

US Strategy in Afghanistan: From Attack to Talks

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ABSTRACT

The US emerged as a responsible actor post world war 2nd when the Europe heavily damaged by the two destructive wars. Keeping the world politics balanced on the principles of bipolar system, USSR emerged as a second non European major power by declaring the cold war. It was the last stage of the cold war when the US increased its interests in Afghanistan. The US planned the War in Afghanistan six month prior to the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 by supporting the anti soviet forces that ultimately buried communism in Afghanistan. Post 9/11 2001 expedite the US to contain the influence of China and keep an eye on Russia, Iran and Pakistan. To achieve its objectives the US eliminated the Taliban backed Al-Qaeda from government and started to reconstruct Afghanistan by engaging regional and major powers. To cope with the issue of insurgency the US administration launched drone attacks inside Afghanistan and Pakistan. By putting an end to their strategy the Osama Operation conducted inside Pakistan that generate spectrum of questions. Dialogue with Taliban in Afghanistan was the last option for the US to drawdown from Afghanistan with honor.

KEY WORDS: USA, Afghanistan, War on Terrorism, Cold War, Drone Attacks, Osama Operation, Talk.

INTRODUCTION

The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 ended the regional era in US foreign policy and started global era that compelled US to involve the most destructive war of the human history. For the next four years the US administrations believe on multilateral approach on sphere of influence that ultimately demarcated in the United Nations Organization. This approach became an illusion when the founder of grand strategy Roosevelt died on April 1945 and succeeded by Truman who found the USSR as a competitor in designing the destiny of the World (Rosati, 2013). The world divided into two ideological blocks that lasted till 1990 with the collapse of Soviet Union. During this Cold War the US not only dominated the world politics but also very keen about each and every state to contain the spread of communism (McWilliams, 1990).

It was the last stage of the Cold War when the importance of Afghanistan increased in White House and Pentagon with reference to invasion of USSR in 1979. The grave yard of Empires once again became a battle field for the last session of the long ideological Cold War as the first was fought between the Russia and Britons in 19th century. The US supported the most ignored ethnic group of Pokhtoon in Afghanistan to show its resistance to the Red Army with the approval of the leading Muslim states including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. With the collapse of Soviet empire the US diverted its attention from Afghanistan to the newly born states of Central Asia and developments in Middle East (McWilliams, 1990). Nearly for one decade Afghanistan was the victim of civil war among different Mujahedeen groups and ultimately it was linked to A-Qaeda that was considered the most resistance force to the US interests in the Muslim World. This linkage of state and non-state actor posed serious threat to the US when they were involved in series of incidents targeting the US officials and property around the World (Rosati, 2013).

The attacks of 9/11 were the latest attempt of Al-Qaeda to hurt American within their own home land to review its biased policies towards the Muslim Ummah. For the American it was the start of long and costly war on terror that brought the US to invade Afghanistan with the support of international community and world organizations (Scott, 2007). Initially the poorly equipped Taliban showed its resistance and rejected the US demands about the involvement of Osama in 9/11 attacks and his handover to the US authorities. Later they realized the serious consequences of rejection but the US already planned a war on terror not only in Afghanistan but also on Iraq. This study will elaborate the US strategy in Afghanistan issue wise which include the elimination of Taliban government from Afghanistan, reconstruction of Afghanistan, insurgency issue and Drone attacks inside Pakistan, Osama operation inside Pakistan, the US talks with Afghani Taliban and its drawdown from Afghanistan (Scott, 2007).

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9/11 2001 attacks and the US decision to punish Al-Qaeda/Taliban

The world community also condemned the liaison between Taliban and Al-Qaida who according to the US were involved in anti-American incidents that accelerated the US anger to assault Afghanistan and dismantle the sanctuaries of Al-Qaida from Afghanistan. During the decades of 80s and 90s many anti-western Islamic groups spread all over the Muslim World to preach anti-western lobbies. Among them some were state sponsored like Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestine Islamic Jihad but Al-Qaida enjoyed the financial support of a super-rich Arab, Osama Bin Laden, who was the sole financier of Al-Qaida (Katzman, 2010). Unlike other anti-western Islamist organizations, Al-Qaida avoided any political engagement and made an international organization to liberate the Muslim World from the clutches of American empire. Besides 9/11 attacks, the following five other incidents were responsible for worsening the relations between the US and Al-Qaida/Taliban

- The 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Lebanon
- *Khobar* Towers attack in Saudi Arabia In 1996
- Destroying American embassy in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.
- Attack on USS *Cole* in 2000.
- Assassination of *Ahmed Shah Masood*, the commander of Northern Alliance on Sep 9, 2001. (Katzman, 2010)

Well coordinated hijacked aircraft attack on September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center, the symbol of world economic system, and pentagon, the symbol of world most secure place on September 9, 2001, that resulted, in the killing of 3000 people from around 78 countries. The economic cost of the World trade Center estimated at 83 billion dollars. The world leaders deemed the attack on World Trade center and Pentagon as an attack on a civilization. Bush administration reiterated Al-Qaida's 9/11 assaults is not a crime against the US but attack against the whole humanity (Perl, 2001).

