



Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement

***OPERATION CYCLONE
AND ITS CONSEQUENCES***

Research Paper n°12 August 2014



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Dr FARHAN ZAHID

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AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY

Dr Farhan Zahid earned his PhD in Counter Terrorism from Vrije University Brussels (VUB), Brussels, Belgium. By profession, he is Superintendent of Police in Police Service of Pakistan (PSP). Dr Zahid has authored over 15 papers on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, Islamism, Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Operation Cyclone (1979-89), launched after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, was the biggest and longest ever covert operation in the history of the CIA. It was also one of the most expensive operations. Its main objectives were :

- turning Afghanistan into Soviet Union's Vietnam,*
- recruitment of Afghan refugees and Arab volunteers and turn them into Mujahedeen to fight against Soviet forces,*
- establishment of madrasahs for the indoctrination of refugees,*
- arming of Mujahedeen ranging from light weapons to Surface-to-Air Stinger missiles.*

It is generally believed that the training camps established during the operation Cyclone trained more than 100,000 mujahedeen to fight against Soviets. It was not possible for the CIA to supply arms, establish training camps and recruit Jihadi soldiers from all over the world, without the support of allied countries' intelligence agencies. The main subcontractor for recruitment, training and arming the Mujahedeen was Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI ; but the US were also heavily relying on British MI6 and SAS, and Saudi General Intelligence Department (GID).

The Afghan War was one of the catalysts that accelerated USSR collapse. But Soviet Union desintegration left US policymakers in a perplexed state as no one had imagined it. They did not even get time to devise future strategy for a post-war Afghanistan. Big mistakes had been committed by the US in this war. They had no idea of how its consequences would be damaging for their own interests as well as for the World peace. Some of the major US errors were:

- Wahabism and Salafism were boasted and resurrected to fight the war against the Soviets, and the war was propagated as Jihad against the infidel and atheist Soviets.*
- More than 100,000 radical Islamic youngsters from 43 different countries were brought to the region, trained and armed under Operation Cyclone. What would have to be done with them after the war was never envisioned by US policymakers.*
- Numerous Jihadi organizations were founded and, later on, were left on their own and evolved to become today's Islamist terrorist organizations.*
- Pakistan although practically managed the whole Afghan War operations on behalf of the US but Washington stopped supporting its partner soon after the Geneva Accords and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, which was too quick and acting as abandoning Islamabad.*
- More than 3 million Afghans refugees never went back to their country, becoming a tremendous burden on Pakistani economy, and Afghans veterans were funneled into Pakistani society, so the country had plunged into the culture of armed outfits, millions of drug addicts and islamisation and radicalisation of Pakistanese society.*

The current global jihad movement is not a new one ; it took its roots long ago with the emergence of Wahabi movement in Saudi Arabia. But the catalyst was Afghan War and Saudi-American backing that galvanized the pace of the movement. The radical Islamic movement is more than Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. The growing number of radical Muslim youth worldwide is alarming and focus on Al-Qaeda might be too narrow a plan to cover up the growth of Islamism in other countries or even in the west.

RÉSUMÉ

L'Opération Cyclone (1979-1989), lancée après l'invasion soviétique de l'Afghanistan en décembre 1979 a été la plus importante et la plus longue opération secrète de l'histoire de la CIA. Ce fut aussi l'une des plus coûteuses. Ses principaux objectifs étaient de :

- transformer l'Afghanistan en un Vietnam pour les Soviétiques,*
- recruter de réfugiés afghans et des volontaires arabes et les transformer en moudjahidines pour lutter contre l'Armée rouge,*
- mettre en place des madrassas pour l'endoctrinement des réfugiés,*
- armer les moudjahidines, des armes légères aux missiles antiaériens.*

Il est généralement admis que les camps d'entraînement mis en place au cours de l'opération Cyclone ont formé plus de 100 000 combattants pour lutter contre les Soviétiques. Or, il n'a pas été possible à la CIA de fournir des armes, d'assurer l'entraînement et de recruter des jihadistes venant de tout le monde arabo-musulman, sans le soutien des services de renseignement de pays alliés. Le sous-traitant principal de Washington fut l'agence de renseignement pakistanaise ISI; mais les États-Unis se sont également appuyés sur le MI6 et les SAS britannique ainsi que sur le service de renseignements saoudien (GID).

La guerre en Afghanistan a été l'un des facteurs qui ont accéléré l'effondrement de l'URSS. Mais la désintégration de l'Union soviétique a laissé les décideurs américains dans un état de perplexité qu'il n'imaginaient pas. Ils n'ont même pas eu le temps de mettre au point une stratégie future pour l'Afghanistan d'après-guerre, car de grosses erreurs ont été commises par les États-Unis dans cette guerre. Ils n'avaient alors aucunement conscience que ses conséquences allaient être dramatiques pour leurs intérêts comme pour la paix mondiale. Les principales erreurs des États-Unis ont été :

- la résurrection du wahhabisme et du salafisme pour mener la guerre contre les Soviétiques, et l'utilisation du djihad pour lutter contre les athées Soviétiques.*
- plus de 100 000 jeunes islamistes radicaux venus de 43 pays différents ont été transportés vers la région, entraînés et armés dans le cadre de l'Opération Cyclone. Ce qui devrait être fait d'eux après la guerre ne fut jamais envisagé par les Américains.*
- de nombreuses organisations jihadistes ont été fondées puis abandonnées à leur sort. Elles ont évolué pour devenir les organisations terroristes d'aujourd'hui.*
- Le Pakistan bien qu'ayant conduit presque l'ensemble de la guerre pour le compte des États-Unis, a été abandonné par Washington dès la fin du conflit, peu après les accords de Genève et le retrait des forces soviétiques d'Afghanistan.*
- Plus de 3 millions de réfugiés afghans ne sont jamais rentrés dans leur pays et sont devenus un fardeau énorme pour l'économie pakistanaise. De plus, les anciens combattants afghans se sont répandus dans la société pakistanaise, de sorte que le pays s'est trouvé plongé dans une culture des armes, de la drogue et que cela a provoqué l'islamisation et radicalisation de la société Pakistanaise.*

Le mouvement jihadiste mondial actuel n'est pas nouveau. Il est né il y a longtemps, lors de l'émergence de mouvement wahhabite en Arabie saoudite. Mais la guerre en Afghanistan et le soutien américano-saoudien l'a réveillé et l'a galvanisé. Le mouvement islamique radical ne se limite pas seulement à Ben Laden et à Al-Qaïda. Le nombre croissant de jeunes musulmans

radicaux dans le monde est alarmant et se concentrer sur Al-Qaïda est une vision étroite qui ne permet pas de bâtir un plan pour faire face à cette croissance de l'islamisme, dans le monde arabo-musulman comme en Occident.

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1. Operation Cyclone

Operation Cyclone (1979-89), launched after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, was the biggest and longest ever covert operation in the history of Central Intelligence Agency. It was also one of the most expensive operations as far as running day-to-day costs and assistance to on-ground operatives was concerned. The Carter Administration (1976-80) initially planned and executed the operation but during Reagan administration's times, the operation fully matured. The primary objectives were :

- turning Afghanistan into Soviet Union's Vietnam,
- recruitment of Afghan refugees in camps in Pakistan,
- turn them into Mujahedeen or holy warriors to fight against Soviet forces in Afghanistan,
- establishment of madrasahs or religious seminaries for the indoctrination of refugees,
- establishment of training camps near Pakistan-Afghanistan border for the training of recruited Mujahedeen in asymmetric/ guerrilla warfare,
- arming of Mujahedeen ranging from light weapons such as AK-47 to Surface-to-Air Stinger missiles,
- finally, sending the Mujahedeen corps into Soviet-occupied Afghanistan¹.

The total cost of the planned scheme was more than \$20 billion². The intermediary body for recruitment, training and arming the Mujahedeen was Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI ; as the US was heavily relying on ISI in the operation. British MI6 and SAS, and Saudi General Intelligence Department (GID) also played key roles. Apart from political leaders of these allied countries who had given their blessings to their respective intelligence agencies, some people played pivotal roles throughout the operation. They were:

- Zbigniew Brzezinski (President Carter's National Security Advisor),
- Charlie Wilson (US Congressman from Texas),
- Gust Avrakotos (CIA's regional head),
- General Akhter Abdul Rehman (Director General ISI),
- Michael G. Vickers (CIA paramilitary officer, known for training the Mujahedeens),
- Michael Pillsbury (Pentagon senior official, advocated providing Stinger missiles).

The US government funded and relied heavily on Pakistan; and somewhere between \$15-20 billion were funneled into the country during the ten year period of war. Several packages of military and economic assistance were given to Pakistan, along with sales of military hardware. After coming into power President Reagan, announced the Reagan doctrine according to which the US would support and provide assistance to anti-communist resistance movements in Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua and elsewhere. Then, the funding reached its height and touched \$630 million annually³.

¹ Peter Bergen, *Holy War Inc.*, Free Press, 2001, p.67

² For details see: Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin Books, 2004

³ *Ibid*, p 68

It was not possible for the CIA to supply arms, establish training camps and above all recruit Jihadi soldiers from all over the world, and to indoctrinate them, without the support of allied countries' intelligence agencies. It is generally believed that the training camps established during the operation Cyclone trained and produced more than 100,000 mujahedeen to fight against Soviets in Afghanistan.

