain political support from its allies over attacking Pakistan, that absence of multilateral support will further reduce the possibility of success for the US, a fact that will be reiterated in a US congress that is already split in its support for existing campaigns.

What is the Solution?

In light of this, the question then arises as to what the nature of the compulsion facing Pakistan is in continuing to support the US in its campaign in 'Af-Pak'?

This question should initiate a comprehensive strategic review by Pakistan of its position both vis-à-vis the US and more generally in the region at large. Pakistan is facing a campaign, initiated and sustained by the US, of steady encroachment over strategically salient parts of the country to where Pakistan is now fighting a defensive battle against an enemy it publicly maintains is its ally on its own territory. This is not a sustainable course of policy even over the medium term.

What Pakistan must do is recognise the nature of the enemy it faces and confront it. This it must do

across the full spectrum of options available to it, including diplomatic, intelligence, political and if necessary military. The US is compelled to wage an undeclared war in Pakistan because it cannot conduct a declared and conventional course of belligerence against Pakistan. This compulsion must be obviated. Through conducting operations under the aegis of private contractors and through expanding the scope and frequency of drone-launched missile strikes in FATA and NWFP, the US is seeking to overstep the limits of Pakistan's sovereignty, an objective also pursued by introducing the lexicon of partial or blurred sovereignty in the term 'Af-Pak'. The term 'Af-Pak' refers to an expanded zone of conflict that includes parts of Pakistan in the battle space of the Afghan campaign. No Pakistani protestations occurred over this intellectual and lexical prelude to the physical expansion of the theatre which we are now witnessing.

This reveals the degree to which the mindset of the leadership in Pakistan is totally subservient to the intellectual, political and military doctrinal diktats issued by the US.

Rather than initiate a comprehensive strategic review in light of America's creeping belligerence towards Pakistan, the Pakistani leadership has been petitioning the legislature and military leadership for the ratification of the Kerry-Lugar Bill, which proposes an annual assistance to Pakistan to the tune of $1.5 billion for five years, conditional on the level of performance of the Pakistani military and intelligence organs in pursuit of America's military and security objectives in Pakistan.

America is carrying out an undeclared war in Pakistan because it is not in a position to wage a conventional campaign, due to both political and military limitations. In order to counter, America's aggression Pakistan must obviate what is apparent to many, that the US has transgressed Pakistan's sovereignty as an independent state, and is pursuing actions that have resulted in economic hardship, political chaos, severe social distension and violent opposition around the country. This unparalleled meddling in the affairs of a sovereign state constitutes a clear and present threat that must be reversed by all possible means. These include:

- The termination of US diplomatic, political and aid/assistance access to Pakistani society.
- The immediate removal from Pakistan of all personnel affiliated with the military and intelligence organs of the US including Blackwater (Xe) affiliates.
- The termination of all agreements relating to the Pakistani military carrying out actions against anyone at the behest of the US, whether explicitly or implicitly.
- Any conventions granting foreign powers access to Pakistani airspace, territory or waters must be nullified.

Only through taking these comprehensive steps can Pakistan stop the US from expanding its campaign of steadily expanding instability and violence to where it consumes the state rendering it paralysed.

These first steps must be followed by a comprehensive re-evaluation of Pakistan's relationships with the major powers as well as with the states in its immediate vicinity. Bilateral relations must be reconsidered outside the framework of American or Chinese strategic imperatives, and must be formulated in accordance with Pakistan's own regional and global political vision.

Chapter 5 An Islamic Alternative – Separating Fact from Myth

Introduction

The Muslim world has long suffered at the hands of its rulers and foreign interference in its internal affairs. Afghanistan and Pakistan are no exception: endemic corruption, rampant poverty and a crippling national infrastructure have long plagued the region and continue to threaten regional stability as well as basic functions of state and society. With little sign of change the prospect is one of continued paralysis extending over decades to come.

