

***The Islamic Emirate Of Afghanistan 1.0:***  
**A Study on 'Islamic Government' Practices under the Taliban 1996-2001**

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**Abstract.** The Taliban group managed to return to power in Afghanistan after the departure of the international coalition forces led by the United States and the collapse of President Ashraf Ghani's government in August 2021. Their determination to revive the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has raised global public fears that the Taliban will repeat the practice of a hardline Islamic government as previously practiced. they have implemented in the first five years of their leadership phase. What was the pattern of the Islamic government of the Taliban version that was implemented in 1996-2001? By analyzing the content of data sourced from documents in the form of official political texts, news reports, journal articles, and books circulating in the context of the time, this paper presents an explanation that reveals why the pattern of Islamic rule of the Taliban is the anti-thesis of the ideal model of government adopted. the majority of the international community. Instead of strengthening democratization and upholding human rights, the Taliban implemented many policies that curbed the basic freedom rights of the Afghan people in the fields of education, livelihood, and social and political affairs based on adherence to religious dogmas.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan; Islamic Government; Taliban

After a lengthy and successful battle against the US and NATO-backed government forces, the Taliban have retaken control of Afghanistan. They were previously deposed from the throne of government after becoming one

of the primary targets of the worldwide War on Terror coalition for allegedly aiding and abetting the principal suspect on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, Osama bin Laden.<sup>1</sup> On August 15, 2021, this once-powerful militia stormed Kabul and took the Presidential Palace, which Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani had left behind. The Taliban's entry into Kabul is a repeat of a *rendez vous* episode that occurred on September 27, 1996.<sup>2</sup> The difference this time is that the Taliban ruled the capital rather 'peacefully,' with little violence.

The Taliban's accomplishment in overthrowing Ashraf Ghani's administration stunned the international community. It just took less than two weeks to capture practically the whole land of Afghanistan after dominating the first province<sup>3</sup> is a shred of evidence that the Taliban now wield greater influence than they did before 2001, as many expected. Some intelligence analysts initially believed that the Afghan Government's *Afghan National Defense and Security Forces* (ANDSF), which numbered more than three times the number of the Taliban's army and had been specially trained by the US and NATO, would be able to muzzle or at least outlast the Taliban for up to 30-90 days.<sup>4</sup> According to the facts, the Taliban's power allowed them to overcome them in less than 7 days. The Taliban have also

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<sup>1</sup> The US-led global War on Terror coalition offensive against the Taliban in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001. After more than one month of fierce fighting, Kabul fell to the Taliban in November 2001 and the Taliban regime finally collapsed in total on December 9, 2001. See for example, CFR, "*The U.S. War in Afghanistan: 1999 - 2021*", *Center of Foreign Relations*, accessed from the page <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan> on 28 September 2021.

<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive description of the profile, history, and actions of the pre-2001 Taliban, the explanation can be obtained in several books such as Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven and London: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), Burchard Brentjes, *et.al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, (Varanasi, India: Rishi Publications, 2000), Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan*, (London: Pluto Press, 2001), and Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> The first provincial capital controlled by the Taliban was the city of Zaranj, Nimruz Province, which they captured on August 6, 2021. See Ruby Mellen, "*The Shocking Speed of the Taliban's Advance: A Visual Timeline*", *The Washington Post*, August 16, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/16/taliban-timeline/>

<sup>4</sup> Idrees Ali, "*Taliban could Isolate Kabul in 30 Days, Takeover in 90 - U.S. Intelligence*", *Reuters*, August 11, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-could-isolate-kabul-30-days-takeover-90-us-intelligence-2021-08-11/>

demonstrated their ability to dominate Afghanistan even though US and NATO soldiers are still entrenched and on their way out.<sup>5</sup>

Another major surprise from the Taliban's win in Afghanistan was their decision to hold a "news conference" to address the world. Communicating government policies to journalists and the media appear to be a routine part of public communication. This occurrence became unusual when it was carried out by the well-known Taliban, who were closed to the media even during their sovereign period from 1996 to 2001. Within a week of gaining control of Kabul, the Taliban staged at least two key news conferences. The first was a surprise call from Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen to the BBC presenter, which aired on 16 August 2021.<sup>6</sup> Second, on August 17, 2021, another Taliban spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, gave a press conference at the Presidential House of Afghanistan. One of the primary themes from the Taliban's two news conferences was that they will build an Islamic government in Afghanistan once more. The Taliban refer to the administration as the *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan*, with Islamic Sharia as its legal foundation.

The declaration of the Taliban's version of the Islamic Emirate jogged the audience's recollection of the pattern of rule that they had followed in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. They enforce laws and restrictions based on the literalist Islamic doctrine of the Deobandi and Hanafi schools of thought<sup>7</sup> which they propagate through institutions especially education under their power. Their association with this sect is shown in their name, "Taliban," which refers to the group of Talibs (students) from Deobandi madrasas who

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<sup>5</sup> The deadline for the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan is August 31, 2021, as directed by US President Joe Biden. This date is about 3 months behind the agreement on the May 2021 deadline previously signed by US President Donald Trump and the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, on 29 February 2020. See Joan E. Greve & Julian Borger, "*Biden says US troops may stay in Afghanistan beyond 31 August deadline*", *The Guardian*, 19 Aug 2021. Accessed from the page <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/aug/18/biden-us-troops-afghanistan-31-august-deadline>

<sup>6</sup> BBC, "*Afghanistan: Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen calls the BBC - interview in full*", *BBC News*, August 16, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-58223530>

<sup>7</sup> The background of the religious ideology adopted by the Taliban is discussed in sufficient detail by Barbara D. Metcalf in her article "*Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs*", in *ISIM Papers* number 4, 2002. See Barbara D. Metcalf, "*Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs*", in *ISIM Papers 4*, (Leiden: ISIM, 2002).

have been carrying out the activity since 1994 under the direction of Mullah Muhammad Omar. After defeating its adversaries, who were major groups of the anti-Soviet Mujahideen organization, the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996 and continued to battle for power following the breakup of the Soviet Union's puppet government in 1992. Under his reign, the Taliban was well-known for implementing Sharia law, such as the installation of the ordinance of chopping off hands, stoning, and murder, as well as outlawing pastimes such as music, radio listening, and television viewing.<sup>8</sup>

Is it accurate that the Taliban engaged in a pattern of violence in the name of religion during its first time in office from 1996 to 2001? This research seeks to analyze this remark through a documented survey by assessing the content of official documents, news items from reputable media, reliable journal papers, and novels released during the Taliban group's reign of terror. The selection of document sources in this connected time is critical since many contemporary publications are caught in stereotypical pictures as a result of ideas created following the worldwide War on Terror campaign, in which the Taliban has always been positioned as a war criminal and terrorist organization.