2. The Arab Afghans

Apart from the training of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the project also attracted Muslim jihadi volunteers from 43 countries. Many of them were Arabs, and later became known as the Arab-Afghans fighters. One of the mentors of these Arab jihadis was Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, a Palestinian and former professor of Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. Azzam soon came into limelight as he opened his own office by the name of Maktab-al-Khidmat (services office) in the northern Pakistani city of Peshawar. This town had become the rendez-vous of Jihadists coming from all over the world. Raison d'être for opening of this office was to facilitate the arrival of Arab volunteers coming from Middle East and African countries to Afghan border. The MAK soon attracted many Arab rich kids who wanted to join the jihad against the Soviets. One of them was Osama Bin Laden, a spoiled youngster from Saudi Arabia. Azzam knew Bin Laden from his brief stay in Jeddah before landing in Pakistan and persuaded him to join the Jihad against the Soviets.

With Azzam's expertise in luring in Jihadis and Bin Laden's connection, the flow of Arab Afghans gradually started to increase in the latter years of the war. But by no means was the number of Arab Afghans ever as significant as the actual Afghans fighting the war. According to estimates there were not more than 35,000 Arab Afghan in comparison to 250,000 Afghan fighters¹.

MAK had played the crucial role in recruitment and facilitation of radical Muslim youth coming to Peshawar from all over the world. In this regard, as part of operation Cyclone strategy, delegations were sent to Islamic and western countries, including the United States, for the purpose of recruitment of local Muslim youth or anyone interested in fighting the Soviets. Abdullah Azzam visited more than 40 US cities and preached jihad. His books *Join the Caravan* and *Defense of Muslim Lands* were printed and widely distributed during his visits and lectures at mosques. His travelling expense, visas and documentation, tickets and accommodation, and scheduling was also handled under the operation head. Azzam through Bin Laden and Saudi GID was successful in luring the charity money (Zakat) from Arab countries².

As a fundamental principle of guerrilla warfare it was necessary to arm mujahedeen with Soviet weapons. Israeli Mossad was taken into confidence for providing Russian weapons to the Mujahedeen groups. The deal was brokered by CIA and cache of non-US arms was supplied to Mujahedeen groups via Pakistan³.

There were a number of Mujahedeen groups, fighting with the Soviets in Afghanistan. Some groups were close to Pakistani intelligence apparatus while others had limited contact. Hizb-e-Islami of Gulbadeen Hukmatyar was one of favorite

¹ Abdullah Azzam, *The Godfather of Jihad*, available at: (<http://www.pwhce.org/azzam.html>)

² Lawrence Wright, *Looming Tower: Al-Qaida and the Road to 9/11*, NY, Knopf, 2006, p.37

³ "Pakistan got Israeli Weapons During Afghan War", Daily Times Monitor-Pakistan (<http://www.rense.com/general39/pakh.htm>), 23 July 2003

Mujahedeen groups of Pakistani establishment and received the largest amount of money and arms during the operation. Saudis had their own favorite, such as Itehad-e-Islami's Abdul Rasul Sayaf, mainly because of his Wahabi thoughts. Both of them became warlords after the withdrawal of Soviet forces and remained on destructive spree till Taliban took over power in 1996. There were some groups considered moderates by the western media and such as Jamiat-e-Islami's Ahmad Shah Masood.

The then ISI chief, Lt General Akhter Abdul Rahman, was considered the architect of the Jihad against the Soviets. He had very close and personal relations with Capitol Hill and Langley, Virginia. He, along with Lt General Hamid Gul (later became ISI chief), were active proponent of an all-out Jihad even taking it inside the Soviet Union¹.

Most of the trainees were Afghan refugees who were driven away from their homes and living in refugee camps in Pakistan. Their estimated number was 3 million. It was believed to be the largest refugee population in the world. The number of Arab arrived in Pakistan from many different countries to wage Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan was less significant compared with the number of Afghans. Arab contingent also included some rich Arabs youth who landed in Pakistan for more adventure than Jihad, and were more anti-western than anti-Soviet in their approaches because of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They were not interested in fighting than achieving heroic status in their own countries². A large number of them came to study in Madresshas (religious schools) of Pakistan, promoting jihad as part of Operation Cyclone's strategy. A number of them left Afghanistan after the war, but quite a significant number stayed there even after the end of war and withdrawal of Soviet forces. They intermingled with local Afghans and even got married with local women. Many of the Arab Afghans did not have the option of returning home. They were outcasts in their largely undemocratic Arab states. Many of the same foreign fighters would play a larger role in later years and it was their contingent that evolved into Al-Qaida, under the leadership of Bin Laden. These were the people who started to believe and later claimed themselves as responsible for the so-called victory against the Soviets³. Bin Laden in an interview said, *"The collapse of the Soviet Union goes to God and the mujahedeen and the US had no mentionable role, but collapse made the US more haughty and arrogant."*⁴

3. Escalation of Fighting and End of the Game

Operation Cyclone went operational by early 1981. President Reagan was all for it and declared Soviet Union an "evil empire" and called for "tearing down the Berlin Wall". Indeed Reagan was an enthusiastic Cold Warrior with firm agendas and clear vengeance against the Reds⁵. He announced Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program, also known as Star Wars program, and increased the defense budget, enhanced military support to all right wing groups fighting the Soviets, once again heightening the Cold War tensions to their peak. Initially the Soviets were not much bothered by the lightly armed mujahedeen but as the Operation gained momentum, the CIA supplied a cache of

¹ B. Raman, *Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)*, (<http://www.acsa.net/isi/index.html>)

² Ahmad Rashid, "Taliban", 2000, p.129

³ Ibid, p.130-133

⁴ "Messages to the World", 2006. p.50 (March 1997 interview with Peter Arnett)

⁵ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History*, Atlantic Monthly Press, page 246, 285, 302

heat seeking Stinger missiles to the Mujahedeen, turning the tide of war. The Soviet casualties had started to increase by manifold and they started losing their air superiority. The number of mujahedeen kept increasing and at one time there were 250,000 mujahedeen against 120,000 Soviet Red Army troops. With Operation Cyclone in full swing, the asymmetric nature of conflict became increasingly expensive for already debt-ridden and near economic-collapse Soviet Union. With the change in Soviet leadership, as Mikhail Gorbachev became president of Soviet Union and general secretary of Communist Party, the Soviets started planning for an exit strategy¹.

They trained and prepared a Afghan National Army (ANA) to defend the current regime and ANA stayed in power after the Soviet withdrawal. The training of Afghan army started and by 1986, the number of Afghan army reached 300,000 but there were question marks about its effectiveness. The new strategy was to operate an Afghan army with Soviet support with only soviet advisors in the country and Soviet military leaving the scene. Very soon the Soviets had planned their way out with the signing of Geneva Accords (1988). It was speculated that after the withdrawal, the government of Najibullah - came into power after Babrak Karmal's removal in 1985 - would not last very long and eventually fall to advancing mujahedeen. In February 1989 the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan while giving all the military apparatus and state control in the hands of the government of Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). The Soviet military advisors continued to stay for the support of Soviet-backed Afghan communist government. The mujahedeen groups kept advancing towards major cities and Afghan army was their only obstacle in taking over the control of Afghanistan. A small contingent of Arab Afghan fighters were also along with them who were more in Jihadi fervor than local Afghans fighting for their homeland.

As a result of Operation Cyclone the Soviet suffered heavy losses in ten years of war. The death toll was around 14,000 and 53,000 injured. They also lost 451 aircrafts (333 helicopters) and numerous material losses. It is estimated that more than one million Afghans were killed and more than a million received injuries during the course of war. There were around 5 million Afghans who became refugees and had to take shelter in Pakistan and Iran^{2,3}.

Pakistan heavily suffered from the war. Though it did not involve Pakistan directly, the country was heavily affected and influx of Afghan refugees on an already poverty-ridden country made worst socio-economic and political effects. The economy survived mainly because of the US aid coming into the country, but soon after the war Pakistan went into deep economic crises. The inflow of arms into the country and the spillover drastically effected Pakistan and a new culture of guns and non-state actors started to arise. Afghan refugees also brought in drugs and the wave swept the whole country. After the end of Afghan War, Pakistan had become the country with most drug addicts in the world. According to one report, *"Once the Soviet withdrew, US interest in Afghanistan ceased. The US decided not to help with reconstruction of the country and instead they handed over the interests of the country to US allies, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Pakistan quickly took advantage of the opportunity and forged relations with warlords and later the Taliban, to secure trade interests and routes"*.⁴

¹ "Reagan Doctrine", at US Department of State. (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/rd/17741.htm>)

² "Russia and the USSR in Wars XX century", Moscow, OLMA-Press, 2001

³ "Death Toll for the Major Wars...." (<http://www.users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat2.htm#afghanistan>)

⁴ L. Panetta, "Collateral Damage and the uncertainty of Afghanistan" 2007 (<http://www.opticalrealities.org/Afghanistan>)

To counter Operation Cyclone the KGB and KHAD carried out number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. In 1987, 127 incidents resulted in 234 deaths in the country. In 1988, an ammunition depot outside Pakistani capital Islamabad was blown up, killing more than 1000 people. Pakistan took in millions of refugees fleeing the Soviet occupation. All of this had a heavy impact on Pakistan and its effects continue to this day¹.

