

# Afghanistan Heads Back to the 1990s as Civil War Looms

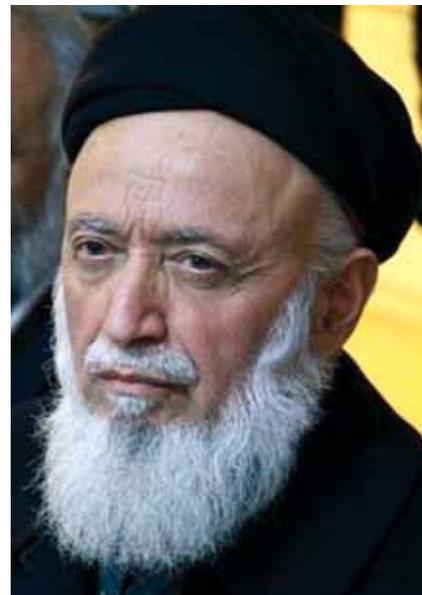
by Ramtanu Maitra

Sept. 25—The well-orchestrated attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul (Sept. 13) and the assassination of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik-Afghan, by a suicide bomber inside Rabbani's home in Kabul (Sept. 20), a stone's throw away from the U.S. Embassy, have been passed on to the American people by the Western media as an omen that the collapse of peace talks between the "Taliban" and the occupying forces, is in the offing.

However, the truth about why these acts were committed at this stage of the Afghan War is altogether different. These violent acts were orchestrated to unleash once more, the British-led policy of unrestrained chaos and violence in Afghanistan. That policy is being implemented through the Saudi-Pakistan network that controls the jihadis on the ground, and is presided over by a hapless and befuddled U.S. President Barack

Obama. Obama, in light of his ongoing disastrous Presidency, has hoped that he would be able to bring home a significant number of U.S. troops next year to influence the American people to re-elect him. His delusion is that he could do that, by killing off the "Taliban" militants, using unlimited drone attacks. But, these violent incidents suggest that this could be wishful thinking, and that the U.S. troops, along with their reluctant NATO colleagues, may soon be caught up, in a gut-wrenching civil war, about to be unleashed in Afghanistan.

This fact is slowly sinking into the minds of those in Washington who prefer to live in la-la land, justifying such fairy-tale thinking by asserting political exigencies, or some such nonsense. The real purpose of the lies is to mislead the American people, a perpetual practice of this White House; but the process eventu-



US Army/Sgt. Catherine Threat

*The recent attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and the assassination of former Afghan President Rabbani were part of the British-orchestrated permanent war in the region, implemented through London's Saudi-Pakistani jihadi network. Above: U.S. Forces in a firefight with insurgents during the attack on the Embassy, Sept. 13; former President Burhanuddin Rabbani.*

ally fools them as much as anyone else.

The single-most important lie about the Afghan War by this White House, and the previous one, is the denial of Saudi-British links with the insurgents, or the terrorists, or the jihadis. Every follower of the Afghan situation has pointed to the huge sum of Saudi money that goes into funding these anti-U.S./NATO groups, and the groups working inside Pakistan in tandem with the insurgents. There is no dearth of evidence of the role of Prince Turki bin Faisal al-Saud, director general of Al-Mukhabarat Al-A'amah, Saudi Arabia's intelligence agency; and Prince Nayef bin Abdel-Aziz, longtime Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia, among the Taliban and other terrorists in Afghanistan over the years. Yet, the White House has never made these facts known to the American people, and never called to question the Saudi role against the United States.

The case with Britain is the same. London, the controller of many Islamic jihadis, has remained a major recruitment center for the Afghan insurgents, as has been documented by many, including this author, in the United States. This could not have been accomplished without the protection of British intelligence, MI5 and MI6. Besides some occasional whining heard from individuals allegedly close to the White House, no one in the Obama Administration would question the British role in Afghanistan, or in Pakistan, or its collaboration with the Saudis, who are funding a horde of terrorists within Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **A Destructive Alliance**

In other words, Washington has established a long-term self-destructive alliance with Britain, Saudi Arabia, and, by extension, with Pakistan. This alliance does not allow the White House to tell the truth about who our real enemies are in Afghanistan. The alliance centers on maintaining control over oil and gas fields around the world; a Middle East policy that promotes Sunni-Shi'a sectarian strife to keep Islamic nations off balance; and the unholy financial ties between Wall Street and the City of London, which includes the laundering of huge sums of drug money, generated in Afghanistan and elsewhere, to keep the bankrupt banks of London and Wall Street alive.