### **The Islamic Governing System and the Taliban's Violent Image**

Upon regaining control of Afghanistan's Presidential House, Taliban official spokesmen have underlined that the *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan* has returned to Shari'ah law.<sup>9</sup> To quell world outrage, they highlighted that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan would be inclusive this time, welcoming all components, including minorities, and would not accept its land being used as a base for terrorist actions. The Taliban also committed to protecting women's rights, including access to political rights, the labor market, and education, as long as they did not contradict Shari'ah.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam...*, p. 90-140, Neamatullah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban...* p. 123-150, and Burchard Brentjes, et.al., *Taliban: A Shadow...*, p. 100-125.

<sup>9</sup> BBC, "Afghanistan: Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen calls the BBC - interview in full".

<sup>10</sup> Ahmad Seir, et.al., "Taliban vow to respect women, despite a history of oppression", *The Associated Press*, August 17, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/08/17/taliban-vow-to-respect-women-despite-history-of-oppression/>. See also Saurabh Sinha, ed., "No discrimination against women': Taliban promise security, rights based on Islam in a first press conference", *Zeenews.India.com*, Aug 17, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://zeenews.india.com/world/ Taliban-promise-to->

The Taliban's official statement prompted at least two interconnected parts of a wide range of discussions. Secondly, the Islamic Emirate's language suggests a polemic debate about Islamic sovereignty with a Syari'ah-based governing structure. Second, the Taliban's adoption of Shari'at in the sociopolitical domain has earned them the designation as a formal expression of extremist and militant Islam. The very presence of the Islamic political system has sparked discussion among Muslims. Even though some Muslim personalities, such as Ali 'Abd al-Raziq, (Adam, *et al.*: 2015), Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Nasution, 2014), and Nurcholis Madjid (Santoso, *ed.*: 1997 dan Arsyad: 2022). Many influential Muslim scholars over history, including al-Mawardi (364/974-450/1058), al-Ghazali (450/1058-505/1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (661/1263-728-1328), and Ibn Khaldun (732/1332), maintained that the establishment of an Islamic state and governance is a normative requirement (Schedina: 1995). According to its proponents, the formal validity of the Islamic state and administration is evident in the Qur'an and Sunnah, while many specifics differ fundamentally in practice.

The Taliban portray themselves as a group that strongly thinks that Islam is the primary foundation for the governance of a state and its governing system. Nonetheless, the Taliban's implementation has been heavily criticized due to the use of physical brutality in law enforcement, including lashing, stoning, and public hanging. The Taliban's image as "barbarians" was reinforced when they were designated as a terrorist organization and became the primary target of the worldwide war on terror. As a result, narratives regarding the Taliban's leadership style, particularly those that circulated after 2001, often portray them as criminals. This tendency can be seen in labeling the Taliban as terrorist protectors (Dobbins et al., 2003; Gunaratna, 2005), spreading terror propaganda (Soriano, 2007), restricting women's access to exercising civil and economic rights (Pilch, 2006; Benard et al., 2008), and comparing the Taliban to other jihadist terror groups that use asymmetric warfare tactics (Bockette: 2009).

Based on the foregoing, the best method to gain a more complete and impartial image of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan during the Taliban's

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[honour-women-rights-build-a-secure-Afghanistan-2385947.html](https://20.detik.com/detikflash/20210818-210818031/lima-janji-manis-taliban), and Detikflash, "Lima Janji Manis Taliban", 20 Detik, August 18, 2021. Accessed from the page <https://20.detik.com/detikflash/20210818-210818031/lima-janji-manis-taliban>

first administration is to consult trustworthy papers provided at the time. Since its inception in 1994 until its ascension to power in the 1996-2001 period, the Taliban's acts have frequently garnered worldwide media attention and prompted notable scholars to write books and journal articles about them. These historical sources provide an excellent foundation for researching the Taliban government's profile.

### **The Beginning of the Taliban Emerging as a Political Force**

The phrase chosen to be the name of this movement represents its roots and identity. The term "*Taliban*" is Arabic in origin. The term "*Talib*" signifies "students or scholars" in Arabic.<sup>11</sup> The singular form of Arabic combined with the language of (Persian) ends in *alif* (ا) and *Nun* (ن) The plural form "Taliban," ie students or scholars, is then formed.<sup>12</sup> The term suggests that this movement was largely organized by Islamic students or clerics trained in Islamic institutions or madrasas. It is also possible that by using such a name, these students indicated that they carried the banner of Islam and were attempting to persuade Afghanistan's Islamic population that they were religiously credible to govern them, or that they distanced themselves from the Mujahideen political party and implied that they were more of a movement to clean up society than a party attempting to seize power.<sup>13</sup>

The Taliban emerged from a network of professors and students from rural private madrasas in southern Afghanistan and surrounding Pashtun-populated parts of Pakistan. The number of madrasas in the region increased dramatically during the 1980s as a result of the region's political environment at the time. Pakistan's military ruler, Ziaul Haq, used conservative groups to boost his political bases, such as the competition between Sunni Saudis and Shia Iranians because each protected religious institution prefers to back their side,<sup>14</sup> and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) coup that

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980), p. 564.

