

## The Rise of Jihad in the Pakhtun Region: The Role of Culture



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### Abstract

Using secondary data, the study is an attempt to analyze the rise of jihad in the Pakhtun region. The objective is to investigate the transformation of jihad and the role of Pakhtun culture in the process. The study provides a thorough analysis of the historical background of Jihadi activities in the region, the role of religious figures, the establishment and role of the Darul Uloom Deoband before the creation of Pakistan, and the Afghan jihad and its aftermath after the creation of Pakistan. The study concludes that the concept of jihad has been manipulated historically by non-state actors to gain political authority and lately by the state actors themselves for the achievement of certain foreign policy goals. The study further concludes that although much of this process of jihad has historically been pronounced on the Pakhtun land, however, it is important to note that it is not culturally driven.

### Introduction

The present turbulent situation unleashed by an unprecedented wave of terrorism on the Pakhtun land is but a continuation of a long process, spread over decades. The areas now comprising FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have a long history of resistance movements; however, it is clear that the notion of jihad has transformed considerably over the years, not only in terms of the leadership of the jihadi movements and the means employed by them but also in terms of its goals and objectives. Before the creation of the state of Pakistan, jihadi or religious movements were rallied around a saintly figure or "Sufi". However, leadership was taken over by the political *mullah* in the new jihad, which started in the 1970s and flourished in the 1980s after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (Akhtar, 2010). The objective of the former was to clear the Muslim land of foreign powers, the Sikhs and the British; the new jihad unleashed by the orthodox *mullah* was mainly centred on the acquisition of political power by the traditional *mullah*, hitherto marginalized and considered non-Pakhtuns in the Pakhtun dominated society. The machination of the new state of Pakistan came as a catalyst in the process of the orthodox *mullah* coming into prominence, mainly to contain secular forces inside the country, and to use the former as "strategic tools" to achieve "strategic objectives" outside the country in the two rival neighbors (Afghanistan and India) (Akhtar, 2010). In fact, in both cases, state patronage was vital for the successful implementation of the strategy.

Seminal anthropological studies on Pakhtuns rightly suggest that religion plays a dominant role in the Pakhtun society, as saintly figures acquire enormous powers in times of extraordinary crises (Haroon, 2011). Religious mobilizations led by such figures as Syed Ahmad Bareilly (19<sup>th</sup> century), Hada Mullah and Haji Sahib Turangzai (20<sup>th</sup> century) are a clear indication of this trend. However, it does not mean that Islam overpowers or engulfs the culture. Fredrik Barth has rightly observed in his "Segmentary Lineage Theory" "that Sufis and saints were outsiders to the Pakhtun *Jirgah*-style assemblies and asserted no political power there" (as cited in Haroon, 2011, p. 63). Akbar Ahmad suggests that "the actual structure of the tribe did not involve the religious authority in any form except in opportunist seizure of power in situations where

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traditional *Maliki* authority weakened" (as cited in Haroon, 2011, p. 63). At the same time, recourse to religion by the Pakhtuns has been selective. For example, the Pakhtun culture has retained the right to *Badal* or revenge even after embracing Islam. *Badal*, in a personal capacity, is clearly contradictory to the spirit of the Islamic judicial system. However, it does not imply either that cultural framework completely define Pakhtuns' discourse in the day to day life. Many other factors, including religion, state policies and socio-political environment, play a role. It also does not mean that cultural outlook is completely violent. For example, the notion of *Badal* is modified by the other two cardinal elements of Pakhtun culture, that of *Panah* (Asylum) and *Melmastyā* (Hospitality). The following sections discuss these arguments in greater detail. Armed religious mobilizations before the creation of Pakistan in the Pakhtun land are discussed in the second section. It is an important starting point as except for the movement led by Tipu Sultan, and that too in the initial years of the British rule when it was consolidating its power in India, hardly any other part of the country had produced a genuine armed resistance movement. The third section analyzes the rise of non-state actors under the state patronage right from 1947. The section, however, mainly focuses on the period of the Afghan jihad and the rise into prominence of different jihadi groups. This is certainly the most important of all the phases in the rise of terrorism in the Pakhtun land. This era saw the now lethal jihadi groups mushrooming, mainly due to a network of *madrassas*. The last section draws some conclusions from the study.