The 9/11 attacks were basically a spark of starting a new world war for which the American were searching after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1990. This spark was also the continuation of a long war that led to the attack on Taliban and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan. The Bush Administration also redeemed the war with new color and targeted the whole Muslim civilization that also caused hatred in the Muslim World against the American. The world community condemned the attack and amalgamated as US-led Coalition force to fight the war on terror on economic, diplomatic, intelligence and military fronts to dismantle the menace of terrorism once for all. The Bush administration quickly responded to the 9/11 attacks by branding Osama Bin Laden and his Jihad sponsored Al-Qaida-cum- Taliban organization as terrorist which was responsible for the destruction of World Trade Center and Pentagon. The US decision was to punish Al-Qaida and gave a choice to the rest of the world in such words, "You are either with us or against us (Perl, 2001)."

The role of UNO is to maintain world peace through its specialized agencies but it has to do it job within the parameters of UN charter and International Law. Regarding terrorism the UN has been taking multifaceted legal steps for the last four decades. The UN Security Council strongly condemned the attacks and expressed solidarity with the terrorism-inflicted victims, families and the US (Perl, 2001). The UNSC also passed a resolution 1368 calling the international community to stop the support of terrorists and their organizations. It further supported the decision of US post 9/11 by passing another resolution 1373 that hold the support of all Security Council members. They wanted to contain terrorism in all its forms. They formulated a Counter Terrorism Committee for handling the terrorism issues in future according to the UN charter. The UN focused and directed the US to use its entire possible means to put an end to the terrorism with respect to the UN charter and internal law and also avoid the unilateral actions while attacking on Afghanistan. (Norman, 2004)

The US declared Al-Qaida responsible for the 9/11 attacks and for giving asylum to Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. The US isolated Taliban in the world by launching international war on terror. The US made four demands from Taliban in initial time which included:

- It was obligatory on the Taliban of Afghanistan to handover all Al-Qaida key leaders to the US.
- The US urges to stop terrorist nurseries and their camps in Afghanistan.
- To allow the US authorities to verify the removal of Taliban/Al-Qaida training camps.
- Taliban should liberate all foreigners including the US and other Western citizens.
- Taliban should ensure protection foreign aid workers. (Norman, 2004)

Taliban rejected the above mentioned demands of the US due to historical experiences of US reaction. Furthermore Bush issued an ultimatum to Taliban on September 15, 2001, to hand over Osama bin Laden or face the results in case of rejection. While the Taliban asked for solid proof of his involvement in the terrorism. On 16th

September 2001 the Taliban leadership accepted all the demands of US but it was too late. The American made their mind to attack Afghanistan. When Bush was informed about the proof he said,

“There will be no negotiations or discussions, there’s no need to discuss innocence or guilt we know he’s guilty (Jan, 2006).”

At the initial response the Taliban were showing no flexibility but when they realized the sensitivity of the incident and its repercussion they developed a sensible response but the American were firm in their decision to eliminate Al-Qaeda from Afghanistan.

1: Elimination of Taliban/Al Qaeda

Keeping the security objective in high profile post 9/11, the US had two important strategic objectives in Afghanistan. Its first objective was to diminish the risk of terrorist attack on US. In other words, to stop Afghanistan by not becoming safe haven for the terrorists that could impinge US security. The second objective was to contain the conflict in Afghanistan, and to stop the expansion of this menace to the regions of Central and South Asia. After the US decision to punish Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan where they got political asylum provided by Taliban since September 1996, the US launched the Operation of Enduring Freedom to dismantle Al-Qaeda/Taliban. The operation had two stages, the first one was of conventional fighting which started from October 2001 and ended on March 2002. The second one was known for insurgency that is still lasting (Burrough, 2009).

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

The US divided the operation into three fronts on which the actions were undertaken, Military, Diplomatic and Humanitarian. On military front, it had clear goals to eliminate Osama bin Laden’s network of terrorism, Al-Qaida in Afghanistan, and at the same time to take action against the Taliban regime for sheltering Al Qaeda. On diplomatic front, the US and UK were engaged in building up a coalition against the poorly equipped Mujahidin. On Humanitarian ground, it has to provide food, medicine and other essentials of life to the refugees within and outside Afghanistan. The decision was immediately taken by the US after promptly passing a resolution from the UN to legitimize the military attack on Afghanistan (Library, 2001).

Political Ground

Politically, the US from the day one decided to invade Afghanistan without waiting for the investigation of the incident. Washington prepared the ground for attacking Afghanistan from two sides: externally they secured the support of world community by using force warning weak states about the results of not supporting US, and the Major Powers by giving some space of interests to motivate them for the war. Internally within Afghanistan, they split the Afghan society by supporting the anti-Taliban group, Northern Alliance, an amalgamation of Tajiks, Hazarra, and Uzbeks force fighting with Taliban and its foreign supporters. The U.S. provided information by surveillance of air force collected through Special Operations Forces and CIA personnel. To counter the Taliban/Al-Qaeda position in Afghanistan, CIA developed close links to Ahmed Shah Massoud and his Northern Alliance group before 9/11. The US also tried to get cooperation and legislation from the UN, EU and G 8 organizations to foil the financing of sponsoring states and organizations (Burrough, 2009).