<sup>12</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 11

<sup>13</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 23

<sup>14</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs", in *ISIM Papers 4*, (Leiden: ISIM, 2002), p.13

occurred in tandem with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> The increase in the number of Islamic schools, primarily supported by Saudi Arabia, corresponds with an influx of around three million Afghan refugees. Religious schools are becoming the most appealing focus for many Afghans in refugee camps near Afghanistan's border with Pakistan. Not only do these religious schools provide the only education accessible, but they also provide a source of money for many families. Students get free accommodation and board as well as a monthly stipend to help support their families.<sup>16</sup>

The Taliban identify as Deobandi, a Sunni school of thought that emerged during India's colonial period in the late nineteenth century. a school named after the little northeastern Delhi town of Deoband, where the movement's founding madrassa is based which was founded in 1867.<sup>17</sup> Its self-identification stems from the fact that the majority of Taliban are part-time or full-time students of madrassas ruled mostly by Deobandi clerics who were also linked with Jamaat-e-Ulama-e-Islam (JUI), a religious group influential during Benazir Bhutto's second term in Pakistan. Several of the Taliban's top commanders received their education at Deobandi madrassas like as Jami'at al-'Ulum al-Islamiya in Kota Baru, Karachi, and Jami'a Haqqaniya in Akora Khattak, near Peshawar. One thing the Taliban and other Deobandi movements have in common is a focus on a relatively narrow range of Sharia law that emphasizes personal conduct and rituals, such as opposing traditional ceremonies such as weddings and pilgrimages to holy sites, as well as practices associated with the Shia minority, and a focus on the exile of women as central symbols of a morally ordered society.<sup>18</sup>

The Taliban movement's highest commander is the one-eyed Mullah Muhammad Omar. He was born in the hamlet of Nodeh near Kandahar in 1959 to a family of impoverished farmers of another land from the Hotak tribe, an offshoot of the Pastun Ghilzai.<sup>19</sup> At a conference of Durrani's leaders

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<sup>15</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, h. 11

<sup>16</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, h. 11

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Lewis, *e.al.*, (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1965), vol. II, p. 205

<sup>18</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs", p. 13

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 2. According to Nojumi, Mullah Mohammed Omar is from the Durani Pashtun tribe whose

in Kandahar, he was named movement leader.<sup>20</sup> During the Afghanistan-Soviet conflict, Mullah Omar rose through the ranks of the al-Harakat Inqilab-I Islamic Party to become one of its commanders<sup>21</sup> in the Argestan district of Kandahar province. He led a group of local Mujahideen into a key position north of the Kandahar-Chaman Highway. During the battle against the Russians, he lost his right eye due to shrapnel wounds. With the overthrow of the Najibullah administration in Kabul, Mullah Omar resumed his religious activities as the head of the local madrasa before being proclaimed Taliban commander.<sup>22</sup>

Mullah Mohammad Umar is an enigmatic person. For many Afghans, he is little more than a name. He has never been photographed, and he has never interacted with Western officials or media. His first encounter with a UN official occurred in October 1998, when he met with the UN Special Representative for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi, as the Taliban faced a severe onslaught by Iran as a consequence of the deaths of nine Iranian diplomats and a journalist in Iran. Mazar-i-Sharif. He seldom leaves Kandahar, where he stays in a palace allegedly built for him by Osama bin Laden. He only traveled to Kabul for brief visits when there were significant meetings in the capital.<sup>23</sup> More than 1000 Muslim clerics chose Mullah Omar as "Amirul-Mu'minin" on April 3, 1996. (leader of the faithful). Omar was picked as the Taliban's commander not because of his political or military ability, but because of his devotion and profound belief in Islam. Some claim that he was selected by God.<sup>24</sup> His rise to the leadership throne was also a form of social revolution. The son of a poor family from junior tribes and clans has utilized his madrasah education and international funding to destabilize the tribal nobility that formerly ruled southern Afghanistan. His administration also

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surname is Papalzai or Noorzai. He was a teacher at the local madrasa before the Soviet invasion. See Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, p. 20

<sup>20</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, (Varanasi, India: Rishi Publications, 2000), p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> The party is one of seven groups that receive foreign funding from the West through Pakistan. The leader of this party at that time was Mawlana Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi. See Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 101

<sup>22</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 121

<sup>23</sup> BBC News, "Profile: Mullah Mohammed Omar", September 18, 2002, on [www.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south\\_asia/newsid\\_1550000/1550419.stm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_1550000/1550419.stm).

<sup>24</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, h. 23

supplanted the Persian-speaking elite, who were primarily affluent and educated.<sup>25</sup>

The Taliban's rise as an armed movement in the political-military arena did not occur overnight. It arose as a result of the abrupt shift in conditions at the end of the first Afghan war, which was marked by the departure of the Red Army in 1989, followed by a lengthy battle against President Najibullah's rule until he was defeated in 1992 and the Mujahideen took control of Kabul. The success of the Mujahideen resistance would provide renewed hope for the emergence of a new, peaceful, and well-organized Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the government crumbled and deteriorated into a new civil war between erstwhile Mujahideen organizations that had previously unified against the Russians.<sup>26</sup>

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The internal situation in Afghanistan caused a wide schism between the warring political elites and the ordinary populace. According to Burchard Brentjes, a former professor of ancient art and archaeology at Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg, Germany, the 1992 civil war in Afghanistan was also driven by shifting allegiance among numerous interest groups in the United States, each with their interests. One interest group in the United States, for example, based its approach on the power of unification under

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<sup>25</sup> Barnett Rubin, *et al.*, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peace-building in a Regional Framework", in *KOFF Peacebuilding Reports*, Vol. 1/2001, June 2001, p. 15

<sup>26</sup> Barnett Rubin, *et al.*, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peace-building in a Regional Framework".

<sup>27</sup> Barnett Rubin, *et al.*, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peace-building in a Regional Framework".