## Historical Background

Two factors that largely influenced armed religious mobilizations in the Pakhtun region before the partition of the Indo-subcontinent were: 1) *Sufi* revivalist movements in the Indo-subcontinent and 2) the establishment of *Darul Ulum Deoband* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Millenarian (Religious belief in a future period of ideal peace and happiness) movements and systems of *Sufi* religious practices had always attracted Pakhtuns of northern India. Most of these movements originated in mainland India (Present-day India), while the theatre of its militant offshoots were the Pakhtun regions. Different *silsilas* or *Sufi* orders have appealed to the Pakhtuns of the region. The *Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya silsila* inspired most of the militant uprisings against the Sikhs and the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya tariqa* or method was inspired by the teachings of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the seventeenth-century Muslim *Sufi* and philosopher, also known as Mujaddid Alf Sani (1564-1624). Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762), student and successor of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, further elaborated the teachings of his mentor, emphasizing *Shariah* (Islamic Law) as the basis of social practice (Haroon, 2011). This *tariqa*, while retaining the tenants of *Sufism* added emphasis to individualized religious practices by returning to the teachings of Quran, *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet SAW), and authoritative commentaries. However, Pakhtuns did not follow the *Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya* order exclusively. They intermingled it with other prevailing *Sufi* orders like *Qaderiyya*, *Suhrawardiyya*, and *Chishtiyya* thought (Haroon, 2011). One of the main reasons for the popularity of these movements was the cult of its charismatic leaders. Sainly figures like Syed Ahmad Bareilly, Shah Ismail, Akhund Abdul Ghafoor (19<sup>th</sup> century), and Haji Sahib Turangzai (20<sup>th</sup> century) could easily mobilize large numbers of Pakhtuns by appealing to their love of religion. Although they capitalized on the Pakhtuns' sentiments, however, the cardinal feature of the success of these movements was state patronage. Analyses of Mughal accounts suggest that *pirs* and religious personalities among the Pakhtuns were given powers and were patronized to control the politically volatile regions. Emperor Jehangir would give allowances to *pirs* of *Naqshbandiyya* order in return for their loyalty (Haroon, 2011). These *pirs* would work as eyes and ears of the imperial government in asserting state control. State patronage in turn strengthened the *pirs'* role in dominating religious organizations through reinforced personal prestige and wealth. Given their weak political position, Afghan rulers were even more willing than their Indian counterparts in patronizing religious personalities to consolidate state control in the far-reaching areas. Ahmad Shah Abdali (1723-73) and Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-63) entrusted a juristic role in religious personalities, appointing them *qazis* or jurists, not only to adjudicate disputes at the

local level but to regularize a legal code for the nascent state. This confidence in the *pirs* and *Sufis* made them rulers in their own respective areas. It was this combination of religious and temporal power which brought to prominence such religious functionaries as Akhund Abdul Ghafoor.

### Akhund Abdul Ghafoor and his Jihad

Akhund Abdul Ghafoor (1793-1878) was the son of a Safi-Mohmand from upper Swat. He received his initial training in the *Sufitariqa*, *Naqshbandiyya* line, from the Hazrat Ji of Kabul in Peshawar. However, the most extensive education in multiple *silsilas* was imparted to him by Akhund Muhammad Shoaib. Akhund Shoaib had himself taken *bait* (Oath of allegiance to the pir) in *Naqshbandiyya*, *Chishtiyya*, *Qaderiyya*, as well as *Suhrawardiyya* line. Akhund Ghafoor attained his most vigorous training in all *silsilas* from Akhund Shoaib and took the *bait* in *Naqshbandiyya* and *Qaderiyya*. His mastery in the *Sufi tariqa* earned Abdul Ghafoor the title of Akhund, a title denoting distinction in the *Sufi tariqa*. Akhund Abdul Ghafoor came to prominence during the Afghan Amir Dost Muhammad Khan's campaign against the Sikh Kingdom of Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) in 1835. The Amir referred to the campaign as jihad and appealed to the Yusufzai *pirs* for assistance. The Akhund came to the call for jihad, raised an armed *lashkar* and fought against the Sikhs at Peshawar. As a reward for this campaign, the Amir awarded him land among the Yusufzai in Swat, Lundkhwar, and Mardan (Haroon, 2011). This helped the Akhund in two ways: first, this earned him the reputation of a *Mujahid* and took part in the subsequent mobilizations, i.e. Syed Ahmad Bareilly's Jihad against the Sikhs. Second, it provided him with enough wealth to cater for his generous *langarkhana* (An open community kitchen), which fed 500 men on a daily bases. This in turn, strengthened his following. Among his followers was Mullah Najmuddin of Hadda, called the Hadda Mullah.

Hadda Mullah's succession and Akhund Abdul Ghafoor's death coincide with the coming into power of Amir Abdur Rehman (1879-1901) in Kabul. Amir Abdur Rehman initiated the process of the consolidation of the Afghan state authority from the centre. Under this policy, the autonomy given to local religious figures was curtailed as formal military and the administrative system evolved. The situation was made more difficult by the British forward policy, which was initiated from the east. As against the closed border policy, the imperial power made westward advances through active military campaigns, thereby creating hurdles for Hadda Mullah to achieve an autonomous sphere of influence in the region. Therefore, Hadda Mullah's efforts focused on resisting these pressures to his regional autonomy. His major military campaigns were targeted against the British. He mobilized against the imperial power in 1893 in opposition to the latter's encroachment into Chitral and the penetration of the area by railway lines and cantonments. In collaboration with Sadullah Khan, called *Sartor Mullah* (Bare-headed), also called "Made Mullah" by the British, Hadda Mullah fought against the British in the battle of Malakand in 1897-98, mobilizing people from Buner and Mohmand. This was the time when descendants of the Akhund Abdul Ghafoor, led by Mian Gul Abdul Wadud, parted their ways from Hadda Mullah, thereby weakening the reformist agenda of Akhund Ghafoor *Piri-muridi* line. This made things even more difficult for Hadda Mullah in achieving an independent sphere of influence in the Swat region.

However, after their death, Akhund Ghafoor and Hadda Mullah's reformist agenda was taken well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century by his murids. Prominent among them was Haji Turangzai, who fought a prolonged jihad against the British in the tribal areas. Haji Turangzai will be discussed later. Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly, who had enormously influenced Akhund Abdul Ghafoor in the initial years and who precedes Haji Turangzai in his jihadist campaign, is discussed in the following section.

### Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly

Syed Ahmad is considered the founder of the *Wahabi-Ahl Hadith* movement in the Indian Subcontinent. In fact, the Al Qaeda-inspired Taliban-led jihadi ideology now at work in the region was initiated by Syed Ahmad Shaheed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ahmad, 2009). He was a close friend and student of Shah Ismail, grandson of Shah Wali Ullah, founder of the revivalist movement in India. Syed Ahmad went to Makkah for

pilgrimage in 1821. During his stay in Arabia, he was strongly influenced by the teachings of Sheikh Abdul Wahab, founder of the *Wahabi* ideology. After coming home, he toured India for the next seven years, making ground for his jihadist campaign (Ahmad, 2009). Subsequently, he proclaimed jihad upon the Sikhs in Punjab. Starting from Akora Khattak in 1826, he finally liberated Peshawar from the Sikhs in 1830. He was declared as *Amir-ul-Momineen* or leader of the believers, *Shariah* was imposed in Peshawar, and the city was given in the hands of two brothers, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Yar Muhammad Khan. However, through a treacherous plan in connivance with the Pakhtun leaders, the Sikhs were able to recapture the city. This strengthened Sikhs position vis-à-vis Syed Ahmad Bareilly and they bounced back strongly. In the final battle at Balakot in 1831, Syed Ahmad was killed along with Shah Ismail and other of his companions (Ahmad, 2009). Although the battle brought an end to hostilities in the short run, however, the movement inspired by Syed Ahmad Shaheed became a harbinger of more such events in the region in the future. Soon after the battle of Balakot, myths were created about the person of Syed Ahmad. It was rumored that he was alive, taking refuge in a cave, and one day, would resurrect the jihad against the non-believers (Ahmad, 2009). His shrine at Balakot is still revered by many as a symbol of the cause of Muslim *Ummah* (Community of the believers). Syed Ahmad Bareilly died, but the movement initiated by him was kept alive by his followers. Even Akhund Abdul Ghafoor was strongly influenced by the revivalist movement of Syed Ahmad right from the beginning. He even vigorously took part in Syed Ahmad's campaign against the Sikhs (Haroon, 2011). In turn, among the followers of Akhun Abdul Ghafoor was Haji Sahib Turangzai, who engaged the British for more than two decades in the tribal areas.

### **Haji Sahib Turangzai**

Haji Sahib Turangzai was born in 1858 to a religious family in the small town of Turangzai in district Charsadda. His real name was Fazal Wahid. Haji Sahib received his early religious education from a renowned religious scholar of his area, Syed Abu Bakar. After completing his early religious training in his home town, he was admitted to a famous religious seminary in Tehkal in the outskirts of Peshawar. This *madrassa* was affiliated to the *Naqshbandiyya-Mujadiddiyya* school of thought in line with the teachings of Mujaddid AlfSani and Shah Wali Ullah (Haroon, 2011). The *madrassa* had a profound effect on his future life, making him one of the influential revivalist leaders of his time. Soon after graduating from the *madrassa*, he visited *Darul Uloom Deoband* in India, one of the great religious institutions in the world. During his stay at the *Darul Uloom*, he was introduced to Maulana Mahamudul Hassan by the Pakhtun students of the *madrassa*. The Maulana was a prominent religious authority, and Haji Sahib grew an attachment to him. He accompanied the Maulana on *Haj* (Pilgrimage) to Makkah. At Makkah, he took the *bait* (pledge of allegiance) at the hands of Haji Imadadullah, one of the members of the *Wahabi* revivalist movement (Razarwal, 2008; Haroon, 2011). Haji Imadadullah showed great trust in Haji Turangzai, convincing him to take the task of Islamic revivalism in his own area. Upon his return, Haji Sahib took yet another *bait* at the hands of Najmuddin Hadda Mulla, trusted ally and successor of Akhund Abdul Ghafoor (Haroon, 2011). From then onwards, Haji Sahib channelled his whole energies for the cause of Islamic revivalism, mainly through armed resistance.

This was the period of widespread resistance against the British, and Haji Turangzai started his campaign by actively participating in the *Hadda Mulla's* attack on the British cantonments at Malakand and Chakdara in 1897 (Rauf, 2006). Heavy losses were inflicted on the British in this attack, making the *Mujahideen* emboldened to accelerate their armed activities. After the demise of Hadda Mulla in 1902, Haji Turangzai gave a renewed pledge of allegiance to his successor, Maulvi Alam Gul. In turn, Maulvi Alam Gul gave him his sword and turban, thereby making him his *Khalifa* (Deputy). Moreover, judging his calibre, Haji Sahib was appointed as *Amirul Mujahideen* (Commander of the Mujahideen) of the militant wing of the *Tehrik-e-Hizb Ullah* (Movement of the Party of God), an independence movement, in a secret meeting in Delhi's Fateh Puri mosque in 1914 (Haroon, 2011). Haji Sahib accelerated his jihadist campaign and mobilized large numbers of people in support of his cause after these responsibilities were entrusted to

him. Fearing large scale mobilizations in the Pakhtun region, the colonial authority issued orders for the arrest of Turangzai on 12th June 1915 (Razarwal, 2008). However, escaping the arrest, Haji Sahib migrated to the Mohmand territory along with his sons and close friends. He settled in Sur Kamar, later renamed Ghazi Abad by Haji Sahib, in the Safi region of Mohmand territory (Haroon, 2011). The tribal region provided a perfect base for Turangzai from where to launch activities against the colonial power: safe refuge, a responsive population, and enough arms and ammunition. Capitalizing on these factors, Haji Turangzai engaged the British for 20 long years in the tribal region and the adjoining settled districts. For example, on one occasion in 1916 Haji Sahib, along with *mujahideen* from Mohmand, Bajaur, Peshawar, and Mardan, launched a massive attack on the Shabqadar Fort. They inflicted heavy losses on the British, albeit with considerable collateral damage, as the colonial authority had resorted to aerial bombardment, fearing a complete loss of ground to the untrained militia (Rauf, 2006).