Justification

Legally, the US already secured the UN Security Council resolution with the approval of major permanent and non permanent members to attack and eliminate the threat of terrorism from Afghanistan by dismantling Taliban and Al-Qaeda. The US administration also got approval from the US congress to use power against those who hurt them and who hurt the people from 78 countries. With holding the legal justification from UN and international community they approved the Operation of Enduring Freedom. The actual implementation of the US policies was approved on October 7, 2001 with a letter from the then Permanent Representative of the US to the UN, Ambassador John Negroponte, for legalizing the operation under the purview of international law. He added that the US administration has sufficient proof about the involvement of Al-Qaeda in the 9/11 attack that was supported by Taliban of Afghanistan. He also declared the organization of Al-Qaeda a hazardous threat to the US citizens within and outside the country. He clear the position of Taliban who rejected the US demands and Al-Qaeda has not stopped the killing of innocent people all over the world that directly posed threat to the international community as a whole that must be eliminated (Norman, 2004).

Keeping in mind the objectives they achieved the immediate objectives that include eliminating the Taliban from the ruling state by force and not supporting the Al-Qaeda network to terrorize the world. They also achieved the objective to liberate the people of Afghanistan from the clutches of Taliban but they could not provide peace and stability to the Afghan society and still most of the Afghan considered the American as another foreign

intervention force coming with new ideologies and disrupting the Afghanistan original traditions and culture. They failed to make Afghanistan capable becoming a responsible actor in international community. They also failed to stop the spreading of these elements to the region of South Asia and Central Asia.

2: Reconstruction of Afghanistan

Political Aspect

The Operation Enduring Freedom damaged Afghanistan heavily in all spheres of life including political, economic and social development. To reconstruct Afghanistan, the US along with international community initiated multi-faceted rebuilding and rehabilitation strategy to reform the Afghan society in different aspects. The international community was convinced that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in the best interest of every country. They all reiterated that if Afghanistan is not rebuilt after the withdrawal of the US and NATO forces, then it was certain that it will again face civil war and will become a nursery of terrorism once again. The US and international community expressed the need to provide proper political, administrative, legal and stable security systems for Afghanistan (Yousaf, 2012). It was realized by the US and the international community that after the intrusion of Afghanistan, war is not the only solution to win hearts and minds of Afghans and achieve the long term objectives in the country. After the operation, the US started the second step of its long term strategy and took the initiative while launching the reconstruction process from the Bonn Conference held in Germany in 2002, where the USA, Italy, Turkey and Germany to reconstruct infrastructure in Afghanistan. Bonn Conference was also attended by a delegation of politicians, warlords, intellectuals and businessmen to guarantee the contribution of Afghans and reach out to a policy. Bonn Conference highlighted six areas of rebuilding Afghan society (Yousaf, 2012).

- “Politically, The Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) should be called for the resumption of differences among various groups.
- Economically, it was also considered with great focus that such conferences would be conducted for the world community to ensure the economic aid to country which was considered the foundation of all these activities.
- Socially, it is also aimed to defend human rights in Afghanistan. For that purpose the Afghan Human Rights Commission was also established to check human rights violations.
- Militarily, restructuring the Afghan military armed forces for establishing the writ of Afghan government
- The establishment of (International Security Assistance Force) ISAF was eyed to tackle the issue of terrorism and internal security.
- Problems regarding good governance were also discussed in detail to reform the grey areas of governance in Afghanistan to insure the political stability in the country (Yousaf, 2012).”

On political ground the Bonn conference signed an agreement, and it was decided that an interim government would be established under the leadership of *Hamid Karzai*. With all the preparation of an interim government, *Hamid Karzai* got the office on 22 December, 2002. When the government changed, a *Loya Jirga* was called on for the establishment of new constitution in November 2003. It was decided that the ISAF (the international Security Assistance Force) will provide security for the new government to administer the state affairs without the coercion of anti-state actors. The UN acknowledged the legality of the government and renewed the ISAF presence each year in the Bonn Conferences. Militarily speaking, new Afghan National Army (ANA) of about 70000 soldiers was established with the existing peacekeeping force of ISAF, comprising of 4000 Non-US soldiers and airmen for defending the territory of 250 square miles around the capital city of Kabul. (Yousaf, 2012)

Economic Aspect

Due to the Soviet War in 1979 and the US and allied forces assault in 2001, the state affairs and infrastructure of Afghanistan was extremely incapacitated, and it was inevitable to invest money in Afghanistan to rebuild and reconstruct the war-torn country. The international community promised over \$5 billion aid for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. The pledged money was not sufficient for the reconstruction and rehabilitation, and the flowed aid was also ransacked by the ministers sitting at the helm of affairs. For that purpose, an Aid Conference on Afghanistan was held in Tokyo, Japan which aimed that the country should be backed economically by the International community to ensure the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan (McNerney, 2006). Tokyo Conference in 2001 was actually intended to focus on aid and economic support to the war-ravaged country Afghanistan. Simultaneously, the aid conference which was held on 22 January 2002 was attended by nearly 61 countries and 21 international organizations. The President of Afghanistan and his delegation comprising of his ministers attended the conference. They indicated the significant areas for investment and attention (Yousaf, 2012). E.g.