President and Prime Minister Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hekmatyar. Others, including the CIA, desired Hekmatyar to be at the helm.<sup>28</sup>

The civil war has inevitably torn the country apart and widely reopened the social and economic wounds that the Afghan people have suffered from over twenty years of fighting. The country is divided into warlord fiefdoms and all the warlords have fought, switched sides, and fought again in a bewildering series of alliances, betrayals, and bloodshed. Instead of encouraging refugees to return from various refugee camp points outside Afghanistan, the civil war has created a new wave of refugees who have started to leave the country. Describing the social chaos in Afghanistan before the emergence of the Taliban in late 1994, Ahmed Rashid wrote the following:

*...Their leaders sold everything to Pakistani traffickers for money, including cables and telephone poles, trees, mills, machinery, and even road rollers. The warlords took over houses and farms, ejected the residents, and gave them to their allies... The commanders exploited the people at will, abducted girls and boys for sexual delight, looted market sellers, and battled and fought in the streets...<sup>29</sup>*

The social condition in the age of civil war was exceedingly distressing for the Mujahideen who had fought against the Najibullah regime and then went home or resumed their studies at the madrasa. They had known each other throughout the resistance and had frequently met to discuss ways to improve the grim situation. Several of them attempted to start the peace process by addressing the individual leaders of the warring factions to discuss their disagreements, but they were unsuccessful, and things only became worse. Then, these disparate but deeply concerned groups, which included Mullah Omar, Mullah Mohammed Ghaus, Mullah Mohammed Rabbani, and Mullah Mohammed Abbas, came together and devised an agenda that is still the Taliban's stated goal: restore peace, disarm the population, uphold Sharia law, and preserve the integrity and character of Afghanistan's Islam. Everyone gathered around Mullah Omar were Jihadi youngsters, but they had been badly disillusioned by the factionalism and criminal behavior of the once-idealized Mujahidin Command. Then, these disparate but deeply concerned

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<sup>28</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 116

<sup>29</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 23

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The Taliban's emergence is inextricably linked to the political situation in neighboring Pakistan. From 1991 until Benazir Bhutto's second term in office, there was a power struggle between two conservative Islamic parties, the Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP) led by Qazi Hussein Ahmed, who supported Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and the Jamaat-i-Ulama Islami led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman, who later supported the Taliban, and between the Intra-Service Intelligence (ISI) and the Home Ministry in Islamabad. The biggest impediment is the continuing Afghanistan civil conflict.<sup>31</sup> Pakistani policymakers are then faced with a strategic quandary. To establish a stable Afghan administration that may pave the way to Central Asia, Pakistan must either support a party in Kabul that brings Pashtun parties to power who will become Pakistan's friends, or Pakistan must alter policy and urge for power-sharing. At whatever cost to the Pashtuns, agreement amongst all Afghan groups. Pakistan's military prefers the first option. The military remains committed to securing a Pashtun triumph in Afghanistan by backing Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, despite lobbying from the JI group within the ISI and the influence of numerous Pashtuns who account for 20% of Pakistan's army. Hekmatyar, on the other hand, had failed militarily by 1994. While his fanaticism split the Pashtuns, Hekmatyar lost international support when his faction sided with Saddam Hussein in the 1990 Gulf War against Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United States.<sup>32</sup> The Pakistani government, notably Interior Minister General Nasirullah Babar, denounced the failure of Pakistani military and Afghan ISI activities to influence the newly created administration in Kabul. The administration is sick of backing losers and is hunting for alternative Pashtun proxies. Pakistan has removed all help to the traditional

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<sup>30</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 22

<sup>31</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 121-122

<sup>32</sup> Richard Labeviere, *Dollars for Terrors: The United States and Islam*, (New York: Algora Publishing, 1999), p. 261

groups of the Afghan resistance and provided it to the Taliban as a result of lobbying by JUI leaders, who are political supporters of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and have access to the army and the ISI.<sup>33</sup>

There are also additional external factors for the Taliban's existence. One explanation is that the powers that be - the United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia - are embroiled in continuous conflicts. Second, the recruited Islamic volunteers who had been used as cannon fodder against the Soviets had turned on their sponsors and benefactors. The 1993 World Trade Center attack is seen as an example of the so-called "blowback" that shook the Western world. Mercenaries deployed in Afghanistan for military training are then used to train Islamic extremists in North Africa and abroad. As a result, the CIA is seeking a new instrument to manage and administer Afghanistan.<sup>34</sup>

The Taliban movement was first mobilized in the spring of 1994. It is said that two young girls from the hamlet of Kandahari Sang Hesar were kidnapped by local warlords and raped repeatedly at the local checkpoint. Mullah Mohammad Omar, hearing of their suffering, summoned his 30 Talib colleagues, who only had sixteen firearms to carry out the rescue. The girls are released after a brief shootout, and the warlords are hanging from a steadily rising tank barrel. Calls for assistance flooded in from all around the district almost immediately, and so the Taliban movement was created.<sup>35</sup>

Months later, the tale goes, two militia leaders in Kandahar clashed over a lovely youngster whom the two wanted to sodomize, which entailed battling a tank and murdering numerous people. This rage is said to have fueled Mullah Omar's rage. He and the Taliban finally freed the children, and public appeals for the Taliban to assist in another local issue began to come in.<sup>36</sup> Omar and the Taliban then appeared as "Robin Hood," assisting misfits in evading the greedy warlord. "We are fighting against erring Muslims. "How can we remain silent when we see the cruelty being perpetrated against women and children?" Mullah Omar said later.<sup>37</sup> The Taliban's first public

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<sup>33</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, h. 26

<sup>34</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 18

<sup>35</sup> Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan*, (London: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 35

<sup>36</sup> Tim Mc Girk, "Mullah with a Mission", *Time*, March 31, 1997

<sup>37</sup> Tim Mc Girk, "Mullah with a Mission".

manifesto, "Ramping up the wrongs and punishing the guilty," was issued sometime before the Taliban had matured into an organization with sufficient military might to demand the establishment of a puritanical Islamic state.