In 1923 the British sent troops to Mohmand. But this time, without shedding any blood, they managed to sign a peace deal with Haji Turangzai, thereby avoiding hostilities for the time being. However, in 1926 the British decided to construct a road network in the region to pave the way for the swift mobilization of the troops. This was vehemently opposed by Haji Turangzai. Two major confrontations were made with the British on this issue in 1926 and 1927 (Haroon, 2011). Although the *mujahideen* did not suffer many losses, the colonial authority was able in spreading the road network. The British were annoyed by such threatening activities of the *mujahideen*, however. They sent three brigades to the upper Mohmand in 1935 to settle the issue once and for all. The *mujahideen* confronted the British troops at Nahaqi Pass on 29 September 1935. The *mujahideen* demoralized the British troops due to their courageous performance on the battlefield, killing 35 of their officers and injuring another 60 in just one night (Haroon, 2011). Thus the British were compelled to send men to the Mohmands for talks. The latter agreed, and a grand jirga of all the Mohmand tribes was held at Gandhab. After a prolonged discussion, peace was restored as a result of a truce. This was to be Haji Sahib's last jihad. He fell ill in 1936 and died one year later on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1937 (Rauf, 2006). However, this was not to be the end of jihad. *Mujahideen*, inspired by the Akhund Abdul Ghafoor-Hadda Mullah and Haji Turangzai's movements, were busy in armed resistance till the departure of the British from the Indian Subcontinent, not only in Mohmand but in other tribal agencies as well. One such mujahid was the Faqir of Ipi.

### The Faqir of Ipi

Mirza Ali Khan, or the Faqir of Ipi as he was called by his followers, was born in 1897 in Shankai Kairta in North Waziristan Agency. After completing his early religious education in different *madrassas*, Mirza Ali Khan went to a place near Jalalabad and became *Murid* (Disciple) of the Naqib of Chaharbagh, a famous religious scholar in Afghanistan. He went to Makkah in 1923 and performed *Hajj*. After returning from Makkah, the Faqir settled in Ipi near Mirali in the North Waziristan Agency and started his peaceful religious preaching. He attained the status of saintliness and attracted a large number of followers (Hauner, 1981).

Although he was already inspired by the Islamic revivalist movements led by different *Sufis* in the Pakhtun region, however, the event which turned Mirza Ali Khan from a saint to a jihadi and made him the most feared yet unconquered man for the British was the story, in early 1936, of a young Hindu girl by the name of Ram Kor and a Muslim boy Amir Noor Ali Shah from Bannu. They both fell in love and decided to marry. The girl converted to Islam, was renamed Islam Bibi, and subsequently married Noor Ali Shah in a simple wedding ceremony. However, this was strongly resented by the mother of the girl, and she reported to the Bannu Police Station, accusing Noor Ali of kidnapping the young girl. In April 1936, the court proceedings ruled the girl to be a minor and declared the marriage null and void. The girl was given back to her parents, and Noor Ali was jailed. The ruling of the court aroused strong indignation among the majority Muslim community, accusing the British government of undue interference in a purely religious affair (Haroon, 2011).

At this juncture, the Faqir rose to prominence. Other religious leaders of the area were mobilized, and an appeal for jihad was made, attracting the wider population. In the ensuing crisis, the Faqir engaged the British in an intense guerrilla campaign right until their departure from the Indian Subcontinent in 1947 (Dupree, 1973). The Faqir's tactics were simple in utilizing the insufficient and inferior-quality weapons in an effective way. He would use a hit-and-run strategy, ambushing a British convoy or military installation and hiding in the nearby caves, mostly capitalizing on local informants for his intelligence (Hauner, 1981). The British, with their superior quality of weaponry and better-trained troops, were unable to kill or capture the religious leader, wasting their men and resources for more than 10 years, starting from mid-1930s to 1947. At one point, about 40,000 British and Indian troops were searching for the Faqir, trying to capture him but to no avail (Hauner, 1981).

Keeping in view the Faqir tactics, a remarkable parallel can be made with Osama bin Ladin. The latter, living in the same mountainous region on the Pak-Afghan border, successfully used local informants to escape a US attack in 2001. The Faqir, however, had an added advantage. He was a local and knew the people and its terrain very well, using it to the best of his advantage. Through his own personal courage, miraculous power (as his followers believed he possessed), and some of the brave and loyal fighters, the Faqir was able to keep not only the British at bay but also inflicting heavy losses on them.

Even after the British departure and the creation of Pakistan, the Faqir did not reconcile and continued with his activities. He was supported by the government of Afghanistan, inimical to the new state of Pakistan, for its own national interests. The insurgency was brought to an end only after the surrender of Maher Dil, Commander-in-Chief of the Faqir, to the Pakistani authorities in November 1954. The Faqir himself died peacefully in 1960 (Hauner, 1981). This completely brought an end to his militant campaign in the region, only to be imitated more than half a century later by Baitullah Mehsud, Hakimullah Mehsud and other Pakistani Taliban leaders, albeit for different objectives.