4. Regional Scenario in Post-Soviet Withdrawal Situation

It became clear after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that the world would never be the same as it used to be during the last 45 years of Cold War. The Soviet withdrawal and later fall of Iron Curtain had indicated a new emerging scenario and especially for South Asia and Afghanistan. - Pakistan was not invaded by the Soviets but the country suffered in many ways. Most importantly, the effects on over all fabric of Pakistani society were too much to bear. Pakistan had already suffered a lot when it lost its eastern wing which emerged as Bangladesh after a short but bloody civil war (1971). There were separatist movements in Balochistan and Sind was also in turmoil after the execution of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who hailed from this province. Military government of General Zia had no acceptance at any world forum. The Soviet invasion, followed by the advent of US in the region, and prior to it, was the loss of Iran to a deeply anti-American Shia theocracy. The US eagerness to avenge the Vietnam defeat by launching Operation Cyclone made Pakistan once again on top of US agenda. And it again emerged as corner stone of American foreign policy. All of these factors also provided solid reasons for Zia regime to survive. Zia regime had no political footing and only a handful of religio-political parties supported the military coup and the government survived as a result of it.

Jamat-i-Islami (JI) was one of the hardcore religious parties who supported General Zia. Not only that it supported the military regime, but also it came forward to assist the government in providing manpower for the so called Jihad against Soviets in Afghanistan. JI was founded by Abu ul Ala Maududi before the partition of India in 1941, and the party was once a staunch opponent of the creation of Pakistan. Later on, when Pakistan came into being, Maududi migrated to the new born state and launched his party there. Despite all of the efforts, the party remained quite insignificant as far as the general elections were concerned. It managed to get only four seats out of 300 in 1970s general elections and the result was almost the same on the following elections. The Islamist manifesto of JI had no standing amongst the Pakistani masses and moreover it had a negative image in their minds, due to its opposition to Pakistan movement. JI capitalized when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and sided with military regime of General Zia. Zia and JI were two quintessential allies of US CIA for executing their agenda. Consolidating his weak position inside the country amid Operation Cyclone, General Zia started his Islamization process (implementation of Islamic laws) in the country during early 1980s. The main idea was to Islamize Pakistan at state level and gradually impose medieval era Islamic laws in the country. Again, JI was behind the agenda. The Islamization process drastically affected the society and persecutions of liberals and seculars were seen at highest levels. Many leaders, scholars, poets,

¹ Robert Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, New York, Vintage Departures, p.12, 115, 143,144

intellectuals and academics were sent to gallows or into exile. Radical Islamist ideology of jihad was professed at every educational level and state sponsored propaganda touched new levels. Idea was to turn the whole nation into a radical mob and draw youth for the purpose of Afghan war. Culture of violence and pent-up aggression was also on rise. A new culture of guns and arms was invigorated and pumped into the society. Armed militias were formed and trained to fight the Soviets.

Afghanistan once used to be considered a hostile neighbor, friendlier to arch-enemy India, was now propagated as brother Islamic country. Above all, Saudi government pumped in huge amounts of money in Pakistan to spread Salafi/Wahabi sect in the country, which was predominantly a Sufi-Islamic society. All of these major tendencies drifted Pakistani society towards Islamo-fascism and effects were started to come out during 1990s as many Pakistanis were found involved in acts of terrorism worldwide.

General Zia died in a mysterious plane crash along with General Akhter Abdul Rahman (ex ISI chief) and many other high ranking officers in August 1988. After his death, general elections were held - after 11 years interruption - and Pakistan People Party, under the leadership of Bhutto's Benazir, won the elections. With the Soviets' exit the US was losing interest in the region. It became clear to the newly formed government of Benazir Bhutto that things would be different as used to be during Zia regime and the US would be behaving in a different tone. Pakistan was slapped with US economic sanctions in 1992 on the pretext of Pressler Amendment¹. Newly elected President George Bush Senior refused to provide the presidential certificate.

The Benazir government did not last long and was dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaque Khan on the charges of corruption in 1990. Soon after the election was held and Mian Mohammad Nawaz Shariff-led government came into power. It was a coalition of mostly semi-right wing parties. This government also did not carry its day and dissolved in the next two years, with Benazir once again taking over the reins of power in next elections. During her second tenure (1993-96), the US put Pakistan under observation status amongst the states responsible for state-sponsored terrorism (or simply Rogue States). There was a move to declare Pakistan a rogue state - alongside Libya, Syria, Iraq, North Korea, Sudan, Iran, Cuba -, but a successful lobbying averted the situation. The US behavior was becoming more and more unfriendly and once a close ally, now Pakistan was considered to be more of a burden.

The situation was the same in Afghanistan where, since the withdrawal of Soviet forces, mujahedeen groups got involved in a struggle for power. The country as soon as abandoned by both Soviets and Americans fell into the hands of warlords (former Mujahedeen). It was assumed that the pro-Moscow government of Najibullah would not last very long. The government was fragile and controlled only the main cities. Moscow continued to support it financially and militarily but, with the demise of Soviet Union in December 1991, the new government of Boris Yelsin shut down all supplies. The termination of aid in 1992 was pivotal in the fall of Afghan government of Najibullah. With no oil supplies from Russians the Communist Afghan government's air superiority finally ended and it fell like a house of cards with Afghan mujahedeen groups attacking Kabul from all sides.

¹ US President, under Pressler Amendment was required to certify to the Congress that Pakistan was not involved in nuclear enrichment in order to develop a nuclear device

5. The Afghan Civil War

With the full withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the country has hitherto witnessed periods of Civil War. This civil war could be divided into three periods.

- 1989 to 1992 (with the fall of Kabul),
- 1992 to 1996 (with the Taliban regime into power),
- 1996 to 2001 (with ouster of Taliban and US invasion)¹.

The mujahedeen who had long been fighting the Soviet forces did not have a unified command and control structure. They were divided in ethnic, religious and regional groups. Majority of Afghanistan's population was ethnic Pashtuns, but there were other ethnicities such as Hazara, Uzbek, Turkman, and Tajiks. Some ethnic-groups were supported by Pakistan, some backed by Iran, some groups financed by the Saudi government (those belonging to Wahabi/Salafi sect as the Saudis), groups aided by Russians (previously Communist and defectors from Afghan Army), and some groups were favorites of the US government.

It is important to know major Afghan mujahedeen groups in order to understand the nature of conflict that would engulf the region during the civil war. There were more than dozen groups of Mujahedeen, fighting the Soviet Red Army and DRA's Afghan National Army. Major groups were:

- Hizb-e-Islami : Headed by Gulbadeen Hukmatyar, backed by Pakistan (ethnic Pashtuns),
- Junbish-e-Milli (aka Jozjani Militia): Led by former Afghan army/Communist General Abdul Rasheed Dostum, used to be an ally of Russians and then DRA, but later joined mujahedeen groups (ethnic Uzbeks),
- Jamiat-e-Islami: Led by Buhanuddin Rabbani (Iran, and later India),
- Shura-e-Nazar: Led by Ahmad Shah Massoud (backed by the CIA and MI-6),
- Hizb-e-Wahdat (Shia group, financed by Iran),
- Ittehad-e-Islami (Wahabi/Salafi group, bank-rolled by the Saudis).

During the first phase of this Civil War, all of these factions/militias fought against governmental forces with a common objective to overthrow the communist government of DRA. After the Soviets withdrawal, it was believed that it would not last for very long. During the first major battle after the Soviets' exit, the Afghan Army inflicted a crushing defeat to mujahedeen factions in the battle of Jalalabad, early 1991. And in a lot of other major battles, they also defeated mujahedeen most of the times. Soon after the termination of the aid from Moscow - especially oil supplies - due to the new Russian President Boris Yeltsin, the tables turned in mujahedeen's favor. And in April, 1992, the government almost crippled and Kabul fell into Afghan mujahedeen hands without any fight².

Then, Afghan mujahedeen groups' turn to fight each other for the control of Kabul and a major power struggle started among them. Pakistan-sponsored Peshawar Peace Accord for power sharing did not last long and fighting continued. Under short-lived Peshawar Accord, the three major power groups were given major share in

¹ Norm Dixon, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Afghanistan"
(<http://www.greenleft.org.au/2001/475/24709>)

² Philip Corwin, *Doomed in Afghanistan: A UN Officer's memoir of the Fall of Kabul and Najibullah's Failed Escape*, 1992, Rutgers University Press, p.70

Pakistan backed set up : Burhanuddin Rabbani as President, Hukmatyar as PM and Ahmad Shah Massoud as Defense Minister. Fighting continued with no result as all of the groups had states behind them and accumulated chunks of leftover weapons of Soviet military. This period of Afghan Civil War was more severe for Afghan civilians than the war with the Soviets which was mostly fought in rural surroundings and small towns ; but the civil war was fought in big cities and towns causing vast number of civilian casualties and destruction of cities. Millions fled Kabul and other major cities due to the bombings, and became internally displaced people. The refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran continued to swell as more and more Afghans were leaving their country despite the end of war with the Soviets¹.

Two years of power rift and race for Kabul resulted in thousands of deaths and an unknown number of injured people. In 1994 a new group started to emerge from the southern city of Kandahar calling themselves Taliban (students). Previously unknown in that perpetual war zone, but significant in number and better armed than most of the other groups. The group was consisted of students of madrasahs of Afghan and Pakistan, mostly second generation of Afghan refugees' studying in madrassas of Pakistan. The new group quickly defeated the already warring factions and Kabul fell to them in 1996. In the next two years, they had become masters of 95 percent of Afghanistan with most of the groups either fled to neighboring countries of Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan or had formed the Northern Alliance, in the only available enclave in the north (Panjsher Valley)².

