

WHO IS THE ENEMY IN AFGHANISTAN?

Look Who Created the Taliban: Saudi Arabia and the Brits

by Ramtanu Maitra

Sept. 25—A common refrain in Washington in some quarters is that if the United States begins withdrawing troops now, Afghanistan will be taken over by the Taliban. The Taliban will, once again, bring in al-Qaeda, posing a threat to Americans residing thousands of miles away. Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, in an interview with *Fortune* magazine on Sept. 22, “If you want another terrorist attack in the U.S., abandon Afghanistan. . . . The last time we left Afghanistan, and we abandoned Pakistan, that territory became the very territory on which al-Qaeda trained and attacked us on September 11th.”

Rice, of course, held office when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime from Kabul, in 2001; her statement was issued at a time when President Obama and his administration has, under review, options which could lead to a wholesale reconsideration of its strategy.

It is important to investigate whether her statement is a valid assessment, or was made to rally those in Washington who want the present administration to adopt the British imperial policy and lead America into another Vietnam War, weakening the United States, and endangering the entire world. Is Rice doing exactly what was done by the 1960s’ policymakers who lied to the American people that the purpose of the Vietnam War was to prevent Communists from taking over Asia?

Remember the “domino theory”? Now, find out how similar that theory is to the one that Rice is propagating.

The Taliban: A Laboratory Product

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the “free world” got together to push the Red Army back and smack the Russian bear. Money flowed into Afghanistan from the West and the Persian Gulf, with the intent of protecting the sovereignty of Afghanistan, preserving Islam, and crippling the Communists. This went on for ten years, during which many Afghan-bred mujahideen (religious fighters) were armed and trained by the Western powers. Ten years later, in 1989, the Soviets, humiliated and badly mangled, left Afghanistan. Then, the groups of mujahideen the West had created fell upon each other and began a civil war, trying to grab control of Kabul.

During the 1980s, Saudi-funded radical Pakistani *madrassas* (seminaries) had pumped out thousands of Afghan foot soldiers for the U.S.- and Saudi-funded *jihad* against the Soviets. They also helped bind the independent-minded Pushtun tribesmen closely to the Pakistani government for the first time in history, easing the acute insecurity Pakistan had felt towards Afghanistan and the disputed border.

However, only in 1994—almost 15 years after the



The Taliban in Herat, Afghanistan, during their 1994-2001 rule. They are by no means an indigenous phenomenon; in fact, nobody in Afghanistan had ever heard of such a group in times past.

Soviet invasion began—did the world come to know about the rising force called the Taliban. Afghanistan had never had a politico-religious group of that name, nor had Afghans even heard about the group before. The Taliban was created as a handmaiden of outside forces, including:

- Saudi Arabia, which indoctrinated a group of Afghans by funding the establishment of thousands of *ma-drassas* inside Pakistan;
 - The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which acted at the behest of Islamabad to gain control of Kabul through a proxy and dependent rag-tag group; and
 - British intelligence, which saw the Taliban as a potent ally that would further British interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia by undermining all sovereign nation-states.
- All this, while Washington watched the development from a distance, essentially encouraging it.

To be precise, the Taliban is a laboratory product, created to unleash instability throughout the area. The instability is essential for the empire builders, and those who know how the British Empire was built in the 18th and 19th centuries, would recognize the phenomenon in a flash.

The Pakistani ISI and the military trained this group of Islamic zealots indoctrinated by Saudi-funded Wahhabism, an ultra-conservative version of Sunni Islam. Beginning in 1994, the Pakistani military, aided by these zealots, went against the somewhat war-weary Afghan mujahideen. With the Islamic flag in their hands and Pakistani soldiers providing the fighting-muscle, the Taliban soon overran most of Afghanistan, but not all. Between 1995 and 2001, when the United States landed its Special Forces from Uzbekistan, the Taliban rule had lost its momentum. Once a binding force in the midst of greedy, power-hungry mujahideen leaders, the Taliban, after it came to power, lost credibility fast. Reports indicate that not more than 5% of Afghans in 2001 still supported these zealots.

It also became evident in 2001, when the U.S. Special Forces, with the help of the Tajik-Uzbek-Hazara-dominated Northern Alliance, breezed through Afghanistan and took control of the whole country in six weeks, that the Taliban could not fight. Although the Bush Administration did not divulge it at the beginning, it soon became public knowledge that Washington had allowed the Pakistani government to rescue thousands of Afghan Taliban, Pakistani adjuncts of the Taliban, Pakistani ISI and Army officers, al-Qaeda volunteers, and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) members from the northern Afghan city of Kunduz. It is almost a replay of how the bin Laden family members were spirited out of the United States, just hours after the 9/11 attacks, when the entire airspace of the United States was under lockdown.