### ***Darul Uloom Deoband* and Religious Mobilizations in the Pakhtun Land**

*Darul Uloom Deoband* was established in 1864 at Deoband in the United Provinces in India, mainly to impart religious education to students from around the world. However, its role in the twentieth century Pakhtun region was more of a political nature than a religious one.

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some religious scholars at the *Darul Uloom* were busily bifurcating the revivalist and *Sufi* tendencies in the work of Shah Wali Ullah. They emphasized his revivalist agenda but rejected the notion that its genesis was in the *Sufi* practice. Instead, they stressed the actual content of the Quran and *Sunnah* (Practice of the Holy Prophet SAW) and individualized method of religious practice, thereby removing the *pir* as an intermediary between man and God (Haroon, 2011). Programs were started to rid the society of heretical practices. Students of Deoband long considered themselves as heirs and carrier of the idea of Pan-Islamism, expounded by the Persian religious philosopher Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1839-97). Pan-Islamism sought solidarity among Muslims around the globe. This was largely influenced by colonialism, as miseries of the latter were shared by Muslims from all over the world. Around 1910, the idea of Pan-Islamism was gaining ground in India, especially among the prominent scholars at Deoband (Haroon, 2011).

In 1914, Maulana Mahmudul Hassan, Chancellor of the *Darul Uloom*, proposed a plan for the liberation of India. It was decided that he would send his deputies to the tribal areas' Pakhtuns to support religious figures there to wage a militant campaign against the imperial power. They pointed out that it was a contradiction to wage armed resistance from mainland India since the nationalists had adopted a non-violent course. Hence the tribal areas provided a perfect waging ground owing to the free nature of the tribes, character of the people, and past relation of the area to the Indian politics. Maulana Hussian Ahmad Madni observed:

Without violence [we believe], evicting the *angrez* from Hindustan was impossible. For this [violent action of the *angrez*], a centre, weapons and *mujahidin* were necessary. Hence, it was thought that

arrangement for weapons and recruitment of soldiers should be conducted in the area of the 'free tribes'. (Haroon, 2011, p. 90)

Under this discourse, a well thought out strategy was adopted, and a narrative was built about the Pakhtuns, highlighting the un-administered nature of their land, militaristic character of the people, and their love for independence. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi (1872-1944), a scholar at Deoband, and Hussain Ahmad Madni, another religious figure at the *Darul Ulum*, articulated this political ideology about the Pakhtuns. Pakhtun population of the tribal region was described as a separate and distinct people from the rest of the Muslims in India. Highly idealized appraisals of the Pakhtun society and their past history were stressed to back their strategy in the tribal region. Pakhtun youth of the free tribes (*Azad Qabail*) was described as 'strong-willed and brave', which had always been busy in jihad. Jihadist activities of Hadda Mullah and Syed Ahmad Bareilly were emphasized as a mark of Pakhtun commitment to the cause of independence and the protection of their religion (Haroon, 2011).

Links between the twentieth century *Deobandis* and *mullahs* of the *Hadda* line had already been established in 1875 when Haji Turangzai joined a party of *ulama* (Religious Scholars) from Deoband to perform Haj. Haji Sahib spent a few years in Deoband to further cement the ties. In fact, later in 1914, it was Maulana Mahmudul Hassan that compelled Turangzai to move from Utmanzai to Mohmand to shift his jihadist campaign to the tribal areas (Haroon, 2011).

Under the new strategy, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, Maulana Fazal Rabbi of Lahore and Maulana Fazal Mahmud of Peshawar were sent to the tribal area to organize a new political strategy by re-establishing the military bases of Syed Ahmad at Chamarkand in Bajaur and Asmast in Buner to pave the way for the movement. Funds were channelled to the tribal region for the purchase of weapons, printing press for effective propaganda campaign, and other necessities.

It is important to emphasize here that these scholars or *ulama* from Deoband were never directly involved in the militant activities on the ground. Instead, their role was that of intermediaries, helping the local leaders of the movement. Therefore, it can be deduced that their real objective was not the independence of the country but the empowerment of the local *mullahs* or religious figures; through ideological patronage, financial support, and institutional help, the *Darul Uloom Deoband* firmly entrenched the authority of the local religious figures in the future politics of the tribal region. Even after the failure of the movement due to the apprehension and subsequent deportation to Malta of some of the prominent *Deobandis*, including Maulana Mahmudul Hassan, the tribal area *mullahs* maintained links with Deoband, sending later generations for studies. They would later contribute to the organization of the Deoband legacy in the areas which became Pakistan in 1947.

### Jihadi Discourse after the Creation of Pakistan in 1947

It is common wisdom that most of the jihadi groups that are now active in the country owe their existence to the Afghan Jihad, waged in the backdrop of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. However, it should be emphasized here that the Pakistani state used non-state actors as a tool of foreign policy right from the independence of the country in 1947. Soon after the partition of the Indo-subcontinent in 1947, volunteer armed groups, mostly from the tribal region, intervened in the disputed territory of Kashmir in an effort to free it from the clutches of 'Hindus'. Officers of the Pakistan Army, dressed as civilians, actively supported the untrained militia in their campaign for the liberation of Kashmir (Fair, 2011). The adventure led to the 1947-48 war between India and Pakistan, which ended on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1949 only after the UN intervened in the matter. However, Pakistan did not abandon its policy of using non-state actors to pursue its foreign policy goals in India. Again in 1965, in the prelude to an all-out war between the two countries, Pakistan initiated "*Operation Gibraltar*". Shuja Nawaz is of the view that almost 17000 armed volunteers, mainly from Jammu and Kashmir, specially trained for this purpose, took part in the adventure (as cited in Fair, 2011). Officers from the two Para-military organizations, the NLI (Northern Light Infantry) and the Azad Kashmir Rifles, accompanied irregulars. The purpose of using the volunteers was to ensure deniability