Over 60% of Pakistan's population live on less than $2 a day [1] and nearly a quarter on less than $1.25 a day [2]. According to the World Food Programme, 7.4 million Afghans – nearly a third – are unable to get enough food to live active, healthy lives, and 8.5 million, or 37%, are on the borderline of food insecurity [3]. Corruption is rife, demonstrated by the ongoing court cases in Pakistan looking into allegations of corruption at all levels. In a recent corruption assessment for 2008, Pakistan and Afghanistan were ranked 134 and 176 out of 180 countries respectively [4]. Misrule is the norm with some of Pakistan's history being under non civilian rule. Afghanistan's much lauded elections have been the subject of serious fraud and rigging allegations. To make matters worse, we are now witnessing the onset of violence on an unprecedented scale, both with American forces attacking targets in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the recent bombings across major Pakistani cities.

It is in this context that serious questions need to be asked about how these problems can be alleviated. It is becoming increasingly clear that if the status quo is not challenged, the picture of the region may soon look quite different and the lives of ordinary people will worsen beyond what is already a dire situation. The occupation of Afghanistan installed a political process underneath the banner of introducing 'democracy' that has achieved nothing other than confirm the previous tribal structures and interests and opened the doors for poppy cultivation and corruption. It is also clear that since the onset of the occupation, instability and random violence have seriously escalated and now threaten to engulf the entire region.

It is Hizb ut-Tahrir's belief that to overcome this rapidly deteriorating situation, there is a need for a transformational change from the regimes and systems that currently govern Islamic lands in the region (and beyond) and an end to the foreign occupation of Muslim territories. It is no longer acceptable to simply see a few heads change; or for there to be a re-run of corrupt electoral processes, because the track record of these has resulted in the very problems we see before us. Hizb ut-Tahrir believes this transformational

change will be brought about through the re-establishment of the Islamic system – the Caliphate (*Khilafah*) – an accountable, representative, forward looking system with an unrivalled history of success.

Those who believe an Islamic system would be a backwards step to a 'Taliban' era can no longer credibly make such claims. Because it is becoming increasingly apparent that the only system which takes account of all the core ingredients needed for the Muslim world's success – a stable economy, an accountable and representative executive, a system consistent with peoples' values, independence from foreign control, and which prioritises people's basic needs over the gains of a few or of private enterprise – can only be secured by an Islamic system. Furthermore, images of television hanging, denial of women's education, random justice and religious zealotry are the hallmarks of a local tradition, not the Islamic state. The Caliphate has a history of embracing and propelling learning and scientific innovation, granting rights to women and a leadership held to account by an independent judiciary with considerable powers.

The Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, and beyond, are proud of their association with Islam. The suggestion that their countries should be governed by Islam is therefore not unusual and most natural. In the context of the sub-continent, many lost their lives in the struggle for the creation of a Muslim homeland and all those who made that vision possible are remembered as heroes. They supported the Caliphate in its final days and many of the supporting voices became the founding fathers of Pakistan itself. Frustration towards various Muslims parties over the decades has never been towards Islam, but with the misuse and abuse of Islam for political ends by certain groups.

It is also worth noting that the demand for the Islamic State around the Muslim world is growing. Various polls taken in recent years show that up to 70% [5] in countries across the Muslim world want the Shari'ah to feature in how their countries are run. It's a trend that hasn't gone unnoticed amongst Western commentators and politicians, who have made clear their aim to prevent its establishment. For it is a fact that of the few trends that may finally halt the West's neo-imperial mission in the Muslim world and beyond, the emergence of an Islamic state is among the most certain.

2. What is the Caliphate?

Conflicting and confusing models of supposed Islamic governance, whether the Taliban, Saudi Arabia or Iran or in the literature of some religious parties, has not only obscured a clear picture of what the Islamic state will represent, but has also deterred others from considering the Islamic System as a viable or credible solution. Hizb ut-Tahrir has written extensively on the Caliphate and has published a draft constitution together with numerous books detailing its proposed ruling [6] [7], economic [8] [9] [10], social [11] and judicial systems.

The Caliphate (*Khilafah*) is a political system from the ideology of Islam that enshrines: the rule of law, representative government, accountability by the people through an independent judiciary and the principle of representative consultation. It is government built upon a concept of citizenship regardless of ethnicity, gender or creed and is totally opposed to the oppression of any religious or ethnic grouping.