6. The Taliban

The Taliban regime (1996-2001) brought relative peace to Afghanistan and they were welcomed by both people in rural and urban areas. Their leadership also consisted of new faces, but rigid and Islamo-fascist in orientation. With the control over most of Afghanistan, their leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar announced his regime's policies which were a mix of Islamist-Deobandism of Pakistan and radical Wahabi/Salafism of Saudi Arabia. Diplomatically only three countries recognized the Taliban regime : Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Strict enforcement of medieval Islamic laws and with emphasis over curbing women's right, the regime very soon became a beacon of hardcore Islamic fundamentalism and came under stern condemnation all over the world.

Pakistan's leadership also started to worry about the growing radical policies of Taliban regime and their denial of fundamental rights to women and minority groups also put Pakistan under fire. Government of Benazir Bhutto first embraced Taliban regime and Benazir herself gave favorable statements for their efforts that the Taliban had brought peace to a country torn by wars. It was during the government of Mian Mohammad Nawaz Shariff that Taliban started to snub their only true backer: Pakistan. There were major bone of contentions between the two countries as the Taliban leader Mullah Omar refused to listen to Pakistan on major issues like:

- destruction of Buddha Statues,
- providing safe havens to Pakistani Islamist terrorists/absconders,
- giving sanctuaries to Al-Qaeda leadership,

¹ Ibid p.71

² Ahmad Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, Penguin Books, United States, 2009, p.11

- establishing training camps and training Pakistani banned militant groups,
- nazi-styled policies towards minorities,
- curbing women rights.

It became clear to Pakistanese policymakers that they were losing control over Taliban and that things were taking a different course. Stiff behavior of Taliban leadership made Pakistan's military and civilian establishment to rethink about their policy options. Being a landlocked country, Afghanistan had to remain dependent on Pakistan ; but the bottom line was that the results were altogether different as expected by Islamabad¹.

7. Pakistani policies in 1990s

Soon after conclusion of Operation Cyclone and the exit of United States from the region, Pakistan was once again facing economic crunch. Heavy borrowings from International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other financial institutions by the democratically elected governments of Benazir and Nawaz Shariff (both served as PM twice during 1988-99) made Pakistan a heavily indebted country, with biggest part of budget going in debt servicing. Rising corruption and rapid change over of four governments, because of serious power rifts in just 11-year period, brought the country almost at the verge of economic collapse².

After the death of General Zia ul Haq, the army's command was passed over to General Aslam Baig who opted for opening new front in Indian-held Kashmir. The opening of new front was essentially to capitalize a large number of mujahedeen trained and armed during Operation Cyclone against arch rival India. Kashmir had been a disputed region since the partition and India and Pakistan had fought two full scale wars over this long disputed territory. A Pakistan backed Operation to launch a freedom movement in Kashmir (Operation Gibraltar 1965) failed miserably. With some brutalities committed by Indian armed forces, the tide of events led to an armed movement started with Afghan war veterans as major contributors in 1988. Jamaat-e-Islami and its satellite religious groups also provided full support to the struggle of Kashmiri people and training camps which were established during Operation Cyclone were now being used to train radical Islamists to fight with Indian armed forces in Kashmir.

Although there was a change of regime in Pakistan after the death of General Zia in 1988, policies remained unchanged and no democratic government, even after at the helm of affairs in Pakistan, managed to shut down the camps in Pakistan, nor did any policy was made to stop the growth of militant Islam in the garb of Kashmir Jihad.

The extent of growing Islamist radicalism could be gauged with an attempt by General Mustansir Billah in 1995 to overthrow the government of Benazir Bhutto. Although the coup failed and all the plotters were arrested and court-martialled, it clearly indicated the growing Islamist tendencies.

An armed rebellion in Swat district of North West Frontier province (now renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhawa) challenged the writ of state and an Islamist radical

¹ "Casting Shadows: War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, 1978-2001", Afghanistan Justice Project, available at: <http://www.afghanistanjusticeproject.org>

² Peter Calvo-coressi, *World Politics Since 1945*, p 419,420, Sixth Edition, Longman Publishing, New York, 1993

organization Tehrik-e-Nifaz Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) launched armed movement to demand Islamic laws to be enforced in the district. The rebellion was of high intensity and armed militia took control of strategic heights and made things difficult for the government. At last, the Pakistanese air force was called in to conduct air raids and destroy the militant positions¹.

Growth of Salafi/Wahabi sect in a predominantly Sunni-Barelvi Pakistan was another growing trend in the country as a consequence of Operation Cyclone. Saudi Arabia and other countries of Arabian Peninsula poured in billions of dollars in Pakistan for the proliferation of their version of Islam. Previously, the United States also capitalized on ideological beliefs of radical Salafi/Wahabi sect during the Afghan war, as the concept of Jihad is of prime importance for the Salafi/Wahabi. The Afghan Arabs who had come to fight Jihad against the occupying Soviets also belonged to the same sect and one of the prominent among them was Osama bin Laden, highly impressed with the teachings of Abdullah Azam and Syed Qutab (a radical Egyptian Islamist from the Muslim Brotherhood)².

8. Afghanistan under Taliban and events leading to September 11, 2001

According to one source, some “35,000 Muslim radicals from 43 Islamic countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa, Central Asia and the Far East,” received military training at camps established under Operation Cyclone and later fought alongside Afghan Mujahedeen. Tens of thousands more Muslim radicals came to study in the thousands of new madrasahs in Pakistan and Afghanistan, funded by the Saudi government and philanthropist Arabs. Eventually, more than 100,000 Muslim radicals were to have direct contact with Pakistan and Afghanistan and became influenced by the Jihad during the course of Operation Cyclone³.

In 1992, Yugoslav wars of succession had begun. Initially pitched battles were fought between Serbian and Croatian forces. Later on, the war theatre increased as the ethnic conflict grew and Serbs, Croats and Bosnian fought with each other, resulting in heavy loss of lives with severe brutalities committed by each side. More than hundred thousand died during three years of war in Balkans (1992-95). In Bosnia, the Arab Afghans found a place to revive their Jihadist tendencies and many flocked to Bosnia in order to wage jihad against Serbs and Croats. The war ended with the US sponsored Dayton Accord in 1995 and Bosnia and Herzegovina gained its independence. Many Arab militants settled there and received Bosnian citizenship. The participation of former Arab Afghans in Bosnian War increased their sphere of influence.

In 1996, an armed rebellion erupted in Chechnya, a predominantly Muslim province of Russian Federation. The Russian troops were sent to curb the rebellion but during two years of fighting and after suffering 30,000 casualties the Russian army withdrew from Chechnya, giving the province de facto autonomy. An Islamist insurgency (1992-2000) led by Arab Afghans of Algerian origins (Group Islamic Army, aka GIA) engulfed Algeria resulting in more than 100,000 casualties.

These successive events and wars involving Muslim populations gave rise to militant Islamist ideology, and organized groups like Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas

¹ Ibid p.421

² Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, 1992, p 31, 32

³ Ahmad Rashid, “Taliban”, 2000 p 130

gained popularity amongst common Muslims all over the world. Moreover, control over Afghanistan and safe enclave in Chechnya also gave further rise to Islamist militancy all over the world. Bosnian government although quite thankful to those jihadist did not allow any fundamentalist and medieval Islamic interpretation and implementation of laws in its society, but in Afghanistan and Chechnya where the Islamist were in firm control, a radical version of Islam was interpreted by these Jihadist elements.

9. The 1993 WTC Bombing

It would be fair to say that the world after the Cold War had entered into an altogether new era. Growing radicalism could be seen in almost every organized religion. Fall of Iran to radical Shia clerics and then rise of Taliban in Afghanistan were very evident proofs of it. While the Afghan factions were busy in civil war, the Islamist radical groups in Pakistan threw themselves into another Holy War in Kashmir region. There, were trained radical individuals who were planning to attack the United States for avenging this country for its continuous support for the state of Israel and presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia. Independent cells of these ex-jihadis had started to operate in different parts of world.

Ramzi Yousaf (aka Abdul Basit Mahmood), a Kuwaiti citizen of Pakistani descent, was one of those who wanted to strike within the United States. After spending time at various training camps in Afghanistan, he landed in the United States with a fake Iraqi passport and a mission in mind. He had a degree in electrical engineering and knew well the art of making homemade bombs. Ramzi entered the US and sought political asylum, which was soon granted to him. After settling in New York City, Ramzi started to gang up with other likeminded Islamist radicals already present there. One of his mentors was Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, a blind cleric of New Jersey mosque. Rahman further radicalized Ramzi's thought processing. Ramzi started working over the project he already had in mind. He assembled a 15,000 pounds homemade bomb. The plan was simple: destroy the World Trade Center (WTC) Tower One from its foundations, and when the pillars collapsed the Tower One would fall on Tower Two, resulting in the destruction of whole WTC complex and causing both these towers to collapse on other buildings nearby resulting in heavy loss of lives and property¹.