that regular forces were not part of the operation. This strategy was to be repeated again in 1999. In May of that year, Pakistan launched a limited incursion in the Indian-held Kashmir. *Mujahideen* were supported by the Northern Light Infantry, disguised as an irregular civilian, in an effort to capture a small territory in the Kargil-Dras sectors. A miscalculation on the part of Pakistani strategists, the issue led to a conflict between the two countries, the Kargil War in 1999.

While Pakistan continued its covert activities in Kashmir, by the early 1970s, it had started supporting dissident Pakhtun leaders in Afghanistan as well. Long before the direct Soviet military intervention, Pakistan had started training dissident leaders like Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masood (Gul, 2009). The strategy was dictated by Pakistan's efforts to pressurize the Soviet-supported Daud's regime to abandon its support for the Pakhtunistan issue. The Daud Khan regime had resurrected Afghanistan's irredentist claims on the Pakhtun region in Pakistan by supporting Pakhtun nationalist leaders in both countries.

Pakistan's reliance on non-state actors as a tool of foreign policy has been dictated by two factors. First, the Pakistani military began to study guerrilla warfare in the 1950s in its engagement with the US in an alliance against the Communist threat. Not only extensive arms and equipment were channelled to Pakistan, but vigorous training in guerrilla tactics was imparted to its military to help the latter cope with any likely challenge. While the purpose of the United States in imparting the training was to equip Pakistan to suppress such conflict, the latter was keen how to wage guerrilla warfare in its neighborhood. Second, the concept of jihad is very old in the Indo-subcontinent and especially in the areas that now constitute Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal considers Balakot, situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to be the epicentre of jihad (as cited in Fair, 2011). It was here that Syed Ahmad of Ria Bareilly and Shah Ismail were martyred while fighting against the Sikhs in May 1831, as discussed in the previous section. It is considered to be the only genuine jihad by scholars. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the Pakistani state chose Balakot to set up training camps for the Kashmiri *mujahideen* in the 1990s. Moreover, the notion of jihad was idealized through a well thought out discourse by the state right from its inception. This anti-India policy, perpetuated through military, civilian, and educational institutions, was actually the product of the Pakistan ideology. The latter itself was influenced, mainly, by the long and hard struggle for Pakistan and the subsequent communal riots as a result of the partition of India (Mir, 2009). It should be mentioned, however, that the concept of jihad was not entirely centered on India. Soon Pakistan would use it against the Communists in Afghanistan. Jihad in Afghanistan was dictated by many factors, including the above-mentioned ones.

## **Afghan Jihad and the Rise of Religious Militancy**

Imtiaz Gul rightly says,

I do not believe that extremism and terrorism are part of our DNA. When I look back down the years, I believe the turning point was in the mid-1970s when the then civilian government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided to recruit dissident Afghans as assets to deploy against a new government in Kabul that was leaning alarmingly towards the godless Soviet Union. It was then that Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal areas bordering Afghanistan became the springboard and the training ground for the Afghan dissidents. (2009, p. 18)

Major General Naseerullah Babar, the main architect of Pakistan's Afghan policy in the 1990s, was then inspector general of the Frontier Corps (FC). FC is mainly stationed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and its primary task is to help the local law enforcement authorities in maintaining law and order (Gul, 2009). Babar was instrumental in Pakistan's strategic thinking about Afghanistan and thus largely responsible for the miseries of Afghans and Pakhtuns, inside Pakistan, in the ensuing period. With the help of some of his subordinates like brigadier Aslam Bhodla and Aftab Sherpao, then a captain in the Pakistan Army, Babar consulted Afghan dissident leaders who had taken refuge in Pakistan. A training process in the guerilla tactics was initiated in the mountainous area of Cherat, some eighty kilometres southeast of Peshawar, to help prepare leaders like Gulbadin Hikmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masood for activities against the Soviet inclined Daud regime in Afghanistan. Apart from the leaders who had taken refuge in Pakistan,



others, too, active inside Afghanistan, were on the pay roll of the FC (Gul, 2009). It was part of a comprehensive strategy to not only ward off the communist threat but to destabilize the Daud regime and help prepare grounds for a pro-Pakistan, friendly and pliant government in Afghanistan. The policy of training and brainwashing Afghan religious leaders served two objectives. First, Pakistan wanted to ensure that Pakhtun ethnic feelings be channelled through religious aspirations. As religious leaders, against the nationalists, would not take up the Pakhtunistan issue and would recognize the Pak-Afghan border as a permanent boundary between the two countries. And second, to acquire a strategic depth in Afghanistan, to be used in any future confrontation with its arch-rival enemy, India.

It was the time when the United States started taking an interest in Afghan affairs, as it had long perceived an imminent communist threat to the south. Babar served as an intermediary between the Americans and the Afghan dissident leaders. In May 1978, Babar even sent some of the leaders to the American diplomats in Islamabad for an evaluation (Gul, 2009). Although the Saur Revolution and the subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan accelerated the process, Pakistan and the United States were long busy cultivating Afghan dissidents to pitch them against the communists (Abbas, 2005). However, the direct Soviet military intervention in December 1979 came as a godsend to both Pakistan and the United States.