The highest executive post is the post of Caliph who appoints ministers without portfolio to assist in ruling and governors *(Walis)* for the various regions. The legislative sources are the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet

Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم.

While differences of interpretation of these sources can occur, as with any legislative sources, the particular interpretation adopted by the Caliph must be ratified before an independent judiciary, which has the power to remove him from his post should he flagrantly deviate from the boundaries of credible legal interpretation *(ijtihad)* or the terms of his contract with the citizens of the State. The Caliph is appointed by the people and hereditary rule is forbidden.

> "The man who rules the Muslims does not become *Khaleefah* (Caliph) unless
> the *bay'ah* is given to him by the influential people (*Ahl al-Hall Wa'l-Aqd*) from
> amongst the *Ummah*, without compulsion." [13]

3. The Caliphate will bring stability to the region and wider Muslim World

The Caliphate will be a stabilising force for Muslim countries that move to adopt its model, in numerous ways. In order to understand how, the causes of the current instability and violence should be understood to be routed in a combination of political, economic, social and ideological problems. They are connected directly with the impact of failed systems in the region, regimes not acting in the interests of their people, foreign interference, perceived weakness by regimes in the face of this foreign meddling and the fear that deeply held values are being eroded and that no action is taken to prevent this from happening. As political processes continue to fail, factions have reverted to violence as a way of challenging the situation.

The Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم once said: **"The Imam is a guardian, and he is responsible for his subjects." [Bukhari, *Sahih*, #893].** This means that government bears a responsibility for looking after the people. This desperately needed guardianship and care for citizens is, sadly, utterly absent in the ruling structures of the Islamic world today.

3.1 The Caliphate will resolve the causes of violent unrest that are so common today

The Caliphate is able to address these root causes of current violent unrest in the region due to the following reasons:

1. The Caliphate will be independent and free from foreign control.

The inability of current regimes in the Muslim world to oppose or even challenge foreign interference and defend their land from unscrupulous foreign interests and demands is a cause of significant anxiety in the Muslim world. The track record of foreign interference, since the onset of colonialism, has been to the detriment of local populations. Perceived subservience to foreign interests, permitting their military presence and allowing them to pursue their own local strategies unchallenged, has led to violent unrest as groups take the situation into their own hands and attack not only foreign targets and installations but also government departments because of this perceived complicity. The choice of their targets is highly revealing.

Part of the Caliphate's appeal for Muslims is that it will stand up to foreign aggression and wrestle back what

they believe is rightfully theirs. The Caliphate will deal with foreign states, but will reject any attempts to control its policies or further the cause of foreign powers to their detriment. This is widely recognised; Western commentators and politicians argue that the Caliphate must be prevented from emerging exactly because it will challenge the status quo and act in a hostile manner towards foreign powers. It is farcical to suggest that asserting independence from foreign powers who attempt to control the Muslim world will render it unstable. To be clear, the current instability and cause of much violent unrest is due to foreign powers imposing their will and wars on the Muslim world, none of which accord with Muslim interests.

2. The Caliphate is an open, accountable and representative political system that governs through consultation

In the book 'the Institutions of State in the Khilafah' originally published in Arabic in 2005 Hizb ut-Tahrir presents detailed Islamic evidences on the Caliphate and summarises saying:

> **"The *Khaleefah* (Caliph) is the man who represents the *Ummah* in ruling, authority and in the implementation of the Divine laws (*Shari'ah*). Islam has decreed that ruling and authority belong to the *Ummah*. It is therefore for the *Ummah* to appoint an individual to administer that authority and apply the divine laws on her behalf." [12]**

The Caliphate is an open, accountable and representative political system whose head is appointed only through popular consent. It will therefore be unlike the regimes that currently litter the Muslim world, who are both unrepresentative and unaccountable, and inherently fragile and unstable as a result. With no means of recourse within these regimes and no channels to express dissent or criticism, peoples' concerns have become threatening political undercurrents, threats of rebellion, overthrow and the cause of violent unrest. People are locked out of the political processes and are unable to influence the political situation of their countries, and many have reverted to violence. The situation is exasperated by the widespread use of brutality by security services to deal with opposition.