The defeated Taliban and al-Qaeda had fled to Kunduz after losing battles across the north of the country, and many were surrendering. But then, something inexplicable happened. Over a three-day period, Pakistani military planes made non-stop flights in and out of the Kunduz airport, which was controlled by the Taliban. All the important Taliban commanders and Pakistanis escaped along a safe-flight corridor, supposedly guaranteed by the Americans. That airlift, which American soldiers called “Operation Airlift of Evil,” made the Northern Alliance soldiers livid. The Indian government sent diplomatic protest notes to the American and



British governments. The Kunduz airlift story became available to the world much later, when a high-level CIA officer, Gary Berntsen, who was reportedly the second-in-command during the operation, described it in his book.¹

Saudi Arabia's Role

Following the capture of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996, only three nations—Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.)—all close allies of the United States—recognized the regime. There is every reason why the Saudis did that.

1. With Ralph Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker: The attack on bin Laden and al-Qaeda: A personal account by the CIA's key field commander* (New York: Crown, 2005).

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, bordering Afghanistan, the Saudis have pumped in money to indoctrinate the citizens of these nascent states. They provided the money, and Britain provided the manpower, in the form of a religious group, the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT). The HuT is headquartered in England, but banned in many Central Asian states. If one were to ask Tony Blair or Gordon Brown about the HuT, one would be told that the group is “peace-loving.” Both prime ministers, despite the demands of many Britons, have refused to ban the group’s activities in Britain.

On the other hand, ask the same question of any of the Central Asian heads of state, and he would point out that the most ferocious militant group in Central Asia is

the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and almost all the members of the IMU were former HuT members. Both groups are dedicated to destroying Islamic sovereign nation-states and establishing a caliphate. That is what al-Qaeda preaches, and so does Saudi Wahhabi doctrine.

Presently, the British-run HuT has set up a base in Lahore, the second-most populous Pakistani city, bordering India. The *Times* of London reported in July, that Hizb ut-Tahrir was preparing for a “bloodless military coup,” in order to indoctrinate the region by “military means,” if necessary. Members of the group based in Lahore said the group was prepared to bring the Islamic caliphate to power by “waging war.”

As Afghanistan plunged into civil war in the 1990s, the Saudis began funding new *madrassas* in Pakistan’s Pushtun-majority areas, near the Afghan border, as well as in the port city of Karachi and in rural Punjab. The Pakistani Army saw the large number of *madrassa*-trained *jihadis* as an asset for its covert support of the Taliban in Afghanistan, as well as its proxy war with India in Kashmir. While in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province (NWFP), bordering Afghanistan, and the gateway to the famed Khyber Pass, *madrassas* supplied both Afghan refugees and Pakistanis as cannon fodder for the Taliban, the Binori *madrassa* and others associated with it formed the base for Deobandi groups (not too distant from the Wahhabi), such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed, which sought to do the Pakistan Army’s bidding in Kashmir. The many Ahle-Hadith seminaries supplied Salafi (Wahhabi) groups, such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba. Arab sheikhs funded *madrassas* in the Rahimyar Khan area of rural Punjab, which formed the backbone of hard-core anti-Shi’ite *jihadi* groups like the Sipah-e-Sahaba, and its even more militant offshoot, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. All these groups shared training camps and other facilities, under the aegis of Pakistan’s ISI.

The Saudi and Gulf petrodollars encouraged a Wahhabi *jihad*-centered curriculum. Prominent *madrassas* included the Darul Uloom Haqqania at Akora Khattak in the NWFP and the Binori *madrassa* in Karachi. The Haqqania boasts almost the entire Taliban leadership among its graduates, including top leader Mullah Omar, while the Binori *madrassa*, whose leader Mufti Shamzai was assassinated, was once talked about as a possible hiding place of Osama bin Laden, and is also reportedly the place where bin Laden met Mullah Omar to form the al-Qaeda-Taliban partnership.