The ensuing decade (1979-1989) was defined by a happy marriage of convenience between Pakistan and the US. Soon after the Soviet invasion, the Carter administration sought Pakistan's help in its effort to teach a Vietnam-like lesson to the Red Army. The military dictator in Pakistan, General Muhammad Zia ul Haq (1977-1988), showed no hesitation in coming to terms with the US. For the US, it was a golden opportunity to turn Afghanistan into another Vietnam, but this time for the Soviets. Pakistan had other objectives. Although it was not oblivion to the communist threat, the main purpose of joining the war was to turn Afghanistan into a client state and use its alliance with the US and the military and financial benefits such alliance would accrue against its enemy, India (Cooley, 1999).

Wasting no time, the US powerful intelligence agency, the CIA, in collaboration with its Pakistani counterpart, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), made plans for a comprehensive guerilla campaign against the communists. Soon Pakistan's tribal areas and the adjacent province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were turned into a launching pad for the war inside Afghanistan (Mir, 2009). Funds coming from the US, Saudi Arabia, and other western countries were channelled through the ISI as the latter was mainly responsible for intelligence and operations (Yousaf & Adkin, 2001). In fact, Pakistan ensured that no direct contact would be made between the Americans and the *mujahideen*; hence only the ISI was responsible for training the *mujahideen*. The CIA's job was to transfer the requisite amount of money, and if necessary, buy arms and other war-related equipment. Its job would end here, leaving the ISI the ultimate arbiter of planning and executing the operations (Yousaf & Adkin, 2001; Abbas, 2005).

Funds coming from abroad can be divided into two categories. First, the official funding or money given by different states, mainly the US, which released \$ 3.2 billion only in the initial five years of the war, and Saudi Arabia, which matched every US dollar for a dollar (Abbas, 2005). Second, the contribution made by wealthy individuals and other charity organizations, mainly from the oil-rich Arab countries. The official funding was instrumental mainly in the execution of the war. A huge amount of arms and equipment were bought in Egypt, China, Israel, and even in some East European states (Yousaf & Adkin, 2001). The rest of the official money was used by the ISI for training the *mujahideen* and for executing the operations. The bulk of the unofficial or private funding was mainly used for catering for the *mujahideen* families, settled in different refugee camps in Peshawar and FATA, and establishing thousands of *madrassas* around the country (Abbas, 2005; Gul, 2009; Mir, 2009). Both these factors, the ISI handling of the *mujahideen* groups and the flow of official and unofficial money (manipulation and commercialization of the jihad), although vital for the effective execution of the war, had serious consequences for the Pakhtun region in the future.

Pakistan made its own choices while using the funds coming from abroad. The seven *mujahideen* groups based in Peshawar were never treated equally by the ISI (Marwat, 2005). Strategists in Pakistan

were as concerned with post-war Afghanistan as they were concerned with the execution of the present war. The ISI looked into it that the bulk of the funds and arms went to the *Hizb-e-Islami* of Gulbadin Hikmatyar, the most conservative and pro-Pakistan group. Pakistan heavily invested in Hikmatyar because, in him, the army saw a future ally to be trusted upon (Gul, 2009). As discussed previously, Pakistan was cultivating the Islamist Pakhtun, Gulbadin Hikmatyar, from the mid-1970s. The former wanted to set the stage for a pro-Pakistan Islamist government, led by him, after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. Later events, however, proved Gulbadin an unreliable ally as Pakistan turned its patronage from him to the newly emerged Taliban, led by Mullah Umar.

From the onset of the war, it was clear that Pakistan had long term designs for Afghanistan. However, in retrospect, it seems the policy was a myopic one, overlooking its disastrous consequences for society. Popular media discourse in the west and in Pakistan advertised the jihad, calling it a holy war against the godless communists. *Mujahideen* were made heroes, calling them the champions of Islam and the free world (Marwat, 2005). This appealed to the emotionally charged youth, making sure a constant flow of new recruits. State patronage of the jihad and heavy investment in the non-state *mujahideen* groups made the jihad a profitable enterprise. Therefore, more and more jihadi groups plunged into the arena to have their share of the booty (Gul, 2009). Most of the lethal jihadi groups that are now active in the country, including those in Kashmir, emerged during the Afghan jihad.

Apart from the ISI handling of the jihad, a constant flow of the so-called "petrodollars" into the country made a huge impact not only on the war but also on the future events in the Pakhtun region. The large network of *madrassas* across the country and especially in the Pakhtun region owes its existence to the Afghan Jihad (Abbas, 2005). In fact, at the time of the creation of Pakistan, there were about 140 religious seminaries in the country. Now there are about 20,000 of them (Mir, 2009). Most of the private funding to the jihad was directed towards this enterprise. The establishment of thousands of *madrassas* pertaining to different schools of thought like the *Deobandi*, *Ahl-al-Hadith*, and *Barailvi* ensured a constant flow of new recruits to the jihad. Apart from the foreign volunteers such as the Arabs, Chinese, Afro-Americans, and Central Asians, these *madrassas* were the main source of recruitment for the *mujahideen* (Abbas, 2005). Literature in most of these *madrassas* was directed towards inculcating a spirit of jihad among the students (Marwat, 2005). Apart from the jihadi-oriented literature, speeches by religious scholars in the *madrassas* and in different religious congregations galvanized the people for jihad. Although there were Afghans and other foreigners in the *madrassas*, the bulk of the students came from the local population. This made an enduring impact on the region, as the students qualified from these *madrassas* continued to send later generations to religious schools. More importantly, the number of these *madrassas* not only multiplied but continued to gain strength, even after the Afghan jihad was over. Another aspect of these seminaries was that they were established along sectarian lines; therefore, they helped trigger a wave of sectarian violence across the country. There were different *madrassas* for *Sunnis* and *Shias*. *Sunnis* were further divided between *Deobandis*, *Ahl-al-Hadiths*, and *Barailvis*. Foreign financial and ideological support was instrumental even in the sectarian violence. *Sunnis* were mostly supported by the Saudis, while *Shias* were financed by Iran. Thus in the 1980s and 90s, Pakistan became a battleground for the proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Mir, 2009; Gul, 2009). This was a further step towards the militarization of society.