Although the scheme was planned and executed in the exact order but it could not cause much damage to the building that could lead to its fall. There were serious losses in terms of property (\$600 million) and deaths of 6 people, nonetheless, the bomb blast could not result in destroying the pillars of the building. Ramzi executed his idea with a firm belief that it would result in many American deaths (his estimate was 250,000 deaths)².

It was the first ever terrorist attack of this kind in the history of the United States. And till 9/11, it remained the heaviest in terms of damage to the property. One of the biggest investigations in history had started and very soon investigators got clues that led them to the people behind the attack. It was soon found out that the vehicle used in

¹ Craig Whitlock, "Homemade, Cheap and Dangerous-Terror Cells favour simple ingredients in Building Bombs"

(http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/04/AR2007070401814_pf.html)

² Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, The Penguin Press, 2007

the blast was rented by one of the conspirators, Mohammad Salamah, an Egyptian and fellow of Ramzi. But by that time Ramzi had flown out of the country. Salamah was soon arrested by the authorities and he confessed about the plan and revealed all the other details required for making a charge sheet against all involved, including Sheikh Rahman. All the culprits' involved were arrested except Abdul Rahman Yasin who flew to Iraq and still on the FBI's most wanted list.

Ramzi Yousaf, the main culprit, was arrested in Pakistan in 1995, but before his arrest he had undertaken the planning of another severe attack on the US from the Philippines : Operation Bojinka, indeed a very deadly plan which provided the very idea of planning of 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden (now in Afghanistan as an official guest of Taliban regime).

10. Operation Bojinka

Operation Bojinka, or simply Bojinka plot, was one of most horrific and innovative plans by Islamic terrorist groups against the United States. The operation could not be executed but had given original ideas for the planning of 9/11 attacks. The main planners of this plot were Ramzi Yousaf and Khalid Shaikh Mohammad. It was not specifically planned to hit one target but a set of targets, including :

- assassination of Pope John Paul during his Manila visit,
- assassination of President Bill Clinton during his visit to Manila,
- blowing up 10 to 12 airliners en route to the US in the air and killing up to 4 000 passengers,
- crashing one of the hijacked plane on CIA headquarters,
- crashing several hijacked planes at high profile targets in the United States¹.

After planning and executing Twin Tower attacks in 1993, Ramzi was on the run. Right after the attacks, he immediately left the US and after hovering around at different places, he finally reached the Philippines along with some other fellows, Afghan War Arab veterans. Settling there with a fake name and teaming up with his uncle Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, Ramzi unsuccessfully worked over the execution of Bojinka Operation.

There were some other plans considered to be subplots in Bojinka Operation such as to assassinate Pope John Paul II on his visit to Manila, hijacking of planes then crashing these to targets in the US (targets were: The Sears Towers Chicago, The Pentagon, the US Capitol, the White House, Transamerica Tower San Francisco, CIA headquarter at Langley, World Trade Centre, NYC) and to assassinate President Bill Clinton. But the focus was laid on to blow up the airliners with homemade bombs to be placed in during flight time. The bombs were to be made on board with covertly smuggled chemicals in hand carry luggage (at that time allowed) and then placing these bombs beneath seats with time devices. The plotters were to leave the aircraft at transit and bombs would go off afterwards.

Ramzi and his uncle Khalid rented an apartment in Manila and with Ramzi's bomb making experience and skills, the team started to collect required chemicals in the apartment. The team comprising of Ramzi, Khalid and some Afghans started purchasing the chemicals with extra care and caution. For testing the effectiveness of these bombs

¹Mark Mazzetti, "Portrait of 9/11: Jackal emerges as he awaits trial" New York Times, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/us/15ksm.html>

Ramzi experimented it first at one Manila shopping mall which did not cause much damage to the building, but causing injuries. Later he boarded a US bound flight, managed to take all the materials through security checks (taking chemicals in contact lenses bottles) and then assembled it on flight (in the toilet) and successfully placed it beneath his seat. He then checked out at transit in Tokyo. The bomb went off as planned but could not cause much damage to the plane, killing one passenger and injuring three others. The flight was redirected back and landed safely in Tokyo.

After testing the bombs' intensity, Ramzi had clear ideas about the quantity required for blowing up the planes in the air. The plan was on its way, but due to an accidental fire that broke out in the apartment, the plotters had every reason to abandon it as fire fighters and police reached their building and very soon discovered a huge quantity of chemical (that had to be used in bomb making) and manuals, actual details of the plan in Ramzi's laptop and many other evidence. Soon after, manhunt begun and police managed to arrest the plotters : Abdul Hakim Murad, Wali Khan Amin Shah and Ramzi Yousaf, in 1995 from Pakistan. Khalid Shaikh Mohammad could not be arrested till 2003. It was he who later presented such idea to Osama Bin Laden (OBL) and Ayman Al Zawahiri in Afghanistan. It is also believed that the money for the operation was provided by Mohammad Jamal Khalifa (also arrested in the US, deported to Jordan and later killed in Madagascar), but could not be charged because of lack of evidence¹.

The Bojinka Plan and its very idea was the main source later used for planning of 9/11 attacks. It provided the impetus to Bin Laden to execute such an innovative plan with very low level of resources, but resulting in massive damage. But the plan also required highly dedicated men with extraordinary zeal and brains, essential for executing such a complex operation having many phases. The problem was solved when Bin Laden received westernized, educated, motivated and Wahabi-indoctrinated men with passion for Jihad and martyrdom, coming to Afghanistan from Hamburg, Germany. In 1998 the plan was presented by Khalid Shaikh Mohammad to Bin Laden and it took another three years to execute it in letter and spirit².

11. OBL in Afghanistan

Former professor of Islamic Sharia law at King Faisal University Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Abuallah Yousaf Azzam (Palestinian by origin) and Bin Laden had worked together during Afghan War. Azzam was Bin Laden's mentor. They worked together for the recruitment of Arabs mujahedeen from all over the world in the Maktab al Khidmat (MAK), which was established in Peshawar with Saudi money. The Office served as their platform for more than 8 years. During the final days of war, Bin Laden parted ways with Azzam, mostly because of clash of their ideologies in post Afghan War scenario. There was a trained brigade of Arab Jihadists and both teacher and student had their own agendas to pursue. Bin Laden believed in global Jihad against the west, whereas Azzam a Palestinian believed in waging jihad against Israel to liberate occupied territories. Soon after the war, Azzam was assassinated in Peshawar in 1989, along with his two sons. His murder remains a mystery to this day. Bin Laden soon departed for his

¹ Charles Wallace, "Web of Terrorism targeted US jets", Toronto Star, May 28, 1995

² Dorsch, Carole.C, "Superterrorism: Assassins, Mobsters, and Weapons of Mass Destruction", Glenn E. Schweitzer; Plenum Trade, 1998

homeland Saudi Arabia where he was welcomed like a hero (1990). On August 6, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and occupied it. There were speculations that Saddam Hussain's next military adventure would be Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. Coalition forces under the UN umbrella soon started to reach Saudi Arabia and a coalition of 27 countries was established to liberate Kuwait and deter any further Iraqi aggression. Bin Laden strongly condemned Saudi authorities for calling Americans for their help in the Holy Land of Islam. He called on to Saudi defense minister and offered his services along with his Arab Afghan veterans. The offer was politely rejected by the Saudis and OBL denounced Saudi decision for bringing in non-Muslim forces to defend the holy lands of Mecca and Medina (the two holiest cities in Islam). His continuous criticism of Saudis led him to exile in Sudan, where he was provided a safe haven by former Afghan War veteran Ali Mohammad (an old friend of Laden) and Islamist regime.

Along with handful of Arab Afghan warriors, Laden landed in Sudan in 1992. He initially invested in some business ventures (highway construction contracts) and also established a base for attacks on western targets. Ayman al Zawahiri, former member of Muslim Brotherhood and leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) also joined him in Sudan. A staunch believer in Qutbism and a man whose Islamist thoughts influenced Laden more than that of his mentor Azzam's. He was already running an organization with a network in Egypt as well as in other Middle Eastern and African countries; Laden became his financier for many of his terrorist plots. It was primarily the EIJ that later rechristened as Al-Qaida or perhaps it is the real Al-Qaida.

Ayman al Zawahiri planned many attacks against western targets while based in Sudan. One of the very first attacks was against American soldiers transiting from Yemen to Somalia. In 1993, a bomb exploded outside their hotel, killing two passersby, but the US soldiers had already left for the airport, thus causing no damage to the actual targets. In 1995, EIJ planned to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak during his visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, but he survived and attempt failed. Very soon, Egyptian authorities had dug out the real culprits behind and forced Sudan to expel EIJ and Laden from Sudan's territory. Saudis also mounted pressure on Sudan because of Laden's criticism of Saudi monarchy. While feeling the pressure, Bin Laden and Zawahiri had no place to go but Afghanistan where a medieval styled government of Taliban was about to take over power. Along with his band of followers he landed in Afghanistan in 1996.

12. The Hamburg Cell

The Hamburg Cell was a group of radical Islamists, western educated and with western culture-savvy students. These students were from Arab countries with some of them belonging to pretty well off families. The group was called « the cell » by German intelligence, describing its role as pivotal in planning and executing September 11 attacks.