British-Saudi Joint Effort: The ‘Al-Yamamah’ Link

Saudi money does not flow out of the Saudi government Treasury, but from various charities. One such charity is al-Haramain. After al-Haramain figured among a number of Saudi charities accused by Washington of financing terrorism after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, the foundation was closed in Saudi Arabia, in 2005. Al-Haramain was said to have received \$45-50 million each year in donations, and has spent some \$300 million on humanitarian work overseas.

However, the U.S. accusation has had no effect on the donors. The foundation and other private groups that have been dissolved, and their international operations and assets folded into a new body, have been named the Saudi National Commission for Charitable Work Abroad, which will employ all those who were working for al-Haramain and other charities that were closed because of their support for terrorist groups. In other words, the more it changed, the more it remained the same.

Where British and Saudi operations converge in the most profound way, is in the longstanding “al-Yamamah” covert operations slush fund, established through the arms-for-oil barter scheme first negotiated between the Margaret Thatcher government in Great Britain, and Saudi Arabia’s Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, in 1985, and still operational today. As *EIR* has exclusively revealed, al-Yamamah has generated hundreds of billions of dollars in off-budget, offshore funds, that were one critical source of Anglo-Saudi funding to the Afghan mujahideen, in their battle against the Soviets. In a 2006 official biography, Prince Bandar’s ghostwriter boasted that al-Yamamah was a geopolitical partnership between London and Riyadh, to “combat communism” through the buildup of the covert funding conduit. As recently as 2006, the funds were used to stage a number of attempted coups d’état in Africa, which had nothing to do with fighting communism, and everything to do with British schemes to engulf that continent in perpetual, genocidal war. The Anglo-Saudi schemes for South Asia are identical, and there is good reason to believe that al-Yamamah is an active feature of the on-going destabilizations.

This brings us to the question of the relationship between the Saudis and al-Qaeda. Beside the fact that 15 of the 19 terrorist 9/11 operatives were Saudis, it is to be noted that, although the distance from Riyadh to southern Afghanistan is a fraction of the distance between



US Army/PFC Aubree Rundle

This U.S. helicopter has landed in an opium poppy field in southern Afghanistan. Why can't NATO stop the enormous drug traffic there? Ask drug-legalizers George Soros and Britain's Lord Mark Malloch-Brown.

Kabul and Washington, no airplane ever hit Saudi Arabia's palaces, nor its fabled oilfields. All the major terrorist attacks that occurred inside Saudi Arabia were aimed against U.S. targets there.

In other words, if one ignores the mainstream media, there remains no doubt that Riyadh and al-Qaeda work hand-in-glove. Both have the same objectives. One of the major figures dealing with the Taliban, and protecting al-Qaeda, was the Georgetown University-educated Prince Turki bin al-Faisal, who was also an Ambassador to the United States. Prince Turki was given charge, in 1993, of dealing with the feuding factions of Afghan mujahideen. The Taliban began to emerge a year later. Prince Turki was also working closely with the Pakistani ISI and met Mullah Omar inside Afghanistan.

Turki bin al-Faisal was the Saudi intelligence chief between 1979 and 2002, the crucial years during which the Taliban was "bred," the Afghan Taliban brought al-Qaeda into Afghanistan, and the 9/11 events occurred in the United States. In 2002, the Saudi King appointed Prince Turki as the Ambassador to Britain. The appointment created an uproar in London, particularly among the intelligence community, but Prime Minister Tony Blair personally intervened to accept his credentials.

Britain in the Saddle

While the Saudis and the Pakistani military have played significant roles on the ground, shoring up the

Taliban and bringing it together with al-Qaeda, Britain's role was not simply to provide the indoctrinating terrorists, in the garb of the "peace-loving" Hizb ut-Tahrir, but much more, particularly after U.S. and other NATO troops were in Afghanistan. While some 9,000 British troops were sent into harm's way, British empire-servers were also taking good care of the enemies who were killing the British soldiers.

The British operations came to light when Afghan President Hamid Karzai expelled two MI6 agents on Dec. 27, 2007, on charges that they posed a threat to the country's national security. Afghan government officials said the decision to expel them was taken at the behest of the CIA, after the two agents were caught

funding Taliban units. One of the agents, Mervyn Patterson, worked for the United Nations, while the other, Michael Semple, worked for the European Union. Both were Afghan specialists who had been operating in the country for over 20 years; that means they must have been interacting on behalf of London with all the al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders there.