- For improving Administrative capability, latest machinery and effective government execution as to be given priority.
- The sector of education should be revamped for the students and especially for the girls.
- The system of health and sanitation is the poorest one and it needs improvement on war footing.
- The Infrastructure has been devastated due to prolonged wars and development of roads, electricity and telecommunication required investment.
- Agriculture sector and rural development should be revolutionized for the industrialization of the country (Yousaf, 2012).

It was predicted that Afghanistan required \$1.7-2 billion per year and for the next ten years it needed \$20 billion. After the conference Japan has donated approximately \$3.15 billion of aid 2001 until 2011, which developed different sectors like agriculture, education, health, culture, transportation and security sectors. But it could not preserve any development in Afghanistan for the coming years. After these conferences another breakthrough came before the world and a conference of international nature was held in London in which fifty countries and regional organizations participated (Del Castillo, 2008).

The agenda of the conference was to concentrate on the security, governance, human rights, socio-economic development in Afghanistan and to check the export of narcotic drugs from Afghanistan. Similarly, for the rebirth of Afghan judicial system a conference was held in 2007 in Rome in which the loopholes and major shortcomings of judicial system were discussed. It considered the main obstacles in the system including the proper salary support system, infrastructure and office equipment, public cognizance, codes of ethics and financial management and also other tasks like, capacity building, legal education and training. The conference announced a grant of \$360 million for maintaining short term projects and for operationalizing the National Justice Program (Del Castillo, 2008).

The Bonn II was held in December 2011 which focused on the issues of increasing security forces, reconstruction and infrastructure development but owing to the *Salala* incident in which 26 Pakistan paramilitary troops were killed by the helicopters of Americans, Pakistan boycotted the conference. The leverage of Pakistan support for Afghanistan and the remaining doubts regarding the conference did not bear fruits. However, conference was attended by 85 countries and 15 international organizations (Del Castillo, 2008).

The US administration involved most of the major powers in the process of reconstruction including Western developed states, Russia, China and India. The major hurdles in the reconstruction were Afghan society, which was not understood by the international community to address their grievances. The next important factor was the dearth of assistance because there was huge hiatus between the supplied and demanded aid. Some scholars also believe that the factor of insurgency from the neighboring country, Pakistan also played it greater role as a hurdle in the process of reconstruction by targeting the foreign investors and workers especially to reduce the influence of India for its strategic depth policy in Afghanistan. Moreover, corruption, nepotism, cronyism, political polarization, and deteriorating law and order were the obstacles which hampered the reconstruction process (McNerney, 2006).

3: Drone Attacks inside Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighboring countries and anarchy and chaos of one country affects the other. After 9/11 Taliban were over-thrown from power by the US and allied forces in Afghanistan. The Taliban regime was toppled by the logistic and strategic support of Musharraf-led government in Pakistan. The Taliban of Afghanistan propagated the anti-western agenda in Pakistan through political and religious parties; however, the religious factions on both sides of the Durand Line have the same ideology. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was established in Pakistan which also challenged the writ of Pakistani government. Before the establishment of TTP, the Pakistani military also launched various operations in Waziristan to trample the igniting Taliban force. Due to military operations in tribal areas and Lal Mosque operation, the TTP launched a war against the Pakistani government and declared the constitution and judicial system of Pakistan as un-Islamic. TTP also categorized the government as the ally of the infidel force (US) (Shah, 2010).

Different factions of Taliban operated in different areas of Pakistan like the Haqqani faction involved in terrorists activities in North Waziristan agency and was also active in Afghanistan. All the factions of Taliban were trained and financed by Al-Qaida to defeat NATO in Afghanistan and they also challenged the writ of Pakistan with the agenda of establishing Islamic Sharia in both countries (Shah, 2010).

The US war on terror spread to the Pakistani territories including all tribal areas and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. The CIA targeted tribal areas along the line of control by collecting intelligence information and on the basis of the spied information, the US started drones attacks to kill terrorists in North Waziristan which was a complete violation of Pakistan aerial borders. These drone attacks started in George W. Bush's regime and got accelerated in the

government of Obama. At the beginning, the Pakistani government publicly termed it as violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, but covertly allowed the US to strike drones wherever the US suspected the terrorists (Shah, 2010).

Justifications for the Drone Attacks

The legitimacy of drone attacks inside Pakistan poses serious questions for the US and the rest of the world. The US justified the drone attacks on the pretext to root out terrorist for her self-defense; wherever, they are hiding. For justification of killing the targeted and accurate terrorists, the Presidents of the US, Bush and Obama argued that it is a global war against terrorism and should be taken as uninterrupted war (Bowcott, 2012).