The Caliphate, in striking contrast, engages voices of dissent through the political system by providing extensive channels for accounting all parts of the states' apparatus as well as a consultative assembly (Council of the Ummah) made-up of elected representatives with significant powers. To illustrate this, Hizb ut-Tahrir highlights that one of the mandatory powers of the Council of the Ummah is:

> "…the right to hold the rulers to account on all matters that take place within the state, whether these are related to domestic affairs, foreign affairs, financial affairs or military." [14]

The Caliph is appointed to his position according to the will of the people through the process of '*bay'ah*' [lit., voluntary pledge]. The existence of political parties too is a key requirement in the Caliphate and will also act as a mechanism of accounting the executive [15].

3. The Caliphate will protect deeply held Islamic values perceived to be under threat

The Caliphate system is consistent with – not alien to – the values of people in region and the wider Muslim world. It will therefore act as a guarantor for deeply held Islamic values considered to be at threat with the import of foreign values. Values deemed 'Western', for example, are tarnished by perceptions of Western moral and sexual decadence but whose greater penetration in the Muslim world in recent years has remained unchallenged. Again, this has been the cause of considerable apprehension in the Muslim world and unrest as groups attempt to challenge their regimes over failing to protect their sublime Islamic values.

The Caliphate therefore has deep roots and a better chance at working in partnership with its populations because it engages them on a common point of reference and works for common goals. The secular, autocratic even atheistic regimes that emerged in the Caliphate's wake significantly curtailed Islamic practice and engineered new readings of Islamic values and history. They often imposed views that broke with orthodoxy to demand loyalty to divisive and failed ideologies, and therefore remained in a bitter struggle with their own people. A political system that credibly protects Islamic values is therefore fundamental to securing public confidence and partnership.

4.   The Islamic State enshrines the rule of law and will address corruption

The arbitrary rule by the whim of self-appointed kings, presidents and military dictators that have plagued the Muslim world are an anathema to the principle of the rule of law within Islam's political system. The application of the law is in the hands of an independent judiciary that has a special section called the 'Court of Unjust Acts' whose task is to investigate impropriety on the part of members of the executive against the people. On this matter Hizb ut-Tahrir wrote:

> "The judge of *Madhalim* is a judge appointed to remove every *Madhlimah* (unjust act) perpetrated by the State against any person, whether this person were a citizen of the State or a person living under its authority, and whether this *Madhlimah* were perpetrated by the *Khaleefah* or those working under him, be they rulers or civil servants."

> "This is the definition of the judge of *Madhalim*. The origin of the judiciary of *Madhalim* is derived from reports referred to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم where he described the unjust acts perpetrated by the ruler while ruling over the subjects as being a *Madhlimah*. Anas reported:

> **"Prices soared during the time of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم so they said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah why don't you introduce pricing?' he said: 'Verily Allah is the Creator, the Recipient, the Extender of wealth, the Provider, and the Pricer, and I hope that I will meet Allah سبحانه وتعالى without having anyone accusing me of having perpetrated a *Madhlimah* against him be it in blood or in money.'"** This is narrated by Ahmad [See *Musnad*, 3/286]. He صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم therefore judged pricing as being a *Madhlimah*, for if he had done it, i.e. introduced pricing, he would have acted without authority.

"He صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم also made the issues that affect the common rights which the State organises for the people as part of the *Madhalim*." [16]

As for individual wrongdoing – the Caliph is subject to the same laws and penalties as the rest of the people because he is not considered sovereign over his subjects.

3.2 The Caliphate will fill the dangerous vacuum in global Islamic leadership

The fall of the Caliphate in 1924 brought with it an unprecedented loss of authority and leadership on Islamic issues. The resulting vacuum allowed individuals to become global figureheads for merely speaking the rhetoric of anti-colonialism and standing-up to perceived aggressors. This crisis in leadership after the Caliphate dangerously allowed its functions to be dismembered and claimed by virtually anyone who was willing to take them on from tax collection, to defending Muslim territory (including deciding when and how), to defining the relationship between Islam and other peoples.