In 1998, students from Middle Eastern countries namely Mohammad Atta, Zaid Bin Jarrah, Ramzi Binalshibh and Marwan Al-Shehi started living together in one rented apartment in Hamburg. Initially their thoughts were not as radical as they became soon after, when they joined a Islamic study group. A postal worker, Mohammad Bin Naseer Belfas, who was running this study groups, had been thought to radicalize the minds of Cell members who regularly attended his extremely radical preaching. According to

9/11 Commission Report: *"The Hamburg group shared the anti-US fervor of the other candidates for the operation, but added the enormous advantages of fluency in English and familiarity with life in the west, based on years that each member of the group had spent living in Germany. Not surprisingly, Mohammad Atta, Ramzi Binalshibh, Marwan al Shehhi and Ziad Jarrah would all become key players in the 9/11 conspiracy"*¹

Most important, amongst Cell members was Mohammad Atta, an Egyptian student of Urban Planning at Technical University of Hamburg. Initially not radical but very religious, he became a fanatic as inspired by radical Islamist movements worldwide. He was a loner and not in contact with his family back in Egypt. It is believed Qutbism was the pivotal force that had always captured his mind and was in search of some idea or movement to support his ambition and inflict damage to "non-believers", specially the United States. *"In his interactions with other students, Atta voiced virulently anti-Semitic and anti-American opinions, ranging from condemnations of what he described as a global Jewish movement centered in New York City that supposedly controlled the financial world and the media, to polemics against governments of the Arab world"*². During their in-house deliberations, they decided to join some Jihadi movement. Initially they thought of going to Chechnya, where a civil war was going on between Russian forces and Islamist radicals.

Zaid Jarrah, another very important member of the group, had come from Lebanon and belonged to a secular Muslim Lebanese family. The family was almost western in their regular daily life style. Even after arriving in Germany, he lived quite a westernized life and remained in contact with his girlfriend (Aysel Senguen) till his death. It was not until he moved into the apartment with other Cell members that his thinking started to radicalize. He was significantly different in outlook from his fellow hijackers. According to 9/11 Commission Report: *"Even with the benefit of hindsight, Jarrah hardly seems a likely candidate for becoming an Islamic extremist. Far from displaying radical beliefs when he first moved to Germany, he arrived with a reputation for knowing where find the best discos and beaches in Beirut, and in Greifswald was known to enjoy student parties and drinking beer"*³.

Marwan Al Shehi came from United Arab Emirates to study Marine Engineering in Bonn, Germany. He got a scholarship on behalf of UAE army where he was serving in. Belonging to a very religious family and son of an Imam in Abu Dhabi, he turned radical after joining the Cell and attending study group. He was less than a success as student continued to struggle throughout while staying in Germany. Although very conventional in his thoughts (his father was a Muslim cleric and prayer leader) but some of his friends remember him as a "regular guy", wearing Western clothes and occasionally renting cars for trips to Berlin, France and the Netherlands⁴.

Another group member was Said Bahaji who was a Moroccan-German. He was studying Electrical Engineering at Hamburg Technical University where Atta was also a student. One of Bahaji's relative (his aunt) had informed German authorities when she saw his nephew's thoughts being radicalized, but no action was taken by German authorities⁵.

¹ The 9/11 Commission Report, p 160

² Ibid, p 161

³ Ibid, p 163

⁴ Ibid, p 162

⁵ Ibid, p 164

Ramzi Binalshibh, an unemployed Yemeni, was another of the same kind. He entered Germany on a fake Sudanese passport and applied for political asylum. As the court rejected his asylum application, he was deported and very soon got another German visa, this time on his own name. He tried to get the US visa for the operation but rejected thrice on the pretext of his low income status and miserable financial conditions. Ramzi had to take the role of 20th hijacker in the planes operation. He took the role of middleman and coordinator between the team members in the US and facilitators in Afghanistan; which he continued to play until the time he fled Germany after the attacks. He was later on arrested from Karachi, Pakistan in 2002¹.

After having a consensus over joining some Jihadist activity, the group planned to go to Chechnya. But the whole plan took a U-turn when on a train journey, they had a chance meeting with Khalid al Masri and later Mohammad Ould Slahi (aka Abu Musab) who discouraged them for traveling to Russia and instead recommended them to attend training camps in Afghanistan. Slahi had contacts with Arab Afghans (OBL group in Afghanistan) and guided them how to visit Afghanistan via Pakistan.

In November 1999 the Cell members started to reach Quetta, Pakistan, where they contacted, as directed by Slahi, local Taliban office. This office arranged their visit to Afghanistan where they received military training at camps and, later, were introduced to Bin Laden in person. Western educated, fluent in English language, young zealots with desire of martyrdom was more than Bin Laden ever wanted to execute the plan presented to him by Khalid Shaikh Mohammad. OBL deemed these men smart enough to prepare for the plan with having the exact required potentials.

13. US Embassies' Bombings in East Africa (1998)

In 1998, simultaneous attacks by Islamic radicals were launched on US embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salam (Tanzania). 222 people lost their lives and many more received injuries. The attacks were well planned and concerted efforts had resulted in colossal losses and a sudden shock for the US government².

The attacks were of prime importance and revealed Bin Laden and its network to the world, although they were perpetrated by local radicals Islamist and financed by Bin Laden network and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. OBL not only accepted the responsibility but also stressed over the need of new attacks against Americans worldwide. He presented himself before world media as world leader of all Islamist radical movements or as a seasoned veteran who was willing to help wage war against Americans by any means. He was hailed by radicals all over the world and became a symbol of resistance against American hegemony in the eyes of Jihadist organizations. In February 1998, long before the attacks, he issued a Fatwa (religious decree) along with Ayman Al Zawahiri, for waging jihad against "Zionist-Crusaders". The Fatwa was largely ignored by world media, till the embassies' attacks that resulted in heavy casualties³.

The US, in response, immediately launched surgical air strikes (Operation Infinite Reach) against Bin Laden in Afghanistan and in Sudan, where a pharmaceutical factory was destroyed.

¹ Ibid, p 161

² Lawrence Wright, *Looming Tower: Al-Qaida and the road to 9/11*, NY, Knopf, 2006, p.272

³ Jane Mayer, "The Dark Side", Doubleday, p114

A total of 21 people were involved in various degrees of these African attacks. During the course of investigations, the FBI and Kenyan police arrested some of those involved in the bombings : Mohammad Sadek Odeh, Mohammad Rashid Daud al Owahli, Wadih el Hage and Khalfan Khames Mohammad. They were later indicted. Three other were arrested in UK and two held at Guantanamo. And four other were killed during air strikes in Afghanistan

The bombings were a big blow for intelligence agencies. No such warnings were issued or any intelligence report was generated before the attack. Initially, it was believed that the attacks were in retaliation of US involvement in helping Egyptian government arrest members of EIJ from Albania and later extraditing them to Egypt. But it came out as a much bigger threat as Bin Laden and its network had vowed to continue their attacks.

14. USS Cole Bombing

USS Cole bombing was another attack perpetrated by Bin Laden network after locally allying itself with a Yemeni terrorist group. The bombing took place on October 12 2000 ,near the harbor of Yemeni port of Aden. It was a suicide bombing carried out with a boat laden with explosives. Seventeen American sailors lost their lives as a result¹.

During the course of investigations all the conspirators were identified and 23 were arrested by local police. Later, in 2002, in Yemen, the US government also fired a missile from an UAV to kill the masterminds of the operation, Abu Ali Harithi and Ahmad Hijazi. Abdul Rahim al Nashiri who was among the principal planner was also arrested by the US authorities and now being held at Guantanamo².

The bombing was considered as a great victory by Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden but albeit their expectations, no attack was carried out against targets in Afghanistan or Sudan (Sudanese government was suspected to be involved). This frustrated Bin Laden and its network who wanted to drag the US in Afghanistan for a wider war involving other neighboring countries as well³.

15. Products of Operation Cyclone: Khalid Shaikh Mohammad and Ramzi Yousaf

According to the 9/11 Commission Report, the principal architect of 9/11 attacks was Khalid Shaikh Mohammad (KSM). A mechanical engineer who had attended North Carolina Agriculture and Technical University and had lived in the US. Khalid (alias Mukhtar) was born in Kuwait from Pakistanese parents of Baluchi origin (from Pakistan's Balochistan province) but lived most of his life in Kuwait and joined Muslim Brotherhood at an early age. Alike Bin Laden and Ayman al Zawaihiri, Khalid was also a designated Arab Afghan and fought against the Soviet forces in 1986 after attending a

¹ Al-Qaida Activities, Global Security.org

(http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/generate_group_activities.php?name=Al-Qaeda)

² US Navy and Marine Casualties in Wars, Conflicts, Terrorist Acts, and other Hostile Acts. (<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq56-1.htm>)

³ "Federal judge rules Sudan responsible for USS Cole bombing in 2000", NBC News, available at: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id>

training camp. Soon after the Afghan war, Khalid went to fight alongside Bosnian forces in former Yugoslav war and stayed there till 1994¹.

Despite the fact he lived in the US and attended university Khalid remained apathetic towards west, specially the US. His likeminded nephew Ramzi Yousaf coined the idea of destroying WTC buildings in 1993, although unsuccessful in his plan, but the idea was well taken by Khalid. Together they attempted to execute Bojinka Plot in the Philippines. Ramzi, like Khalid, was also an engineer who attended college in the UK. Fluent in Arabic, English and Urdu, both men kept changing their identities and pretending to be Egyptian, Iraqi, Pakistani and Saudi. Khalid joined hands with Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda while he was on the run after the failure of Bojinka Plot. He managed to flee Doha, Qatar, where he worked as project engineer in Qatari government's electricity ministry until his role in Operation Bojinka came to the notice of investigators.