According to the US government the Article 51 of the UN endorses using drone attacks against terrorists inside Pakistan and Afghanistan. This Article also justifies the drones that attacks will be undertaken within the territories of foreign government, if they failed or unwilling to take action against terrorists. The US mentioned Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan as the best examples which allowed drones within their territories to curb terrorists, while in the case of Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq; the US is already fighting the war on terror. Therefore, the use of predator is legalized by the US for destroying the nurseries of terrorism (Bowcott, 2012).

Actually, the unilateral use of drones without the consent of a sovereign state is a clear violation of the UN charter, and is contrary to the assent of UN Security Council. The US argument of legalizing drones is only on the basis of preventive or reactionary attacks, but the justification of reactionary attacks in the milieu of war on terror is not recognized as a legal force. The US claimed that drone attacks have broken the back of TTP, Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaida but it is also undeniable fact that these reapers have killed many innocent women, children and elderly people. So to allow an unbridled permission to the US, the civilian casualties and deaths will certainly ensue owing to the miscalculation and misinformation of Drones (Sarwar, 2009).

9/11 and the use of Drones

The drone technology has been used for two major purposes. The first goal is to kill the terrorists and secondly to lessen the threat for the US forces where they cannot operate or gain access easily.

The strategy of using drone technology underwent five phases. Firstly, the drones were used to assault the high value targets of Al Qaeda and Taliban members when the US attacked Afghanistan. Drones were killing the targets covertly. Secondly reapers were used in Iraq war in 2007 to target the high value anti-American forces; nonetheless, the transportation of predators was expanded from Afghanistan to Iraq and then to Pakistan. Thirdly, during the last year of Bush administration, the shots of drones increased in wake of both Afghanistan and Iraq. From 2001 to 2007 a total nine drones strike occurred while it jumped up to 37 airstrikes in 2008. In this phase drones played a better role to kill asymmetric militant groups in Pak-Afghan border insurgencies. The fourth phase started when Obama was elected as the US President in March 2009. In this phase drones rapidly accelerated and approximately 370 drone attacks both in Pakistan and Afghanistan occurred which targeted high value targets. The fifth phase is called "America's Third World War" in which non-battlefield targets became the important characteristic of the US post-9/11 military policy in Afghanistan and Iraq (Sarwar, 2009).

The lethal attacks of drones are operated in six countries; Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia. Three countries were declared as war zones. The drone attacks were operated by the two most powerful organizations; Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA. The former is an organization of military nature which conducted operations in the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and at the same time the military attacks were backed by the people of America. In these two war zone countries drone had many roles like support in warfare operations, provide information and also attack targets through the guided missiles. The JOSC also operated this war according to the specified rules and regulations. The second organization is CIA which targets the suspected terrorists or anti-American forces in those countries where the US is not militarily engaged. The secret nature of operations that lacks accountability is condemned by the masses of the US. These operations raised the eyebrows of public who object on the nature of operation accomplished by the CIA. The public by and large is doubtful that how they choose the target, where they operate and how many people are killed or injured in the CIA planned attacks. The CIA war reflected on the limelight when they speed up the strikes of deadly drones in Pakistan and Somalia. The world and human rights organizations condemned the Obama's administration for pursuing the policy of drones, and the US has failed to justify the strike of reapers in the non-combating zones that is a sheer violation of international law (Sarwar, 2009).

Drone inside Pakistan

The CIA operated drones attacks inside Pakistan's tribal areas and sometimes in settled areas like Hangu which has inflicted the innocent people with a few high level targeted terrorists. The US and the NATO forces in Afghanistan consider that the attacks launched against them are carried out from the unsettled areas of Pakistan.

According to the US, Pakistan is an ally in war on terror, but at the same time has given safe haven to the most wanted terrorists like Osama Bin Laden who was killed in the Abbottabad operation, and to other prominent leaders of Al-Qaida and Taliban. The Bush and Obama administration on these pretexts justify the predators to operate in a sovereign state without the support of public in the US and Pakistan. The drones are not only deadly for the deaths of innocent children, women and elders in Pakistan's tribal areas but on the international perspective, it amounts to violation of sovereignty of Pakistan. The US administration also claimed that the Musharraf led regime and the succeeding PPP and Nawaz governments have also allowed the drone attacks on the terrain territories of tribal areas. The public outrage was always neglected by every government, but whenever *Salala* like event occurred, the NATO supply was choked for a few months in protest of drone attacks. Drone attacks are internationally recognized as acts against humanity and many powers in the world have condemned them, but the raining of drones is not going to cease due to the stubbornness of American policies (Bowcott, 2012).