The Caliphate is the only institution able to provide credible leadership on Islamic issues and which can hold a convincing Islamic debate that denounces weak or erroneous understandings that threaten both Western and Muslim populations. In the absence of the Caliphate, there is no credible mechanism to challenge those who have assumed current roles or dangerous narratives nor is there a credible entity that 'speaks for Islam' with which foreign countries and Muslim peoples can engage. Organisations such as the OIC lack credibility and consist of the same rulers that lack popular support; they are characterised by useless gestures and ineffective declarations.

3.3 The Caliphate is non-ethnic or nationalistic, and will thus resolve separatist unrest

The emergence of the nation state and nationalism has created strangers out of regional neighbours and has also led to the slow disintegration of states that hold multiple ethnicities, or communities, who have continued the demand for independence and thus undermined the overall integrity of the nations they live in.

The examples of this across the Muslim world are numerous. In the case of Pakistan, separatist movements exist across every province, many hostile and violent, and aim to eventually break away from Pakistan, as East Pakistan did in 1971. This is a cause of tremendous unrest another source of serious instability and ongoing upheaval across the Muslim world.

The Caliphate does not consider its population through the prism of ethnicity but rather enshrines the concept of citizenship. It also has an unrivalled history in dealing with different ethnic and religious minorities, much of which has been shattered through the emergence of artificial nation states that have subsequently competed and fought each other over boundaries that lack any historical or Islamic precedent.

3.4 The Caliphate will address poverty with the highest priority

The desire amongst Muslims for a Caliphate is fuelled partly by the need to address extreme levels of poverty despite possessing huge reserves of natural resources. With all this wealth it is clear that the region could become an independent economic power.

In the Islamic economic system, the people own the natural resources and revenues generated would be used to build infrastructure and facilitate economic growth. This is derived from an edict of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم **The people are partners in three things: water, pastures and fire [energy]. [17]"**

Instead, foreign aid has stifled many states through the imposition of conditions that include mass privatisation, as well as liberal secular reform. It would have been better to have used the resource wealth amounting to billions to invest in education, health and infrastructure such that the region became more economically powerful and independent instead of relying on foreign loans and attendant interest payments.

The Islamic economy not only makes a distinction between basic needs and luxuries, it also sets priorities in solving the needs of the people by ensuring all the basic needs of the people are met. The Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم said: "**The son of Adam has no better right than that he would have a house wherein he may live and a piece of cloth whereby he may cover his nakedness and a piece of bread and some water**." [18]

If this were central to economic thinking then millions would not be suffering from malnutrition or starvation. The free market does not distinguish between the needs of the people and neither does it ensure that the basic needs of people are satisfied rather it hopes that the 'invisible hand' will solve the problem.

3.5 The Caliphate's economic system would reverse the Muslim world's current economic slavery

In addition to the Caliphate's priority in dealing with poverty, there are a number of other items that mark out the Caliphate's economic policy. To demonstrate some of these, the following are highlighted policies in the context of Pakistan:

- The state will fund its priorities by abolishing Income Tax and General Sales Tax, and will replace them with wealth taxes (*Zakah*) on those who can most afford it and land taxes (*Kharaj*) on feudal landowners.
- The state will bring all energy resources into public ownership and end all current contracts with the foreign owned Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Not a single megawatt has been added to the National Grid since 1999 and power shortages (load shedding) are an everyday occurrence.
- WAPDA and KESC will be in public hands. A clear distinction will be made between national ownership of such resources and the use of private expertise for services in these sectors.
- To ensure effective land redistribution and to avoid an over concentration of wealth, measures will be put in place to dissolve Pakistan's feudal structure. Land will be confiscated from existing landowners if not productively used for more than three years and will be given to those who can use it.
- The state will eliminate all interest and short term speculative based transactions replacing them with economic transactions which align with Islamic principles of risk and reward, which channel investment into the real economy rather than obscure financial instruments. Savings on interest paid on domestic bonds and other foreign exchange liabilities, including the external debt of $40 billion will be invested into solving poverty and public services.
- The state will initiate industrialisation as a long term strategy and shift Pakistan away from its

dependence on the agricultural sector. This will be done through greater investment in education, skills and training.