### **Foreign Political and Economic Interests in the Taliban**

Pakistan is the Taliban's biggest supporter. The Taliban and Pakistan have a visible relationship, albeit the structure of their partnership is ambiguous. That is not a boss-subordinate relationship in which Pakistan can tell the Taliban whatever it wants. The link is apparent since Pakistan has supported the Taliban since the movement's inception. The choice of high-ranking Pakistani authorities to include the Taliban in preparations to create CAR routes, and their agreement for the Taliban to take Hekmatyar's significant weapons depot at Spin Boldak in 1994, are two of the few facts that demonstrate Pakistan's initial backing for the Taliban. The Pakistan-Taliban link is also evident in the fact that many Taliban members were born in Pakistani refugee camps and had Pakistani identification cards from their tenure in the country. They were educated in Pakistani madrassas and taught to fight by Afghan Mujahideen groups stationed in Pakistan. Furthermore, the Taliban recruited hundreds of Pakistani Islamic fundamentalist students to fight for their cause, and they are intimately related to Islamic fundamentalist groups like the JUI, which is led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman.<sup>38</sup> Five significant contributors to Afghan studies<sup>39</sup> depicts the Taliban's subsequent ties with Pakistan in military, political, and economic matters as follows:

*...Pakistani commanders are part of their military advisory organization. Regular meetings with Pakistan's Deobandi religious authorities are part of their decision-making process. Their external relations are reliant on Pakistani counsel and logistical support. Their military forces recruit militants from madrassas in Pakistan... Deobandi Pakistan (Sipah-I-Sahaba, Lashkar-I-Jhangvi, and Harakat al-Mujahidin) has bases in the territories under their control. Their economic foundation is based on*

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<sup>38</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan and the Taliban", in William Maley, (ed.), *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1998), p. 72-73

<sup>39</sup> The five contributors in question are Barnett R. Rubin from the Center on International Cooperation, New York University, Ashraf Ghani from the John Hopkins University, William Maley from the University of New South Wales, Ahmad Rashid from the Far Eastern Economic Review and Olivier Roy from Center National de Recherche Scientifique

*economic networks tied to the Pashtun Diaspora in Karachi and Dubai, as well as the Pakistani government of the NWFP and Baluchistan. The Pakistani Rupee is commonly utilized as money in Taliban-controlled territories...*<sup>40</sup>

This link became clearer when Pakistan became the first country to acknowledge the Taliban as Afghanistan's formal ruler on May 26, 1997.

Unlike Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and other Mujahidin organizations in the 1980s and early 1990s, who had exclusive relations with Pakistan's ISI and Jamaat-i-Islami, the Taliban are not affiliated with a single lobby in Pakistan. Within Pakistan's existing fractured power structure, they are strongly connected to the country's multiple governmental institutions, political parties, and business organizations. At the same time, they have solid contacts with the JUI, the federal government of Pakistan, the Baluchistan provincial government and the NWFP, the ISI, and the transport mafia.<sup>41</sup> The Taliban's enormous network allows them to pick and select whom they support from the start. At times, they may even defy the demands of Pakistan's federal government by getting the backing of the provincial government, while at others, they may oppose the ISI by enlisting the assistance of government ministers or the transportation mafia. A classic illustration of this is the Taliban's initial unsuccessful effort to seize Herat. Since Pakistan had earlier urged Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat, to revolt against the Kabul government, the ISI instructed them not to assault the Heart. The ISI also believed that the Taliban were not militarily equipped to confront Ismail Khan's forces. However, the Taliban launched a huge onslaught on Herat with the support of the JUI and the transport mafia, culminating in their defeat with over 3000 dead.<sup>42</sup> The nature of this partnership also allows the Taliban to pursue their goal in Afghanistan autonomously. The Pakistani government may use the connection as a pretext for its political intervention in Afghanistan. As a result, as international and local pressure increased on Pakistan to clarify its stance, Ms. Bhutto rejected Pakistan's support for the Taliban in February 1995. He said that Pakistan did not have favorites in

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<sup>40</sup> Barnett Rubin, *et al.*, "Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peace-building in a Regional Framework", p. 18

<sup>41</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan and the Taliban".

<sup>42</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Grinding Halt", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 18, 1995

Afghanistan and that the Taliban had not intervened in Pakistan.<sup>43</sup> "I cannot fight Mr. Rabbani's battle for him," Bhutto added, referring to the rise of Pakistani volunteers for the Taliban cause. I will not prevent Afghans from crossing the border. I can prevent them from returning, but most of them have relatives here..."<sup>44</sup>

Backing the Taliban has occasionally caused issues for the Pakistani government.<sup>45</sup> Several of Pakistan's peace offers and post-Rabbani restoration of government have been rendered ineffective because the Taliban refuse to share authority. Pakistan has also incurred significant economic losses as a result of smuggling activity to and from Afghanistan, which is a significant source of revenue for the Taliban.<sup>46</sup> Pakistan is also violating a Security Council directive to "refrain from outside meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs" by helping the Taliban.<sup>47</sup> As a result, there was a conflict with other Afghan surrounding nations including Iran, Russia, Turkey, India, and the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Pakistan was more isolated globally, particularly in 1998, because it was the only country that did not endorse UN Security Council Resolution 1214, which imposed sanctions on the Taliban for harboring Osama bin Laden. Considering the drawbacks listed above, and regardless of the nature of the relationship, Pakistan continues to assist the Taliban. The transition of power from Bhutto to Nawaz Sharif had minimal impact on Pakistan's support for the Taliban. Even after the October 12, 1999 coup, the Pakistani government became a military rule, the country remained hesitant to soften its attitude. On December 24, 1999, General Pervez Musharraf stated that his administration has presented various recommendations, including a route for an Afghanistan solution with Iran, and asked Iran to negotiate with the Taliban. Musharraf also appeared to rule

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<sup>43</sup> The Nation, "Benazir Bhutto Denies Support to the Taliban", *The Nation*, February 18, 1995

<sup>44</sup> Dawn, "Pakistan not Backing Taliban Says Bhutto", *Dawn*, March 18, 1995

<sup>45</sup> See for example Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 183-195

<sup>46</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, h. 191

<sup>47</sup> UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, February 15, 1996, and see also Security Council, *Resolution 1076 (1996)*, October 22, 1996.

out UN and Western involvement in the Afghan crisis, insisting that the international community accept the Taliban's control of 90% of Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup>

Pakistan looks to be willing to continue supporting the Taliban as long as it can preserve its political goal in Afghanistan. According to Neamatullah Nojumi, Pakistan has three goals for Afghanistan. The primary goal is to assuage the threat that a strong Afghan government may pose. An independent Afghan government might emerge from an alliance with India, rejecting the Durand border and cutting Pakistan off from CAR, a crucial oil supply and flourishing regional market economy. Another top aim is to salvage Pakistan's faltering economy by creating an energy-efficient economy for a rapidly rising population with free and easy access to CAR. The third objective is to maintain India at bay on the Kashmir border by preventing India and Afghanistan from establishing favorable governance relations. Utilizing Afghan land as a base for Kashmiri terrorists will aid Pakistan's army in balancing its regional stance against India.<sup>49</sup>