4: Osama Operation inside Pakistan

The founder of Al-Qaida, Osama Bin Laden was born in Saudi Arabia in 1957 where he got religious education. According to his view point the solution of all the miseries of the Muslim world is only to follow Islamic law and throw the secular and western democratic and economic systems into back burner. Bin Laden visited several countries to preach the philosophy of international Jihad. The first opportunity which he availed was the Afghan war against the Soviet. He was against communism, so in Afghanistan he fought against the red army to liberate Afghanistan from the clutches of communism. After the dismemberment of USSR in 1990s, Osama waged a war against the US and western powers who supported Israel against the Gulf countries (T. Lansford, 2009).

For that purpose Al-Qaida was founded on specific Quranic interpretation that calls from the Muslims to reduce the clout of the western civilization and replace it with a Muslim civilization. The nature of Al-Qaida is different from other Jihadi organizations because it was free from the financial and political leverage of a state. This necessity compelled the pioneer of Al-Qaida, Osama Bin Laden to establish a base in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida is the amalgam of Arabs and Taliban soldiers who graduated from the Deobandi School of thought Madrassas in Pakistan who shared the common ideology of jihad. The ties between the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaida soldiers became stronger when they fought collectively against the Northern Alliance and subjugated the Hazara Shiite in Afghanistan. Bin Laden believed in Pan-Islamic society under which all the Muslim world should unite together under single umbrella of Muslim Ummah to foil the lobbies and western threats for establishing an ideal Islamic world. He declared an international Jihad against the US and the western society, and called for Islamic solidarity to fight against the infidels (T. Lansford, 2009).

On the global level, the US felt that her interests are threatened by Al-Qaida and the Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Umar who refused to give Bin Laden to the US officials. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE were the three Muslim states that extended recognition to government of Taliban. After the withdrawal of USSR, the Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI supported Taliban in Afghanistan owing to the strategic depth military doctrine of Pakistan. Pakistan's support for Taliban regime soon diminished when Al-Qaida backed Taliban government became an international threat to the US interests in central Asia, Middle East, South Africa and even in the US.

Abbot Abad Operation

In responding to the 9/11 attacks, the US propelled a full-fledged war against Taliban-backed Al-Qaida regime in Afghanistan. The government of Pakistan tried its best to persuade Taliban government to hand over the master mind of 9/11 to the US, but due to the Pashtun culture norms of hospitality they refused the US demand. The refusal, led the US to attack Al-Qaida-cum-Taliban government and beaten the important figures of Al-Qaida and Taliban. Most of the important leaders escaped into the tribal areas of Pakistan where the well-wishers welcomed their asylum. The Musharraf government took several steps to uproot Taliban seminaries in Pakistan and handed over several Taliban's leaders into the lap of the US. He banned the former soviet time Jihadi organizations. The state of Pakistan could not check the anti-US insurgency emanating from Pakistani soil. Similarly, the master mind of 9/11, Bin Laden was provided shelter and opportunities to invest millions of dollars in building guest houses in Peshawar to generate money for Al-Qaida led jihad (Schaack, 2011).

Bin Laden also cultivated intimate relation with the religious parties and religious leaders in Pakistan through Pakistan security and intelligence agencies to further his goal of Pan-Islamism. The international community blamed Pakistan for every act of terrorism. Pakistan ultimately changed drastically the policy of pro-Taliban and reiterated to ally with the international community by eliminating Taliban from its soil. Pakistan's image maligned in the comity of nations and it also lost billions of dollars of investment due to deteriorating law and order situation in Pakistan. The frontline state in the war on terror was bashed by the US diplomatically and it also lost the credibility of Taliban who were used in Afghanistan for maintaining the doctrine of strategic depth (Katzman, 2010).

The US after a continuous search, finally found out Osama Bin Laden in Abbot Abad near Kakul Academy and killed him on May 2, 2011. The operation for catching Bin Laden dead or alive in the center of Pakistan was not a simple one because it had various ramifications. The perception which is still a question mark that whether the operation was a legal one while violating the sovereignty of a sovereign state or not? The CIA led operation was launched secretly at the midnight of 1st and 2nd May, 2011 without informing the intelligence and security agencies of Pakistan. The house where he was killed was at a stone throw distance from Kakul Academy which is considered as the stronghold of Pak Army. The US only lost one Black Seal helicopter in the operation after completion of operation within 40 minutes. This operation raised eyebrows of the US and international community that why for so many years Bin Laden was living near the kakul Training Academy and was unknown to the intelligences of Pakistan (Schaack, 2011).

Justification

After Osama's elimination in the operation of Abbot Abad the question which needs explanation that whether operation was authorized or unauthorized under the international law. Many US officials and also the US president justified the operations in various statements which they expressed in Media. The President Obama said that, "Justice has been done". This shows that it is legally correct to punish Bin Laden who was responsible for the killing of American people. In another occasion the US Attorney General, E. Holder talked about the legal justification of this incident and told the US Judiciary Committee of House of Representative, that Osama bin Laden has been brought to justice. He insisted that it was totally a legal operation. He further added that the justification for killing the Osama's was an initiative of our own National Self-defense (Schaack, 2011).