- The currency will be formally pegged to the Gold and Silver standard rather than shadowing the US dollar. The US dollar as a fiat currency has no intrinsic value and as such depreciation is common as has been witnessed in recent times.
- The state should provide free health care for all but will not prevent the use of private medical services.

4. Dealing with the myths and addressing concerns

Much of the preceding chapter has addressed a number of features that clearly distinguish the Caliphate from, for example, the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the monarchy in Saudi Arabia and the theocracy in Iran. There are, however, a number of additional points that are of particular relevance to understanding the nature of rule the Caliphate would bring.

4.1 The Caliphate embraces modern technology, innovation and scientific progress

Many will recall images of television hanging on the part of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan which fostered the belief that an Islamic State would be anti-modern, shun advances made over the past few centuries and return its subjects to a medieval, pre-technology era.

Contrary to such images however, the Islamic State will embrace technology and scientific progress. This is based philosophically on the belief that Islam does not, nor came to, define reality. So whether the earth orbits the sun or vice versa, water boils at 100 degrees Celsius, HIV leads to AIDS etc are for the human mind and scientific and intellectual inquiry to discover. The Shari'ah therefore does not insist people believe, say, the world is flat; its role is to provide solutions, guidance and a legal framework in which to conduct human activity whether social, economic or political.

The Muslim world is embarrassed by images of television hanging and previous opposition to, for example, the printing press and telephony. Such attitudes demonstrate the decline in thinking which has affected parts of the Muslim world and is one of the key reasons for its decline over many centuries. Contrary to such antagonism, contributions made by the Muslim world to science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and various other fields is well documented and flourished under the Golden Age of Islamic rule.

4.2 Islamic rule is not theocratic

The Caliphate is a human state run by fallible and accountable human beings who implement laws, derived from what Muslims believe to be divine legislative sources, over societal interactions. The Caliph himself is a citizen appointed to execute the role of leader by the other citizens and not a leader chosen by God.

Whilst the head in a theocracy is beyond reproach because of claims to divine right, the Caliph is monitored by numerous institutions, the independent judiciary of which has not just the right but the duty to remove him if he violates the terms of his ruling contract (*bay'ah*), force him to repeal the adoption of a particular law, demand compensation and declare policy invalid amongst other powers.

The Caliphate is also not rule by clergy, or by a religious elite that claims to have a monopoly on interpreting Islamic law; there is no concept of a papacy to make a declaration of divine preference. As Hizb ut-Tahrir highlights in its book 'The Ruling System in Islam'

> "The *Khilafah* (Caliphate)...is a human post whereby Muslims give their
> *bay'ah* (pledge) to whoever they wish" [19].

The Caliph will adopt law following consultation or through adopting *ijtihad* (legal opinion), but that does not prevent further debate and amendment for those who disagree with his adoption.

4.3 Women in the Islamic state

Under the Caliphate system women had the franchise and participated in the political process from the very beginning of Islamic rule. Not only were women able to vote, but they were able to own property - the wife of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, was in fact a wealthy businesswoman and his صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم employer.

The right of women to own property is a relatively recent concept in the West. Education is open to men and women and this is considered a necessity rather than a luxury. Women are, however, limited from holding the ruling posts of Caliph (Head of State), Wazir (Minister of State) or Wali (Provincial Governor). The limitation is not explained in terms of superiority or inferiority. In this respect the system does limit the political posts a woman can hold – both in practice and principle.

That this limitation seems to so preoccupy those who attack the Islamic system is laughable. Liberal secular democracies may theoretically offer equal access to these areas but in practice the results are so poor, they do not give any license to offer lectures on the woman's role in society. We believe that men and women gain honour by their work, and that women have a special privilege in being the mothers of every nation and for that they deserve special regard.