The manipulative strategy, which had long term implications for the Pakhtun region, involved the education of Afghan refugee children. The jihadi literature was mostly printed in the United States. The University of Nebraska was given the task of preparing an Islamize curriculum for the Afghan students (Gul, 2009; Cooley, 1999). The literature was intended for propaganda purposes and involved much unnecessary material. Children were indoctrinated in the strict militant Islamic ideology (Marwat, 2005). A closer analysis of this strategy suggests that it had nothing to do with the execution of jihad. It only sowed the seeds of militarization in society. Thus the next generation of the Afghans and of the Pakhtun region inherited this tradition (Mir, 2009).

The war ended when the last Soviet forces left Afghanistan in 1989, but it left behind a legacy of militarization that has been haunting the region for more than two decades now (Abbas, 2005). At home in Pakistan, such lethal jihadi groups as, *Sipa-i- Sahaba Pakistan* (SSP) (Corps of the Companions of the Prophet SAW), *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (Army of Jhang), *Jaish-e- Muhammad* (Party of Muhammad SAW), *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LT) (Army of the Pure), *Harkatul Mujahideen* (Movement of the Holy Warriors), and *Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi* (TNSM) (Movement for the Enforcement of Shariah) emerged. Except for the TNSM, which originated in the Pakhtun region of Malakand Division, and *Hizbul Mujahideen*, which is located in the Indian-held Kashmir, the rest of these *mujahideen* groups are largely centered in Punjab and draw its leadership and recruit from the same province (Gul, 2009). A cardinal feature of these militant groups is that their area of operation in Kashmir. They consider Kashmir an integral part of Pakistan and regard armed resistance to be the only way to liberate the former from the Indian occupation. Backed by the Pakistani establishment, these organizations brought havoc in Kashmir in the decade of 1990s. In 1999 alone, *Harkatul Mujahideen* claimed to have killed 43 officers and 1825 soldiers of the Indian army during their attacks on convoys and military posts (Gul, 2009). However, the *Sipah-e-SahabaPakistan* (SSP) – or the Corps of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) Companions – is an exception to this rule. The SSP, established in the mid-1980s as a response to the Iranian Revolution, is an anti-Shia fanatic sectarian organization. Considered to be an offshoot of the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam* (JUI), a religio-political party, the SSP was established by Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, Maulana Ziaur Rehman Farooqi, Maulana Esra-ul-Haq Qasmi and Maulana Azam Tariq. Initially it was named as *Anjuman-e-Sipah-e-SahabaPakistan* (ASSP) (Mir, 2005; Gul, 2009). However, it was renamed as *Sipah-e-SahabaPakistan* after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, the chief of the organization, parted ways with JUI as a result of big differences with the latter. The SSP aspires that Pakistan should be declared a *Sunni* state. It wants the restoration of the Caliphate system and has termed the country's *Shias* as non-Muslims (Mir, 2009). In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Maulana Azam Tariq, the then head of the organization, had joined hands with the Afghan Jihad Council, an alliance of Pakistan's religiopolitical parties opposed to the American occupation of Afghanistan. The SSP strongly opposed Pakistan's alliance with the US and the coalition attack against the Taliban regime in the neighboring Muslim country (Mir, 2009). In fact, the SSP is not alone in showing solidarity with the Afghan Taliban. After the Musharraf regime, under pressure from the US and India, banned some of the jihadi groups in Pakistan in 2002, cadres of the militant organizations secretly pushed to join the ranks of Afghan and Pakistani Taliban (Gul, 2009). This became even more apparent,

When the state decided in 2009 to separate itself from the process, the non-state actors it had raised decided to go over to the Taliban. With them went – as if uprooted by the momentum of change – some elements of the state establishment, too. Some left the establishment and raised the standard of revolt from behind their NGO covers, some took to crime on behalf of the Taliban and their warlords, and some, more dangerously, remain embedded inside the guts of the state. (Mir, 2009, p. xi).

## Conclusion

Analysis of the history of jihad in the Indian sub-continent reveals that the process has been manipulated for different political objectives. Armed religious mobilization against the British before the creation of Pakistan was spearheaded by prominent religious institutions like Darul Uloom Deoband. Religious figures from across the breadth and width of the country not only mobilized people but also actively participated in the Jihadi activities as a religious obligation. Investigation of the Jihadi activities after the creation of Pakistan further reveal that the process has been used by the state as a foreign policy goal. It is important to note, however, that Pakhtuns and their land have been instrumental in both phases. But it is also important to note, as discussed above and as revealed by the literature, that this has not been culturally driven.

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