Yousaf's instant notoriety as the mastermind of the 1993 WTC bombing inspired KSM to get involved in planning terrorist attack against the US². Khalid presented the idea of blowing buildings symbolizing the US economic and military might. "At the meeting KSM presented the Al-Qaeda leader with a menu of ideas for terrorist operations."³ Bin Laden paid serious heed to the idea and started recruitment for the execution of plan. Indeed KSM has acknowledged that Bin Laden likely agreed to meet with him because of terrorist activities of his nephew Yousaf⁴.

Like Ayman al Zawairi, Khalid had a wider network and links with jihadist organizations worldwide, considerably wide because of his affiliation with Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait and elsewhere. Before his arrest in 2003 in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, he had travelled to Yemen, Malaysia, Sudan, Brazil, Czech Republic and the Philippines, where he met leaders of radical Islamist organizations and developed strong ties with them. Khalid played the pivotal role in selection, recruitment, training and logistics of 9/11 bombers. After his arrest he confessed before the tribunal in Guantanamo about his role in 9/11 attacks (what he termed Holy Tuesday Operation). He also confessed of beheading Wall Street Journal's correspondent Daniel Pearl in Karachi, 2002 and is also accused of having financed Bali Bombings⁵.

16.The Planning

The architects of 9/11 attacks had the very idea of striking the symbols of American might and, by destroying them, they wanted to make things stir up on the global scenario. The plan was originally conceived by Ramzi Yousaf to be hailed as "the genius". As Bin Laden landed in Afghanistan, soon after, Khalid Shaikh joined him and presented the plan. In a 1984 book, *The 40 Minute War*, Chris Morris had presented such a methodology of attack and it is widely suspected that Ramzi might have read that book. The original Khalid Shaikh's plan was a more destructive one, involving hijacked planes to be rammed on symbolic sites on both East and West coasts and Mid-West. Bin Laden worked over the plan very clandestinely along with his confidants, Mohammad

¹ The 9/11 Commission Report, p.145

² Ibid, p.147

³ Ibid, p.148

⁴ Ibid, p.149

⁵ Ibid, p.148

Atef and Ayman al Zawahiri, and in 1999, after completing all the "pre-production" work, he summoned Khalid Shaikh who meanwhile left Afghanistan and stayed in Czech Republic. Khalid arrived back in Kandahar, Afghanistan the same year and was introduced to newly recruited Hamburg Cell bombers.

Bin Laden formed a committee that held a series of meetings in order to chalk out the strategy for planning and executing the operation. He had a choice to make from a variety of people but he selected Saudi and UAE passport holders as it was easier for them to obtain visas of the United States. Hamburg Cell members were to lead the operation as they looked western and had been living there and knew all the western ways without being suspected. Mohammad Atta because of his quiet and serious attitude was selected as the commander of the entire operation. Other members of the cell, like Zaid Jarrah, Marwan al Shehhi and Hani Hanjour, were assigned the tasks of leading hijacking teams.

Hani Hanjour was not a member of Hamburg Cell but due to his religious extremism, he went to an Afghan training camps run by Bin Laden network. He had previously attended flight schools in the US, in 1997. As he revealed this to his trainers, he was picked up by Khalid Shaikh Mohamed who made him part of the team. He returned to the US in 2000 and got admission in a flying school at Mesa, Arizona (previously he attended a school at San Diego, California). Another recruit, Al Hazmi, joined him at the school directed by Khalid Shaikh Mohamed to do so. Hanjour completed the refresher course by 2001, but Al Hazmi had difficulties in passing the course and could not complete it. They left Arizona by April 2001 and reached Virginia.

The plan was now ready with four ring leaders : Mohammad Atta, Marwan al Shehhi, Hani Hanjour and Zaid Jarrah. Atta was also having the overall command of the operation. Each ring leader was given four members called "muscle hijackers". The first step was to receive training for piloting the planes, indeed primary for executing the plan. Atta, Zaid and Shehhi enrolled themselves at Huffman Aviation School at Venice, Florida, while Hani Hanjour already had a pilot license from Arizona. All the « muscle hijackers » were personally selected by Bin Laden and Khalid Shaikh Mohamed in Afghanistan and started reaching the US by early 2000. They were living in small groups on both East and West coasts. Teams were already formed and tasks assigned to them as preparations had begun¹.

17. Execution of Plan

Atta and his team boarded from Portland (Maine) and Boston (Massachusetts), soon after hijacked American Airlines flight 11 (bound for LA) with paper cutter knives and pepper spray (for pushing the passengers towards the tail of plane) and within next half an hour, rammed the plane on Tower one of WTC. Shehhi and his team boarded United Airlines flight 175 and after applying the same tactics, hijacked the plane and rammed it on the other tower of WTC. On the other hand, Hani Hanjour, along with his team, boarded American Airlines flight 77 from Washington DC and after successful hijacking crashed it on Pentagon, destroying it partly. Zaid Jarrah and his team from Newark, New Jersey, boarded United Airlines 93 but by that time news of other hijackings and plane crashes had become public and news was in the air. The last team hijacked the plane but could not keep the control as passengers revolted

¹ Ibid, p.153-173

and tried to take over the plane. He was still 20 minutes of flight time from the target. The passengers' resistances made him fail in his desired objectives. Then, the hijackers had become sure of the fact that they could no longer keep their plan intact and thus crashed the plane in a forest near Shanks Ville, Pennsylvania.

The whole operation took 2 hours (8:00 am to 10:03 am), with the same modus operandi. All the flights were transatlantic and fuel tanks were having more than 20 000 gallons of gasoline. The plan was in fact innovative and passengers, except flight 93, could not have the idea that the hijackers were going to crash the plane and their intentions were not to place any demands before the authorities. In fact, all the passengers were deceived as the hijackers asked them to remain calm and they were taking them back to the airports.

The whole exercise of this act of terrorism was a display of calm and calculated behavior with exact planning, perhaps after testing each and every move carefully. Element of deception played the key role as all the passengers and authorities on the ground did not get the slightest idea of what was going to happen as everything occurred at a fast pace. Atta had traveled across the US for calculating and gauging the weaknesses in the system plus observed everything meticulously. Atta initially made a mistake when he said that "we have some planes" but ATC personnel could not get out of it that what he really meant and thus could not take apt action or relay it to other control towers. Jarrah and his team, on the other hand, were late in executing the same plan.

Soon after the collisions, both towers of WTC collapsed, resulting in the destruction of whole WTC complex. One side of the Pentagon building was also severely damaged and resulted in the deaths of 188 people¹.

18. The Blowback of Operation Cyclone: Global War on Terror

Although the system was blinking red and there were intelligence reports about some kind of terrorist activity in the offing, the magnitude of attacks was unbelievable for the US government. It was a state of utter shock and surprise. The 9/11 Commission Report described all the possibilities that could have avoided the attacks. There were steps which might have changed the course of terrorists and resulted in their arrest or fleeing from the US soil.

Comprehensive rescue and recovery operations at the sites, combined with criminal investigations began within hours from the attacks. The attacks changed the course of history and the Bush administration announced the War against Terrorism. Within weeks after the attacks the investigators had found the clues and managed to follow the footsteps of terrorists. Investigators also traced their origins and backgrounds and got clues of who would have been behind the attacks. Zakarya Mousawi, who was part of the plan and a possible 20th hijacker was arrested before the attack on immigration related charges and it was only after the attacks that investigators found out that he was also part of the conspiracy. It was an utter lack of coordination amongst the US law enforcement and intelligence agencies that could not share the information about the Zakarya Mousawi's arrest. Much of attack related information, such as planning of attacks, was later found on his laptop (which was not checked after his arrest).

¹ Ibid, p.215-253

Identifying the hijackers was the first step taken up by the US law enforcement and intelligence agencies and an operation codenamed PENTTBOM was specifically launched to identify the hijackers. It was within days of work that the identities of all 19 men responsible for attacks came to the notice of authorities. Calls from passengers aboard and their recorded messages to their relatives and friends also helped investigators in finding out the identity of hijackers. Cars and luggage left behind by the hijackers at airports and burnt passports collected from the sites and most importantly Mohammad Atta's will, was found from his left behind luggage were important clues to verify the hijackers. Background checks also showed hijackers attending various flight schools and of course some of them like Midhar and Hazmi were already under suspicion of being on a covert operation. It was the biggest manhunt across the country. More than 8 000 people, mostly of Arab/Muslim countries and some from Israel, were arrested and interrogated. Most all of them were either released or deported.

National Security Agency (NSA) also intercepted telephone calls between Bin Laden and his associates in Pakistan related to the current events. All the clues and information were making Bin Laden and his network a prime suspect in orchestrating the attacks, which he initially denied, but later accepted. On September 20th 2001, the US government officially confirmed Bin Laden behind the attacks.¹ And the US decided to launch the War on Terror. The term « War against terror » was coined by President Bush, and came soon under heavy criticism on many technical grounds².

After serving an ultimatum to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for handing over Bin Laden for the charges laid against him and taking allies into confidence, the military campaign against Taliban regime was launched on October 7th 2001. NATO unanimously invoked its article 5 and announced full support to the US initiative. Key countries like Pakistan and Middle Eastern allies were also taken into confidence. Most importantly the arch rivals of Taliban regime the Northern Alliance were taken into the fold³.