4.4. Islam forbids Ruling by Police State

There is a huge assumption, given that the dictatorships in the Muslim world that seek to portray themselves as Islamic are authoritarian police states, that an Islamic state would be the same. This is utterly false.

It is neither borne out in history nor in Islamic thought. The Caliphate would be violating Islamic principles if the governing authority became a 'force'; regimes in Arab and Muslim countries exemplify how this would lead to harm and poor management of society and according to Hizb ut-Tahrir:

> "… the concepts and criteria [of society] would become the concepts and
> criteria of coercion, oppression and dominance, and not the concepts and
> criteria of looking after people's affairs. Ruling would then turn into an op-
> pressive rule that knows nothing but terror, dominance, oppression, coercion
> and blood shedding." [21]

In another work Hizb ut-Tahrir gave the following example from Islamic history about the Caliph Umar

> "One day news reached him about his *Amil* (city governor) over Homs Umayr Ibnu Saad who had said while over the pulpit of Homs, "***Islam will remain strong as long as the authority is strong. And the strength of the authority does not come about with the killing by the sword or the lashing by the whip, but by judging with the truth and the upholding of justice***." Upon hearing this 'Umar said "***I wish I had a man like Umayr Ibnu Saad to help me with the Muslims' affairs***." [21]

Moreover the Caliphate is a state that prohibits spying on its citizens – something endemic in Muslim countries but also on the increase in many Western countries.

On this matter Hizb ut-Tahrir has said:

> "Spying on Muslims is *haram* as stipulated in this verse. Allah سبحانه وتعالى says:
>
> يا أيها الذين آمنوا اجتنبوا كثيرا من الظن إن بعض الظن إثم ولا تجسسوا
>
> "*And do not spy on each other*". ..
> [Translated Meaning of Quran 49:12]

> "This is general prohibition of spying; and it remains general unless there is an evidence to specify it. This is confirmed by the *hadith* reported by Ahmad and Abu Dawud in their narration from Al-Muqdad and Abu Umamah when they said: "The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم said: **If the amir sought for suspicion amongst the people he would undermine them.**"
> [Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, #4889 and al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, vol.5, p.218]." [22]

There are also clear Islamic prohibitions on torture and abusive behaviour amongst other things – as applied to the police, armed forces and security services as well as the general population - as a protection from such forceful rule.

These are constitutionally enshrined as well as the Islamic injunction that every individual is innocent until proven guilty.

Conclusion

The term 'balkanisation' is synonymous with disintegration and evokes images of instability. It is forgotten that this term originated from the destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate.

Some have recognised that this breakup of the Ottoman Caliphate was the very thing that caused the Middle East and Muslim world in general, to descend into instability for the best part of the twentieth century, and

beyond. [23]

Since that time, the Muslim world has been considered unstable. Yet, the powerful nations in the world have sought to keep the Muslim world 'balkanised', and in addition have worked hard to make it 'secularised', all in the hope that this would make it a weakened region, easier to control and exploit.

These policies of colonial powers could be argued to have created and perpetuated the chaos in the Muslim world.

Afghanistan in particular has suffered at the hands of the British Empire, the Soviet Empire and, most recently, the American Empire. In between these interventions it never achieved stability for long.

More recently, commentators shrink in horror at the prospect of Pakistan heading towards 'balkanisation' because successive recent governments have capitulated to US demands in the 'war on terror', and also because of the rise of bombings targeting civilian areas.

But, the desire of the Muslim world to return to an Islamic footing, based on their beliefs and values, and consistent with their heritage, which some in the West describe as 'radicalisation' or 'extremism' is actually the antidote to this.

Every society needs ideological 'glue' that binds the governed to those that govern. In Muslim countries it is only Islam that commands the trust and respect to rise above individual politicians, and to under pin much needed institutions. The Caliphate is the means by which Islam has defined this underpinning and cohesion of society.

Moreover, it is only under the Caliphate that the very real economic, security and political problems of the Muslim world can start to be tackled. It is our belief that this radical alternative is the only ray of hope for a people hitherto condemned to live decades under misery and chaos.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

"Verily, with every hardship comes ease"

[Translated Meaning Quran 94:6]

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