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are two more nations that back the Taliban. Saudi Arabia's backing for the Taliban is consistent with the country's long-held strategy of opposing Iran and Shiites while siding with Pakistan and Pashtun Sunnis. Saudi Arabia's engagement in the Afghanistan-Soviet war has been mostly restricted to financial support, with little involvement in providing technical aid to the Taliban. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates provided financial assistance as well as recognition from the Taliban administration.<sup>50</sup>

The Taliban also benefits from large oil firms seeking to access Central Asia's rich energy resources. They are attempting to capitalize on this resource by constructing the Trans-Afghanistan pipeline project. The project has at least two contestants. The first is Bridas, an Argentine firm, and the second is Unocal, an American oil company with powerful lobbying interests in influencing US government foreign policy, particularly in Central Asian matters. For major oil firms, the presence of a centralized government and

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<sup>48</sup> Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan's General Musharraf and the Taliban", *The Analyst*, February 2, 2000

<sup>49</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, p. 131

<sup>50</sup> Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, "Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Conflict in Afghanistan", in William Maley (ed.), *Fundamentalism Reborn?...*, p. 122-126

stable provinces in Afghanistan is critical to the pipeline project's success. As a result, they poured money into the warring Afghan factions and contacted them to start a peace process. The Taliban received a big portion because of their control over critical territories that would become the pipeline and their prospective strength.<sup>51</sup> The Taliban may bribe local army chiefs in Afghanistan with this money.<sup>52</sup>

The Taliban appear to be undermining their allies' interests while clinging to their objective. In many situations, they make critical choices on their own and impose policies against the will of their followers. This firm position on their objective is a trademark of the Taliban, and it has contributed to their reputation as either constant and disciplined or harsh and unyielding in the eyes of both allies and opponents. Their history as religious students is consistent with their goal, which is filled with religious elements.

### **The Taliban's governance pattern in the *Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan***

The objective driving the Taliban's military actions is summed up in their fundamental manifesto, which calls for the establishment of an ordered social life under an Islamic government based on the execution of their interpretation of Islamic Sharia. They are attempting to persuade the outside world, particularly the Muslim community, that Rabbani's interpretation of Islamic administration is incorrect since it has thrown Afghanistan into societal instability. The declaration, made by the Taliban's Voice of Shari'a radio station a month after they conquered Kabul, was unequivocal: "*The Taliban... have started their struggle to relieve their compatriots from pain and hardship, to ensure complete peace and security throughout the world. country by accumulating weapons, by getting rid of feudal empires here and there in this country, and by creating a strong Islamic government in Afghanistan...*"<sup>53</sup>

Various actions have been taken to accomplish their principal purpose. They established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and swore an oath of allegiance (*bai'at*) to their commander, Mullah Mohammed Omar as *Amir al-Mu'minin*, Amirul Mukminin, a method that alludes to what transpired

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<sup>51</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, h. 143-182

<sup>52</sup> Burchard Brentjes, *et al.*, *Taliban: A Shadow over Afghanistan*, p. 117

<sup>53</sup> The Taliban Government's Shari'ah Radio Broadcasts as quoted in Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*, p. 62

following the Prophet Muhammad's martyrdom in 632 AD when Abu Bakr was designated as the leader of the Muslim community.

The Taliban's ideal state would undoubtedly differ from that of the Mujahideen or any modern state. Mullah Deputy Ahmed, Mullah Omar's assistant, once stated: "*Sharia does not allow politics or political parties... We want to live a life like the Prophet who lived 1400 years ago... We want to recreate the time of the Prophet and we are only doing what the people of Afghanistan wanted for the last 14 years...*".<sup>54</sup> Mullah Deputy later stated in an interview with the Arabic journal al-Majallah: "... *There will be no head of state, but there will be Amir al-Mu'minin... Elections are not under the Shari'a and therefore we reject them. Instead, we consulted eminent scholars who met certain requirements.*"<sup>55</sup>

According to this statement, the Taliban have a consultative group whose primary responsibility is to make decisions that govern elements of life for the whole people under their rule. *Majlis al-Shura* is the name of the consultative body. The government structure hierarchy includes at least three *Shura*. *The Supreme Shura*, the Taliban's top decision-making body, is the first. The Supreme Shura was formed when the Taliban initially arose in 1994 and was controlled by friends and associates of Mullah Omar who came to be known as the "Kandahar Council," although being from the three provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, and Urozgan.<sup>56</sup> *The Grand Shura's* original membership was 10 persons, but military leaders, Pashtun tribal elders, and Ulama attended Shura sessions, thus it remained loose and amorphous, with as many as 50 people frequently participating. *The Kabul Shura*, or cabinet of ministerial officers, is another *shura* that is hierarchically inferior to the *Great Shura*. Shura was founded in 1996, shortly after the Taliban took control of Kabul. It began in 1996 with six members, largely Durrani Pashtuns, and did not include a representation from Kabul; by 1998, the membership had grown to seventeen. Kabul Shura controls the day-to-day operations of Kabul's administration, city, and military, although major decisions are delegated to the Supreme Shura in Kandahar, where they are made. *The third shura* is the Military Shura, which serves as the Taliban's military force. Mullah Omar is

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<sup>54</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 43

<sup>55</sup> Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*, p. 65

<sup>56</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 98

the Commander-in-Chief of the Military Forces, albeit his status and function are not defined. The chiefs of the general staff, followed by the chiefs of the army and air staff, reported to Omar. In Kabul, there are also at least four army divisions and an armored division. The military shura is a loose organization that develops strategy and can carry out tactical judgments but appears to lack strategic decision-making authority.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to these three main Shuras, the Taliban appointed local Shuras to serve as Taliban representatives in the regions they seized. Although notable people were nominated, the Taliban picked a Kandahar figure to sit in the local Shura in an ethnically and culturally diverse area from the Pashtuns. These appear to be actions taken by the Taliban to ensure the implementation of their program throughout the nation by removing their adversaries' political involvement. The Taliban's lone concession has been their nomination as governors of provinces. Just four Kandahari governors are known to have served in 1998. These governors' political authority, however, has been considerably diminished. Mullah Omar controls the governors and prevents them from establishing a local power base. Governors had an even lower political, economic, and social influence due to a lack of funding and the inability to carry out substantial economic growth.<sup>58</sup>