In such a wide-ranging alliance, their "friends" role in the killing of a few thousand Americans, and hundreds of thousands of Afghans, does not bother

either Washington, or London, or, for that matter, Riyadh. Simply put, to this White House, Britain and Saudi Arabia are untouchables, but Pakistan can be whipped from time to time.

There are indications that that is what is driving Washington to divulge certain facts about the recent role of Pakistan in Afghanistan. However, the murky role of both Islamabad and Washington together, over the last two decades, in conjunction with the Saudis and British, has still been kept behind the curtain. Nonetheless, on Sept. 21, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, accused Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, of playing an active role in the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, by supporting the Haqqani insurgent network. That network, he said, is a "veritable arm" of the ISI. Mullen, who is now saying what he knew years ago, but did not want to accept, is about to step down as JCS chairman. He had been a staunch defender of U.S. engagement with Pakistan, and has met more than two dozen times with his Pakistani counterpart, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, who, as Pakistan's Chief of the Armed Services, oversees all ISI actions.

On Sept. 16, the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, said, in a wide-ranging interview with Radio Pakistan: "The U.S. has evidence linking the Pakistan government to the Haqqani network, which was behind this week's attack on the American Embassy in Kabul." Subsequently, it has been revealed to the unsuspecting public that this "fact" was based upon interception of cell phone communication between ISI officials and the terrorists who carried out the attack. Similar cell phone interceptions that the Indian intelligence service had also cited after the November 2008 Mumbai attack, did not prompt the same conclusion by officials in Washington at the time—the residents of la-la land—who refused to acknowledge that as valid evidence.

This time around, revelation of this fact is gaining traction. Bruce Riedel, a former top CIA analyst and former advisor to the Obama White House, told Reuters that Administration officials have told him, that the militants who attacked the U.S. Embassy and NATO headquarters in Kabul on Sept. 13 phoned individuals connected with the ISI before and during the attack. Following the attacks, Riedel said, U.S. security forces collected cell phones that the attackers had used. These are expected to provide further evi-

dence linking the militants to the ISI.

Another hapless lot in Washington, the U.S. Congress, joined the chorus swiftly. A Senate committee voted on Sept. 21 to make conditions on U.S. assistance to Pakistan more rigorous, and contingent upon its cooperation in fighting militants such as the Haqqani network.

Rawalpindi, the military headquarters of the Pakistani Armed Forces, pooh-poohed the accusation. Senior Pakistani officials have lashed out against the allegations of support for the Haqqani militant network, accusing the U.S. of trying to make Pakistan a scapegoat for its troubled war in Afghanistan. Pakistan's Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani advised the U.S. not to send "wrong messages"; Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar warned of the loss of an ally; and General Kayani rejected Mullen's charges out of hand.



State Department

*U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has expressed her commitment to finding a regional solution for the Afghanistan conflict. Such a regional solution, she insists, will include a role for Iran, the avowed enemy of Saudi Arabia and Britain. Here, Clinton is greeted by Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad, October 2009.*

### **Why Is Behind the Attacks?**

After ten years of military muddling by the U.S./NATO troops, it became clear to those who have any understanding of Afghanistan, that the foreigners have so far neither won this war, nor do they have the capability to achieve a victory in the short, medium, or even long term. Then, why did the Saudi-ISI-Haqqani group go after the U.S. Embassy, and later, assassinate Rabbani? Was it to establish its supremacy?