An unnamed Afghan government official told the London *Sunday Telegraph* that "this warning," that the men were financing the Taliban for at least ten months, "came from the Americans. They were not happy with the support being provided to the Taliban. They gave the information to our intelligence services, who ordered the arrests." The source added, "The Afghan government would never have acted alone to expel officials of such a senior level. This was information that was given to the NDS [National Directorate of Security] by the Americans." In 2006, U.S. military commanders in Afghanistan had loudly protested the British decision, in a deal with local tribal leaders, to withdraw troops from Musa Qala, opening the door for a Taliban takeover of the region.

The London *Times* wrote that, when Patterson and Semple were arrested, they had \$150,000 with them, which was to be given to Taliban commanders in Musa Qala. "British officials have been careful to distance current MI6 talks with Taliban commanders in Helmand from the expulsions of Michael Semple, the Irish head

of the EU mission and widely known as a close confidant of Britain's ambassador, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, and Mervyn Patterson, a British advisor to the UN," the *Times* wrote. But what has not been told, is that these two MI6 agents were operating in Helmand, the center of Afghanistan's vast opium production. Were Patterson and Semple not simply out to create a British faction within the Taliban, but to arrange for a large-scale opium shipment network, to generate cash for the City of London and Her Majesty's Service?

Besides its covert operations inside Afghanistan, undermining both Kabul and Washington, Britain also rides American shoulders in Afghanistan. One such attempt that failed, was in January 2008, when President Karzai turned down the joint effort of Washington and London to appoint Lord Paddy Ashdown as the UN's super envoy to Afghanistan. Ashdown, a "liberal" and a "democrat," who wears his vainglorious feudal title on his shirtsleeves, was ready to pinch-hit for London and Washington, which are looking increasingly like colonial powers trying to occupy Afghanistan, to further undermine the "duly elected" Afghan President.

In addition, Britain works through some others who have the keys to almost all the locks in Washington. Take, for instance, the duo of George Soros and Lord Mark Malloch-Brown. Soros, who has a hook over the world's narcotics cartels, benefits immensely from the explosion of the drug traffic; Malloch-Brown, adequately trained by Her Majesty's Service, serves the interest of the offshore banks and the City of London by helping to procure the much-needed liquidity to keep the imperial wheels greased. In April 2007, Malloch-Brown was appointed vice chairman of Soros's Quantum Fund, whence come Soros's billions. The *Financial Times* of London reported at the time, that "Sir Mark will also serve as vice-chairman of the billionaire philanthropist's Open Society Institute (OSI), which promotes democracy and human rights, particularly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union." The newspaper added, in a May 1, 2007 article: "In a letter to shareholders in his Quantum hedge funds, Mr. Soros said Sir Mark would provide advice on a variety of issues to him and his two sons, who now run the company on a day-to-day basis. With his extensive international contacts, Malloch-Brown will help create opportunities for [Soros Fund Management] and the fund around the world."

Lord Malloch-Brown was earlier Britain's Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

While Soros promotes drug legalization internationally, the Afghan drug lords do their part—with the help of the Afghan militia, illegal cash, and gunpowder. At the same time, the Soros-funded International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), formerly known as the Senlis Council, having enlisted a number of drug-loving bureaucrats, holds seminars on the "impossibility" of eradication of Afghan opium. Behind these shenanigans, the prime objective of the Senlis Council, and its benefactor Soros, is to legalize opium production.

What emerges from this investigation is that the Taliban is not a natural product of Afghanistan, and never existed there prior to 1994. The Taliban is a movement centered on the Wahhabi doctrine, funded by Saudi and Gulf money, as well as by the joint British-Saudi al-Yamamah slush fund.

The 'Axis of Evil'

What emerges from this investigation is that the Taliban is not a natural product of Afghanistan, and never existed there prior to 1994. The Taliban is a movement centered on the Wahhabi doctrine, funded by Saudi and Gulf money, as well as by the joint British-Saudi al-Yamamah slush fund. The Pakistani ISI and military train and arm them, and pro-British power players such as Soros and Malloch-Brown keep them in place, to create and launder opium-centered illegal money for the City of London and Wall Street.

While U.S. and other NATO troops are laying down their lives to fight the "evil incarnates," the Taliban and al-Qaeda, those "evil incarnates" are being strengthened by the "best" allies of the United States—Britain, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the City of London, not to mention Wall Street.

If Condoleezza Rice and her ilk feel deeply concerned that the security of the United States will be weakened by withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan, they should stop issuing their false statements and go after the real "axis of evil"—the British Empire and those who serve it.