The Afghan Taliban's Islamic government's decision-making process has experienced considerable changes throughout its reign. During 1996-1997, the Grand Shura in Kandahar met regularly and included Kabul and military Shura members, as well as non-Shura members like as military commanders, clerics, traders, business owners, and representatives of local tribal groupings. Attendees were invited to voice their opinions before Mullah Omar made his choice, which lasted all night. Decision-making became entirely concentrated and restricted after 1997 when Mullah Omar grew considerably more isolated. Shura meetings have ceased, and Kabul and the Shura soldiers are seldom consulted on major issues. This arrangement has concentrated all decision-making authority in the hands of Mullah Omar and the tiny number of Kandahari Ulama who surround him. The Taliban, on the other hand, has grounds to defend such circumstances, as Mullah Deputy

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<sup>57</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 98-99

<sup>58</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 98-99

Ahmed stated: "[Our decision] was based on the recommendation of Amir al-Mu'minin. Consultation is not necessary for us. This, we feel, is following the Sunnah. We support Amir's viewpoints, even if he holds them... Mullah Muhammad Omar will be the supreme authority, and the government will be unable to implement any decisions with which he disagrees..."<sup>59</sup> As a result, fatwas appear to be substituting for government or other orders.

Creating a constitution based only on Islamic law has long been a priority for those seeking to establish an Islamic state, including the Taliban. Because the textual sources of shari'ah, the Koran and the sunnah, do not give specifics on how to rule all human concerns, Muslim scholars and statesmen were forced to interpret shari'a. They must then utilize analogies or reach a consensus to create a set of laws that govern the society and political system. Building such an Islamic constitution is urgent for the Taliban, but it will be difficult because they face two difficult challenges: domestically, the Taliban must overcome insurgent opposition to maintain the integrity of the territory they control, and internationally, they must persuade the international community to recognize them. This is the primary reason why, in their five years in power, the Taliban have failed to create a constitution that serves as the practical foundation for their *Islamic Emirate*.

Because the Taliban cannot wait for an Islamic constitution to be written before implementing Shari'a, they begin with the simplest portion, adopting basic laws that are textually available in Shari'a sources. They use Islamic punitive punishments such as hudud, which includes the death sentence for murderers, flogging and stoning for adulterers, and amputation for thieves. They also make choices on men's and women's social interactions as well as their public appearance, which leads to the segregation of women, the closing of women's schools, and the restriction of women's access to public amenities such as work, transportation, and medical care. The Taliban used religious police under a newly constituted organization named the "Ministry of Enforcement of Virtue and Suppression of Vice (*al-amr bi-l ma'ruf wa-n-nahy 'an-il-munkar*)" to implement this legislation. The Taliban pledged

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*, p. 65

that women's access would be restored after the country was restored to order and Islamic norms protecting women's rights were adopted.<sup>60</sup>

Although the severe and restrictive regulations that control people's lives, the Taliban have yet to draught Sharia-based legislation that will serve as the administrative framework of their government. Formulating such an Islamic rule would need a significant amount of time and energy, which the Taliban lacked, especially given the growing necessity for government administration to manage internal matters and international diplomacy. As a result, they are attempting to employ a government structure based on the constitution written under the reign of Afghanistan's previous King, Mohammed Zahir, with certain modifications and alterations.<sup>61</sup> The position of interim cabinet minister was made permanent in 1999, and at least fifteen new ministries were established. Unfortunately, because the ministries depended primarily on the fatwas and directions of Shura Kandahari, their administrative tasks were not carried out efficiently. The cabinet established an amorphous bureaucratic framework that allowed Taliban commanders to function flexibly as either ministers or generals so that no decisions could be taken in the ministry while a minister was at the forefront. Ministerial workstations are devoid of archives, and government offices are devoid of the general public. At times, Taliban commanders hold opposing viewpoints on particular issues, resulting in discrepancies in some of their public pronouncements, causing alarm and confusion.<sup>62</sup>

### **Excommunication for Extremity**

The Taliban's stubbornness in pursuing their own goal is backfiring. The Taliban leaders' lack of experience in political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural affairs, as well as their determination to interpret human rights in light of certain interpretations of Islamic, thought rather than more widely accepted contemporary principles, has brought the Taliban into conflict with logic. In today's world. The Taliban government's approach has received widespread criticism in a world that prefers professional politicians and warriors to oversee political and military issues. The confrontation between

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<sup>60</sup> Christiane Amanpour, "Tyranny of the Taliban", *Time*, October 13, 1997

<sup>61</sup> Neamatollah Nojumi, *The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan*, p. 139

<sup>62</sup> Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*, p. 52

the Taliban and the international community is exacerbated because the Taliban cannot comprehend why it should become a global issue when they, for example, chop off a thief's hand or stone an adulterer to death, as Islamic criminal law typically prescribes. The Taliban officials questioned how a Western group could mediate on behalf of an Afghan woman who violated local cultural norms.<sup>63</sup> Maulvi Jalilullah Maulvizada, the Taliban's solicitor general, declared in an interview:

*Let's state what kind of education the United Nations wants. It is a policy of gross infidel to give such obscene freedoms to women that will lead to adultery and herald the destruction of Islam. In any Islamic country where adultery is common, that country is destroyed and enters the domination of the disbelievers because their men become like women and women are unable to defend themselves. Anyone who talks to us must do so within the framework of Islam. The Holy Qur'an cannot adapt to the needs of others, one must adapt to the requirements of the Qur'an.*<sup>64</sup>

There are various cases of conflicts of interest between the Taliban and international organizations operating in Afghanistan, which resulted in the Taliban government's estrangement. The Taliban's refusal to share power with other warlords they regard as communist unbelievers have hampered UN efforts to form a functioning Afghan government and aid groups to provide help to people. The inability of UN Mediator Mahmoud Mestiri to mediate peace after the Taliban breached their agreement to talk to President Rabbani led to his departure in May 1996.<sup>65</sup> The Taliban also refuses to allow the World Food Program access to besieged districts. On February 24, 1998, all UN personnel withdrew from Kandahar, and all operational aid was terminated after top Taliban commanders beat, threatened, and refused to open routes in villages under their authority.<sup>66</sup> While on an official visit to Kabul in September 1997, the Taliban threatened and then imprisoned EU

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<sup>63</sup> Musa M. Maroofi, "The Afghan Taliban: Like It or Not, It Occupies Two-thirds of Afghanistan and No Sign of Weakening", *Washington Report*, April 1998.