Despite the presence of 150,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, various factions of the insurgents together control most of Afghanistan. They may not have the capability to assassinate such bigwigs as the U.S. ambassador, or the Afghan President, but it was always evident that they possess the capability, thanks to the Saudi-ISI nexus and its agents operating deep within almost every Afghan institution, to take out most people that they want to eliminate. They showed such strength by killing off many Afghan governors they did not like, and their assistants. Therefore, these recent acts by the Saudi-Pakistani ISI-jihadis were not to flex their mus-

cles. It was no 1968 Tet Offensive, which was launched by the Viet Cong on behalf of the Vietnamese people. The recent attacks in Kabul have no connection to Afghan nationalism, unlike the Vietnamese nationalism that was expressed through the Tet Offensive. What was it, then?

The British-Saudi-Pakistani ISI, and the jihadis they control, are concerned about two developments. Their objective is to undermine these two developments by striking while the iron is hot, to throw Afghanistan back into a primitive, ethnic slaughtering house.

The first development centers around the statements by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the U.S. envoy to Af-Pak Marc Grossman, indicating their interest in working towards a regional solution for Afghanistan. Such a regional solution, they pointed out in no uncertain terms, will include Iran, the avowed enemy of Saudi Arabia and Britain.

Also, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which consists of Russia, China and the "-stan" coun-

tries of Central Asia (excluding Turkmenistan), made clear in its last summit meeting at Astana, Kazakstan, last June, that it considers the peaceful resolution of the Afghanistan conflict to be an important part of its regional security agenda. The communiqué said that the SCO supported its member-states in working together with international institutions and other parties to take part in economic reconstruction programs in Afghanistan. What unsettled the Britain-Saudi-Pakistani ISI network is not only the Clinton-Grossman statements, but that the SCO is becoming increasingly warm towards India, Iran, and President Karzai-led Afghanistan.

### **British-Saudi-ISI Nexus Pushes Civil War**

The second development that triggered the assassination of Rabbani, a Tajik-Afghan, and was one of the seven notorious mujahideen leaders who were nurtured and armed by the U.S.-Britain-Saudi-Pakistan nexus to give the invading Soviet Union a bloody nose during the 1980s, by conducting a high-profile proxy war Afghanistan, is the re-arming of the major non-Pushtun ethnic groups, such as the Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks.

The killing of Rabbani was intended to provoke the Tajiks. However, unlike the other six mujahideen leaders—semi-literate jihadis wearing the cloak of democracy and freedom, handed to them by their Western masters—Rabbani could visit Tehran, Riyadh, Islamabad, and New Delhi and be listened to. In other words, warts and all—and there were many—Rabbani had a presence, and he was not a handmaiden of the ISI, or of Prince Turki or Tony Blair. Moreover, President Karzai had appointed him as the head of the High Peace Council, and was enabling his acceptance among the country's diverse regional and ideological forces, to bring about some sort of resolution which would not hand Afghanistan over to the Taliban, or to the British-Saudi-Pakistan-jihadi nexus.

The rearming of the ethnic groups—who have been slaughtered by the Taliban with the help of the Pakistani military and ISI, and of the Saudi funding in the 1990s—began once it became evident to them that President Obama had no Afghan policy, and therefore, in the end, he would smilingly accept a policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan cooked up in London, Riyadh, and Rawalpindi. These ethnic groups are convinced that Obama would resort to almost anything to bring home a significant number of U.S. troops, to win support at home, paying

no attention whatsoever to what happens next in Afghanistan.

The arming of the ethnic groups was not a difficult process. Most of the warlords in northern and western Afghanistan are non-Pushtuns. Following the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, and the subsequent failed U.S. policy that made the entire Pushtun community of Afghanistan an enemy of Washington and Kabul, Karzai's mainstay remained these non-Pushtun warlords. The warlords, in turn, benefitted immensely from the opium explosion and narcotics trafficking over the past decade. They are flush with money. They have militias. Many have come to the conclusion that the U.S. President has no more cards to play, and that the United States will leave them in the lurch, as it did in 1989.

Meanwhile, the Saudis, the Pakistani ISI, and the jihadis, nearly all of whom are ethnic Pushtuns, have developed the necessary wherewithal to gain control of Kabul.