The US Congressional Research Service conducted a general agreement about the legality of operation and decided that it was legal in the Law of United States of America. According to the US Law of country defense, law of armed conflict and human rights law, the customary International law and in the Law of US domestic Law was justified. However, the question of conducting operation inside Pakistan where the US was not in a status of war is criticized in Pakistan and America. Regarding Pakistan this operation was a sheer violation of its aerial boundaries, and security and intelligence agencies came under strong lambasting from the public and media. For the US this operation was to curb the master mind of 9/11 and prove that Pakistan is playing double game; on one hand a frontline ally in the war on terror while on the other it is harboring terrorists. The US operation would be legal for killing Bin Laden in Pakistan, if she abided by these three conditions (Schaack, 2011).

- The US should get prior permission for conducting the operation.
- If the UN Security Council authorized it.
- The US would conduct operation for self-defense, if Pakistan's government expressed unwillingness or as unable to foil the threat emanating from its borders to the US and her allies (Schaack, 2011).

There was no justification from the international Law and especially from the UNO to justify its operation inside Pakistan. The US was only holding the authorization of US administration and Congress while ignoring the UN and other legal authorization.

5: Talks with Taliban

The Obama doctrine believed on the civilian strategy in Afghanistan and rejected the full use of force. It was also one of the policies of Obama that he will put an end to the Afghan war with an honorable way. The killing of Osama also speedup the US withdrawal from Afghanistan but they need to have a peaceful and stable country as a result of 13 years of war. Keeping in mind the civilian strategy the US need to talk to Taliban because they are part of Afghan society. The US and her allied forces are fighting the war on terror for more than a decade in Afghanistan but the objectives for NATO/ISAF forces are not satisfactory. They could not fully curbed Taliban militia in Afghanistan who has adopted the policy of hit and run which has made impossible the complete victory of the US in Afghanistan. Talks were scrutinized because of several assumptions; the studies of ICSR established that "There is no purely military solution in Afghanistan" which means that it was not a part of the strategy but due to the scarcity of alternative options the US was forced to explore the way of dialogue with Taliban (John Bew, Talking to the Taliban: Hope over History?, 2013).

Post 9/11 2001 talks

The incident of September 2001 had changed the politics of the Asia in particular and of the whole world in general. The Americans entered into Afghanistan for the sake of combating Taliban and enduring freedom in Afghanistan. America made many tentative efforts to bring Taliban to the table and resolve the issue peacefully by reconciliation but failed almost every time. Mulla Omar reorganized the Taliban organization in four major southern

Afghan provinces; Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan, and Kandahar. The process of reorganization in the eastern part was carried out by the Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son (Haqqani Network). The attacks started on the Afghan Forces from 2003. Talks pursued in Oct 2003 with the well-known good Taliban. The Americans actually wanted to weaken the Taliban organization by offering the individual Taliban militants to give up and they will be part of the Afghanistan (Bew, 2013).

After the election of the Hamid Karzai in October 2004, he initiated the “Independent Peace and Reconciliation Commission” under Sibghat ullah Mujaddedi offering general pardon to those who voluntarily leave the insurgency. But the insurgency further increased in 2005, after which the need of talks with the Taliban became necessary. For that reason the German official in July 2005 met with the Taliban delegation, the CIA and MI6 do also secretly approached Taliban but all of them were not successful. And for the first time the Suicide bombers emerged on the face of Afghanistan in 2006 by the network of Dadullah (A Taliban Commander). And until 2007 the major parts like Zabul, Helmand, Uruzgan and Kandahar came under the control of Taliban (Bew, 2013).

In 2007, with the help of Saudi Arabia, talks were held among the Afghan Government and Taliban which included Qayyum (brother of Karzai) from Afghan government side and Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil and Mullah Abdul Salaam Zaeef from the Taliban side but these talks also showed disappointment. Taliban were not ready to give recognition to Karzai’s government in any case. In November 2008, Taliban’s spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told the Afghan government that they will not take part in any negotiation until and unless the external forces leave Afghanistan. Presidential election was held in America and Obama came into power, he came with the policy of increasing the troops into Afghanistan in 2009, and poured about 30000 more troops into Afghanistan. President Obama evaluated the Afghan chapter in 2009, found the hindrance factors involved in exaggerating the issue, the dishonesty within Afghan government, safe heavens in Pakistan and incompetency of Afghanistan forces were thoroughly observed. Many military commanders and advisors denied the option of talks and were of the opinion to make the Taliban weaker and compel them to surrender. In August 2009, Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state showed the willingness of the US towards negotiation. This willingness was due to the continued international public opinion about US for emphasizing more on military means but in actuality the original policy of the U.S remained the same (Bew, 2013).

There was a difference of opinions among U.S administration; some advocated the talks to be held while others considered that it was not a suitable time for negotiations. After his reelection in 2009, Karzai invited Taliban for peace talks and invited them for peace conference in Afghanistan. So, the start of 2010 showed some positive signs of negotiations because the 15 member team from Hekmatyar’s side tried to approach Afghan government for negotiation. Soon in June 2010, Karzai launched the Afghan National Peace Conference as promised in the London Conference and formed a committee for negotiations with Taliban but the insurgency gained further momentum and the Taliban again refused everything (John Bew, 2013).