<sup>64</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 111-112

<sup>65</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 43

<sup>66</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, p. 70-71

Commissioner Emma Bonino. Her arrest was made because she was photographing circumstances in a women's hospital.<sup>67</sup>

Nonetheless, the Taliban's women policies have spurred the majority of foreign complaints. After the Taliban conquered Herat in 1995, humanitarian organizations sought to engage the Taliban in discussions to remove restrictions on women. The agencies' efforts were futile since the Taliban refused to make any adjustments, such as prohibiting women from working in non-health-related positions or canceling the closure of girls' schools. As a result, UNICEF issued an official communiqué announcing the suspension of aid to its education initiatives in sections of Afghanistan where females were barred from attending school. The Save the Children Alliance organization followed the cessation of UNICEF aid. The Taliban's gender policy, enacted in Kabul in 1996, drew harsh criticism from international leaders including UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, directors of UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, and the European Commissioner for Human Rights, but there was no reaction from the Taliban.<sup>68</sup>

The Doctors for Human Rights group states that the Taliban has broken at least nine international laws with its gender policies, based on her study results on Afghan women's health and human rights. In June 1998, the Taliban required that all female Muslim relief workers visiting Afghanistan be accompanied by blood relations. As a consequence, 22 of the 30 non-governmental organizations decided to leave Kabul if the Taliban did not withdraw their demands, but the Taliban insist the issue is non-negotiable.<sup>69</sup> Afterward, UN mediator Lakhdar Brahimi denounced the Taliban, expressing UN frustration: *"This (Taliban) is an organization that distributed fatwas with us that prevent us from doing our job. The Taliban should know that there are not only limits to what you can endure, but also that there is increasing pressure on us..."*<sup>70</sup> The Taliban, on the other hand, refused to budge. Instead, they

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<sup>67</sup> James Ridgeway, "The French Connection", *Village Voice*, January 2, 2002. Accessed from the page [www.villagevoice.com/issues/0201/ridgeway.php](http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0201/ridgeway.php)

<sup>68</sup> Nancy Hatch Dupree, "Afghan Women under the Taliban", in William Maley, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 146-147

<sup>69</sup> Physicians for Human Rights, *The Taliban's War on Women: a Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan*, (Boston: PHR, 1998), p. 89-97

<sup>70</sup> Barbara Crossette, "UN's Impatience Grows over Afghan restrictions on Aid Workers", *The New York Times*, July 14, 1998

forced the closure of all NGO offices, sparking an exodus of international assistance workers from Kabul. In response to the NGO's request, Taliban Planning Minister Qari Din Mohammed released the following statement: *"We Muslims believe Almighty God will feed everyone one way or another. If a foreign NGO leaves then it is their decision. We didn't kick them out."*<sup>71</sup>

Disillusioned humanitarian groups are joining the international anti-Taliban coalition in greater numbers. Earlier, various Afghan bordering nations, including Iran, India, Turkey, Russia, and the Central Asian Republic, supported anti-Taliban activities for security, political, and economic reasons. The Taliban's worldwide standing deteriorated as a result of their decision to continue to grant haven to Osama bin Laden. The August 1998 attack on the US Embassy in East Africa, reportedly masterminded by bin Laden, and mounting pressure from American female organizations led the Clinton administration to take a firm anti-Taliban stance. Ultimately, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1214 on December 8, 1998. These UN sanctions were later bolstered by the UN Security Council issuing two more resolutions on the Taliban problem, Number 1267 on October 15, 1999, and Number 1333 on December 19, 2000. The Taliban has reached its breaking point and is beginning to dissolve. Its downfall was unavoidable, but it was the price the Taliban had to pay for their tough-minded goal in a nation as strategically crucial as Afghanistan.

## **Conclusion**

When the worldwide War on Terror operation was launched in October 2001, the Taliban controlled about 90 percent of Afghanistan's land. Although the majority of international entities deny its existence, the *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan* carried by the Taliban has essentially fulfilled the basic elements of a state agreed upon in the Montevideo 1933 Convention, which requires the fulfillment of elements such as having a resident who is settled and organized, occupying a specific area, being organized by a government, and having the ability to establish relations with other countries independently (Tsani: 1990).

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<sup>71</sup> AFP, "Taliban Reject Warnings of Aid Pull Out", *AFP*, July 16, 1998

The Taliban's version of an "Islamic Government System" takes the shape of official nomenclature words like *Amir al-Mu'minin* and *Majlis al-Shura*, as well as the adoption of Shari'ah as the basis for administering state and social law. The Taliban chose this Islamic Emirate design because it reflects their religious insignia and reinforces their assertion that Islam is Afghanistan's cultural identity. The Taliban's worldwide collaboration network has bolstered this identity even more.

Nonetheless, the Shari'at that serves as the state's foundation is based on puritan-revivalist readings of the Koran and Sunnah scriptures. The literal-textual application of the notion in the two primary sources of Islam is the basis for the Taliban's brutal image in the eyes of the worldwide audience. The audience's memories of the Taliban's tenacity in its first administration, which ignored international appeals to protect human rights, reappeared when the Taliban reclaimed control of Afghanistan after two decades of struggle. Will the Taliban for the second time implement their old pattern of violence full of rule? Or will they make changes according to the current context as they promised in many press conferences after seizing power? A study of the dynamics of government that will be run by the Taliban in the *Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan 2.0* in the next few years will certainly be a very interesting discussion.

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