Moreover, the large Afghan National Army (ANA), created by the United States and NATO, to take control of Afghanistan's security once they leave, is large in size, but not terribly competent. Nonetheless, of the 200,000-man ANA, 85% are non-Pushtuns. However ill-trained they are, they possess weapons, and could pose a mortal threat to the jihadi-Pushtuns in the future.

Evidence of preparation for the next civil war has now begun to emerge. In western Afghanistan, the Hazarajat (hometown of the Hazaras) is receiving large assignments of arms from Iran. Although the Hazaras, who are Shi'as (like the Iranians), and constitute about 19% of the Afghan population, have their own differences with the Tajiks (25% of the Afghans) and Uzbeks (6%), in the north, they have no qualms about joining hands with them to defy the Saudi-Pakistan-backed and -armed Pushtun jihadis.

In the north, Atta Mohammad Noor, one of the top commanders under the legendary Tajik-Afghan leader (and arguably the only nationalist Afghan leader who emerged out of the opposition that fought the occupying Soviet forces in the 1980s), Ahmed Shah Massoud, who was assassinated by Saudi agents two days before 9/11, has now emerged in Mazar-e-Sharif, the second-largest city in Afghanistan, and capital of the northern Balkh province, as the unchallenged military leader.

The other indications that a civil war may break

open soon come from New Delhi and Quetta in Pakistan. During the 1990s, India had armed the Tajik-Afghans under Massoud, not only because he was friendly to both India and Russia, but because he was vehemently anti-Saudi-Pakistani-ISI-Wahhabi jihadis. India had set up a hospital in Farkhor, Tajikistan to provide medical help to the Tajiks who were under attack from the Taliban. With the advent of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan, that hospital was closed.

Last month, a top Indian Air Force officer, Air Marshal Kishen Kumar Nakhor, visited Dushanbe, Tajikistan, foreign ministry officials said, and during Nakhor's visit, Tajikistan's defense ministry announced that India would build and equip a hospital for Tajikistan's military officers. And in July, Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony visited neighboring Kyrgyzstan and announced plans to open a joint high-altitude military research center there.

That's one side—and the reaction has already begun.

In Quetta, a military center of the Pakistani Army, bordering Afghanistan, 26 Shi'a pilgrims belonging to the Hazara community were dragged out of a bus in which they were travelling, at Mastung in Balochistan, on Sept. 20, lined up and shot dead by unidentified gunmen suspected of belonging to the anti-Shi'a Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), which is close to al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

The Hazaras had long been a target of the Wahhabi-indoctrinated Sunni terrorist groups. An Indian analyst pointed out the massacre of the Hazaras in Afghanistan after the Taliban captured power in Kabul in September 1996, and allowed the LeJ to operate in Pakistan from sanctuaries in Afghan territory. The Hazaras of Pakistan, who were suspected by al-Qaeda and the LeJ of letting themselves be used by U.S. intelligence in its hunt for Osama bin Laden, subsequently became the targets of the LeJ. There have been many attacks on the Hazaras, who are to be found in large numbers in Balochistan, the Indian analyst said.



*From the time that the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, the Pakistani Army and ISI worked together to put top terrorist and drug trafficker Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in power in Kabul. But the Washington cabal had knowingly backed and funded him as well.*

## Among Washington's Unwashed Sins: Sleeping With Snakes

The resumption of civil war in Afghanistan, were it to happen, would not be simply the result of the latest Saudi machinations, nor those of Britain or the Pakistani ISI. Since the day that the now-defunct Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the proxy war, funded and waged by the Western nations with the help of the Saudis, had another element, which is to further the process of ethnic division of Afghanistan.

The beneficiary of most of the Saudi and Western support that flowed in to defeat the Soviet troops was the then-Pakistani military dictator, Zia ul-Haq, who had hanged the elected Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in

1979. Zia came under verbal attack for executing Bhutto, from the British-Liberal circles in the United States, although the hard-core anti-Soviet establishment in Washington continued to love him. To the jihadi-tuned Zia, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was veritable manna from Heaven.