In 2011, the U.S policy towards Afghan turned a bit and a space for negotiation emerged. The U.S directly involved itself in negotiations and talked with the high command of Taliban in May 2011, in Germany. The U.S also recognized that Pakistan is an important factor for negotiations and could play a very vital role. The U.S selected Frank Ruggiero (Special Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan), Grossman and Jeff Hayes for the process of dialogue. Numbers of sessions were held with Hekmatyar’s Network by the end of 2011, in which HIG demanded for the complete withdrawal of U.S from Afghanistan. A session was also held with Ibrahim Haqqani (Representative of Haqqani Network) in Dubai, but this did not lead to positive implications and Haqqani network remained involved in insurgency. U.S doubt Pakistani ISI for its support to the Haqqani network for increasing its influence. At the start of 2012, the position of America in Afghanistan was not much different from that of USSR in 1980’s, as it started searching the means for its safe exit while on the other side Taliban were trying their best to sabotage any Afghan or U.S-led peace process (Bew, 2013).

A twist in the situation occurred when the U.S after the second Bonn conference, started secret talks with Taliban officials in Qatar and Germany without including any Afghan government representative. The Afghan government reacted to this situation by starting their own negotiations with Taliban in Saudi Arabia. Some major development took place including the opening of Taliban Office in Qatar, to which the Taliban responded positively and showed their acceptance of negotiations specifically with U.S. But the situation became worse when the U.S did not fulfill any of its promises made with Taliban including release of prisoners and opening of office (Bew, 2013).

The Taliban despite fighting for about ten years were still full of potential and confidence to regain the control over Afghanistan and this stance was affirmed by many U.S advisors and officials in mid-2012. And the U.S still believed that some groups within insurgents are still ready for talks. The issue of talks then delegated to Afghan’s “High Peace Council” under Salahuddin Rabbani. The High Peace Council has made an optimistic five point strategy to stabilize the condition of Afghanistan and renovate the major Taliban groups into political participants. The deadline for achieving these goals has been set to be 2015. These points included:

- To gain the support and cooperation of Pakistan.
- To establish understanding between Afghan government and Taliban in the start of 2013.
- To start proper Afghan-Taliban negotiation.
- To put into operation all those agreements set forth in the negotiation by the first half of 2014.
- Return of Afghan Refugees from Pakistan back to their homeland (Afghanistan).

Pakistan strongly welcomed these points and affirmed its support in achieving these goals. The February 2013 trilateral summit in London provided the platform for commitment of Pakistan and Afghanistan government to cooperate with each other.

The process of talks faced a number of ups and downs and still has not achieved its success because of the several reasons involved. The major reason for its failure is its frequent changing of actors for negotiating with Taliban. The U.S has never given a free hand to Afghan government to negotiate totally by its own and never took the negotiation process in an organized way. Continuous shifts in the policies of America took place which also affected the talks. Different actors tried to adopt the process of negotiations by their own different approaches as some wanted to divide the Taliban by negotiation and then defeat them while others wanted to reconcile with them. There had been never a common interest involved. Each actor tried to achieve its own end which includes the American interest of containing Al-Qaeda, the Pakistan interest of securing its geo-strategic interests and Afghan's government interest of centralizing its power over Afghanistan. All these factors contained the negotiations in achieving its utmost end of peace and stability in Afghanistan (Bew, 2013).

Conclusion

The response of the US to 9/11, 2001 attacks was the declaration of war on terror that led to the invasion of Afghanistan to punish Al-Qaeda/Taliban. The world community including, UNO, China, Russia, India and Muslim World (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Arab League, and OIC) condemned the attacks and welcomed the US decision except Iraqi President Saddam Husain and Iranian religious leader who indirectly criticized the US biased policies in Middle East supporting Israel against Palestine. Here the US strategy in Afghanistan has been examined issue wise. Holding such a huge support from international community the US made a strategy on its war on terror policy, starting from elimination of Taliban/Al-Qaeda from Afghanistan which they achieved immediately through launching the Operation Enduring Freedom. Secondly, the US welcomed and encouraged the world community to reconstruct Afghanistan in all its aspects that covered political, economical, social, legal, military areas. Thirdly, when the US felt strong resistance from insurgents, who made sanctuaries in Pak-Afghan border, the US administration introduced the Drone technology to deal with the insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fourthly, the war on terror took another turn when the most wanted man on earth was found and killed in Abbotabad near the capital Islamabad that brought too many challenges and opportunity for the US and for the rest of the world. Lastly, every war must have a political solution at the end and this war on terror also has when the US new administration of Obama announced to talk to the good Taliban and isolate the bad one. The US strategy in Afghanistan is still unclear but still they formally announced to leave Afghanistan in 2014. Their withdrawal does not mean the full evacuation from the region but they are slowly drawdown their the troops to reduce the cost of human lives in the war and will increase the use of more modern technology to continue the war on terror and achieve their objectives may be at the cost of global peace.

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