19. Coup de grace: Operation Enduring Freedom

The official name for the military campaign against Taliban and Bin Laden network was called Operation Enduring Freedom (initially termed as Operation Infinite Justice). The primary objectives of Operation were to arrest perpetrators of 9/11 attacks and bring them to justice and the ultimatum also included other demands such as:

- to deliver all the leaders of Al-Qaeda to the US,
- to release all foreign nationals in Taliban's jails,
- to shut down all the terrorist training camps,
- Full access to the US government to inspect the said camps⁴.

In this campaign, the US were initially joined by the United Kingdom and in latter period as many as 28 countries either under International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or with the US have joined the coalition. The UK government launched its own

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (2001-09-27). "The FBI releases 19 photographs of individuals believed to be the hijackers of the four airliners that crashed on September 11, 01". Press release

² Obama Administration uses the term Operation Overseas Contingency instead of Global War on Terror

³ Katz, Samuel M. "Relentless Pursuit: The DSS and the manhunt for the al-Qaeda terrorists", 2002

⁴ President George W Bush Statement, available at :
<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>

Operation Herrick in 2002. The US military action did not have the UN authorization but the US categorized this invasion as an act of self-defense not an act of aggression. The ISAF was authorized by the UNSC in December 2001¹.

The Operation was successfully launched and in a period of one month the Taliban regime was toppled and Kabul fell by the mid of November to US forces allied to Northern Alliance. The fall of Kabul paved the way for other cities to fall. Before Kabul strategically important city Mazar e Shariff fell to the allied forces and in weeks after the fall of Kabul, Kunduz, Herat, Kandhar and Jalalabad all went out of Taliban control and fell to allied forces. The Taliban leadership was on the run and many took refuge in Tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan. By early 2002 the US and allied forces had taken over most of Afghanistan from Taliban and Bin Laden and his network were on the run for finding safe havens. The US/NATO forces and Northern Alliance proclaimed victory by January 2002.

The Operation was successful in ousting the Taliban regime and destroying Bin Laden's terror camps, but failed to capture the leadership of both Taliban and OBL's network. Most of the previous regime leaders, along with their rank and file, fled and found safe havens in the tribal areas of neighboring Pakistan. Although the fighting was over in Afghanistan, except some pockets of resistance and some level of Taliban resurgence, the focus of war has been shifted to Pakistan. Since 2002, several major military operations have been launched by Pakistanese military in country's tribal belt. To this day, Pakistanese army is engaged with Taliban, both local and Afghan, in battles in the tribal areas bordering with Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom has several other subordinate operations but considered to be part of it. Other campaigns in the Philippines, in the Horn of Africa, Trans Sahara and training of Georgian troops are also part of the same campaign publicly called Global War against Terrorism. It is the width of this operation, the number of countries involved in it and the reach that has made it a Global War against terror networks worldwide.

20. Conclusion

Every major conflict has some loose or sometimes strong connection with the previous war(s) in the region. Franco-Prussian War of 1871 was one of the causes of World War I. The outcome of Franco-Prussian War turned Europe into hostile military camps and alliances such as Triple Alliance and Triple Entente leading European nations towards World War I. The World War II had its roots in World War I. The humiliation of Germany by Allied Powers at Versailles Conference and other reasons connected with World War I paved the way for another Great War.

The two hot wars of 20th century were followed by the Cold War, more complex and longer in its course. The world again turned into hostile military alliances. Although the Cold War ended without a single shot fired from each side, they were many proxy wars where each side used their allies as proxies. The USSR and the USA usually they tried to avoid direct confrontation, but in some cases, were. Not a single region in the world kept itself aloof from the affects of Cold War. After major wars in Korea, Vietnam and Arab-Israeli wars the focus had shifted to Afghanistan in 1979. Like the US directly involved in Vietnam War against a Soviet ally (Viet-cong), the Soviet Union got directly

¹ The Guardian (UK) (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story>)

involved in Afghanistan. Invasion of this country was a turning point in the course of events of the Cold War.

The 11 year long conflict in Afghanistan was pivotal in changing the course of history as no one was of the view that the Soviet Empire would collapse after the war. In fact it was not entirely the Afghan War that led to the collapse of Soviet Union. The Soviet Empire had already been suffering from economic failures, hidden in the all-cut-close structure of Soviet economy. The Afghan War was one of the catalysts that just accelerated the Soviet collapse. The war ended and a very quick dissolution of Soviet Union left everyone in a perplexed state as no one had imagined it, not even the US policymakers. They did not even get time to devise future strategy for a post-war Afghanistan. Himalayan mistakes had been committed by the US in understanding the future outcomes of this war. They had no idea about the leftovers of the war and how injurious could they be for the US interests in upcoming years. Some of the major policy errors and after-effects were:

- The Afghan War against Soviet occupation was fought on religious grounds rather than on nationalist grounds as the war course was planned by the US policy makers.
- Wahabi/Salafi sect of Islam was boasted and resurrected for fighting the war against the Soviets.
- Like all other religions in the world Islam, does have many sects and the most radical among these sects is Wahabi/Salafi brand of Islam. The countries where Wahabi sect of Islam was in practice were taken into the fold (like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and UAE) for getting the foot soldiers of war.
- The War was propagated as Jihad against the infidel and “Godless/atheist Soviets”.
- Forgetting the fact that the true adherents of Wahabi sect of Islam like Syed Qutab and Hasan Al Banna were the ones who had long been US enemies even before the Afghan War and Soviet invasion
- The resurgence of Wahabi/militant Islam by the hands of US was never ever considered to be a future threat for the US.
- More than 100,000 radical Islamic youth from 43 different countries were brought to the region, trained and armed under Operation Cyclone. Their disposal or what would have to be done with them after the war was never envisioned by the US policy makers.
- The dismemberment of the USSR was taken as victory of radical-Wahabi Islam by its proponents. Bin Laden claimed to have himself played the key role along with his Arab Afghan brigade and in his later speeches and interviews he categorized the US role as minimal.
- Numerous Jihadi organizations were founded and later on, they were left on their own and evolved to become today’s Islamist terrorist organizations.
- The US immediately halted all technical and financial support to Pakistan soon after the Geneva Accords and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, which was in fact too quick and considered abandoning of Pakistan. That might have been done in phases.
- Pakistan although practically managed the whole Afghan War operations on behalf of the US but suffered miserably on all counts. The country had plunged into the culture of armed outfits (remnants of Afghan War), millions of drug addicts (because of increased drug smuggling from Afghanistan) and gun control almost vanished in Pakistani society.
- Religious parties used to have a minimal vote bank in Pakistani politics but because of increasing support by military government and state sponsorship they gained influence and also the vote bank.

- The volunteers who came from Arab countries to participate in the war were called Arab Afghans. Many of these Arab Afghans later went back to their respective countries and waged the so-called Jihad against the governments; a most important example of such kind of war was in Algeria where more than one hundred thousand died in ten years of fierce fighting and attacks between radical GIA and government forces.
- Many volunteers stayed in Afghanistan and in tribal regions of Pakistan where they married local women and settled. These people later joined hands with Bin Laden after his landing in Afghanistan and became rank and file of OBL's network and most importantly part of conspiracies and attacks to come in future.
- Most importantly, Pakistan, although not a direct participant in the war, got effected so badly.
- As a nation-state, Pakistan also suffered and religious radical religious thoughts by Afghans veterans were funneled into Pakistani society.
- More than 3 million Afghans that sheltered in Pakistan because of the war never went back to Afghanistan, becoming a tremendous burden on Pakistani economy.
- Parties inspired from the agendas of Muslim Brotherhood established in Pakistan and gained a firm support from Pakistani population.

In international arena of world politics, interests have always been supreme and driving force in formation of foreign policies. The approach that the US had actually adopted was realist. Realpolitik is always pragmatic and national interest is always prime and supreme. The Soviet invasion brought US to the region because it had an interest. The US government wanted to drag the Soviet Union into a proxy war, as the Soviets did in Vietnam. Washington wanted to copycat the Soviet action, in order to level the score that had been going on since the beginning of the Cold War. The US actions were interest based and, for that very reason, no stone remained unturned for winning the war and driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan. Money, arms, training and political support were all part of a unified policy. When the objectives were achieved there was no reason to stay back and divulge into domestic Afghan politics. But realist approach does have its fallouts.

There could have been many reasons and causes that led to the planning of 9/11 attacks but the very idea was of course to wage a global war not only against Americans and the West, but against anyone opposing the agenda of radical Islamist beliefs. The current global jihad movement is not a new one; it took its roots long ago with the emergence of Wahabi movement in Saudi Arabia. The catalyst was Afghan War and Saudi-American backing that galvanized the pace of the movement. The radical Islamic movement is more than Bin Laden and its network; it's even more dangerous than it looks like. The growing number of radical Muslim youth worldwide is in fact alarming and focus on Al-Qaeda might be too narrow a plan to cover up the growth of Islamism in other countries or even in the west.

The only way forward is to bring along other tolerant and more considerate Muslim sect, and then with them, root out menaces like Al-Qaeda and global Jihadism. The forging of alliances with the people of moderate Islamic sects would be the only way forward in this war.