From the very first day after the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, defeated and demoralized, the Pakistani Army and the ISI worked together to put a top terrorist and drug trafficker, the Islamist-mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, into power in Kabul. The megalomaniacal Hekmatyar was the Saudi-Pakistan pawn in the game. But, the entire Washington cabal, including the CIA, in those days, had knowingly backed and funded this well-established drug-trafficker, jihadi, and terrorist.

Let us backtrack a little. In 1992, after the then-Pakistani army chief, Gen. Aslam Beg—who now runs a shadow-ISI outfit outside the intelligence agency, along with the former ISI chief Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul—had removed Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto from power, and replaced her with the pro-Saudi Nawaz Sharif, he called the Afghan mujahideen leaders to a *shura* (council meeting) at Rawalpindi. The objective of the meeting was to goad the most powerful and the best-organized commander from the Panjshir Valley in northern Af-

ghanistan, Ahmed Shah Massoud, to bring Hekmatyar to power in Kabul by ousting the Moscow- and New Delhi-backed Najibullah. Beg wanted Massoud to become Hekmatyar's "spear." But, what was Beg's spiel to these commanders?

Peter Tomsen, the U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan during 1989-92, and one of the very few U.S.-based Afghan experts who call a spade a spade, pointed out in his book, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, what Beg told these commanders. According to Massoud, Tomsen says, Beg "laid out a geo-strategic vision for Pakistan and Afghanistan's liberation."

"Beg called for Pakistan and Afghanistan together to foster Islamic revolution to the Muslim world. There was, Beg claimed, a leadership vacuum in Islamic countries. He claimed that Pakistan's assistance to the Afghan jihad placed it in a unique position to fill that vacuum. . . . Utilizing a map, the general pointed to the five Soviet Central Asian republics. A different color distinguished them from the rest of the USSR. He remarked that following Najib's defeat, Pakistan and Afghanistan could start a new jihad to free the Muslim populations of Soviet Central Asia. Afterward, the two countries could assist other Islamic revolutions in Muslim regions of the world where jihads were already under way, such as in Kashmir, or where they had not begun. He predicted India would disintegrate when the Islamic revolutionary wave reached an advanced age."

Massoud, of course, did not buy any of that. He told his men in Panjshir that Pakistan was not interested in Afghanistan, but had a grand design, which is jihad. However, in secular Washington, where brilliant analysts were poring over data 24/7, they "had no clue" as to what Beg stood for then, and what the intentions of the ISI always were, and always will be, vis-à-vis Afghanistan. The same Beg and Gul, and the rest of the jihadis, are now directing the ISI in Pakistan. Whether Mullen knows it or not, Kayani is part of that as well.

Ambassador Munter said the ISI is helping the Haqqani terrorist outfit. Is this news? Or is it the coming out of the closet, an operation to bring to an end the decades-long policy of "don't ask, don't tell," so assiduously followed by the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan?

Throughout the early part of the 1990s, Washington backed the ISI when it was sending all kinds of support to Hekmatyar, a declared terrorist, to get control of Kabul. In April 1992, when Hekmatyar was fighting to gain control of Kabul militarily, three Pakistan ISI honchos, Hamid Gul, Afzal Janjua, and Sultan Imam (who

was killed recently by the terrorists he trained), were helping Hekmatyar inside Afghanistan. All of them were in active service, and the CIA knew all of their movements. More importantly, five Pakistani Army battalions were brought into Afghanistan to aid Hekmatyar in gaining control of Afghanistan.

None of that was unknown to President George H.W. Bush, a former CIA director. The U.S. knew everything. In fact, when Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid reported that "50 trucks of arms and ammunition" destined for Hekmatyar's forces in Logar province, were traveling from Pakistan to Afghanistan, the Russian Embassy counselor in Washington rushed to the State Department to complain about the ISI interference on behalf of Hekmatyar. He was met with a stone wall.

The Russians were told, as Tomsen reports in his book, that "the US sees no need to proceed with a joint approach in Pakistan concerning the Russian claim that Islamabad is assisting Hekmatyar." In other words, the U.S. State Department lied through its teeth to validate Islamabad's denials.

Now, it is Islamabad's turn.

## Knew You Not, Pompeii?



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